

**ECMI CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECT  
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:  
WORKSHOP ON MEDIA ISSUES**

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## **List of Acronyms**

ATV	Alternativna Radio Televizija
RTV	Radio Televizija
KM	Konvertibilna Marka
CRA	Communications Regulatory Agency
DPRE	Displaced Persons and Refugees
CGSA	Centar za Gradansku Saradnju i Aktivnost (Centre for Civic Cooperation and Activity)
SDA	Stranka Demokratske Akcije (Party for Democratic Action)
HDZ	Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union)
FTV/PBS	Federation TV/Public Broadcasting Service

## **I. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT**

The ECMI Civil Society Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to assist local actors in assuming responsibility for democratic governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They are being involved, with the assistance of international experts, in a process of reviewing existing policy on practical issues of concern to all communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and of developing specific policy recommendations to further governance and civil society development within the framework set out by the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA).

The project targets civil society representatives, policy and decision makers in Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels of governance, and researchers from all national communities. Representatives of international implementing agencies and donors are invited to attend as observers. To launch the Workshop Series, a constitutive meeting was held in June 2001. In addition to outlining an overall agenda for this project, that constitutive session also concerned itself with two broad and substantive issues: governance and media, which served as a foundation for the investigation of more highly specific issues of interest to the participating local actors. This report covers an event held on 24 November 2001 in Sarajevo that followed on from that initial discussion.

## **II. THE WORKSHOP PROCESS**

The meeting brought together media experts, journalists, and civil society representatives to discuss the role and status of the media in terms of interethnic relations and peace-building and peace implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Despite winter weather conditions that disrupted the travel plans of several participants, 18 people attended the session and the group provided a useful avenue to expand upon the discussions held earlier in the year. The meeting sought to explore issues in news and information media, as well as entertainment media, in order to determine the extent to which minority and diverse interethnic communities are currently represented. The meeting also sought to consider what role the media do (and could) play in improving the relations between minority and majority groups, and among the constituent peoples in BiH.

Preparatory research revealed that there has been considerable progress in the development of policies and regulations aimed to ensure high journalistic standards, editorial accountability and consideration of national minority participation in the media. However, there was broad agreement among the experts interviewed, as well as among the participants in the meeting, that the effective implementation of these policies and procedures will prove to be the key challenge. As many policy and structure-oriented steps have been taken in recent years, particularly in 2001, 2002 can be expected to be a year which is heavily focused on implementation.

The deliberations of the participants during the meeting, as well as the background research that was undertaken in preparation, helped clarify the format and objectives for advancing the project. The workshop consisted of informative presentations and lively discussions, and a set of recommendations and suggestions for future efforts was developed (see below). The participants welcomed the initiative and noted their interest in continuing cooperative work in this effort

### III. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

#### A. *Presentation 1: Print Media in BiH*

Muhamed (“Braco”) Dzemic, a media expert from the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia, delivered the opening presentation on media issues, by addressing the fraught question of who the minorities in BiH are. After reviewing a list of numerical minorities in BiH, including the Roma, Albanians, Turks, Italians, Czechs, and others, he noted, however, that since the war and the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), the three constituent peoples in BiH – the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs – can be classified or perceived (by others or by themselves) as minorities, depending on where they are situated within BiH. He further noted that while the recent decision by the Constitutional Court concerning constituent peoples will have an impact on the constitutions and legislation, putting these changes into practice will be a difficult and important challenge.

He drew attention to several aspects of the status of print media in BiH today which affect media quality in general and of minority coverage in particular. Newspapers are often in the hands of special interests, either directly or through financial pressures. As a result, many people throughout BiH have limited print media options, or no options at all. Publishers and editors tend to use a similar recipe in presenting their media offerings, printing sensationalist headlines and stories in which ‘others’ are accused of wrongdoing. Front pages as a consequence resemble tabloids rather than fora for real journalism. Mr Dzemic noted that some people question the origin of these tendencies, asking whether the media increased the appetite for sensationalism or if popular demand for sensationalist headlines drove the performance of media outlets.

Mr Dzemic stressed that newspapers often propagate dangerous stereotypes or misconceptions about different ethnic groups or minority populations, either in blatant or subtle ways. By way of example, he drew attention to the ‘black pages’ of newspapers where crimes are often reported with a reference to the ethnicities of the parties involved e.g. “A Serb was killed by a Croat in the region,” or “A Bosniak is

suspected to be the thief.” This, Mr Dzemic noted, is an example of unprofessional journalism, with potentially dangerous side effects. Additionally, he noted that these demographic ‘assumptions’ are frequently incorrect.

Mr Dzemic emphasized that basic accepted standards of professional journalism could both improve the industry as a whole and improve the journalists’ treatment of minority issues. In this regard, he outlined three basic rules that must be practiced by journalists:

1. Be absolutely certain of the truth;
2. Be independent and objective;
3. Take note of the reactions that are provoked by a text, and be prepared to investigate (and accept) the consequences of what you publish.

Mr Dzemic observed that the level of professionalism of journalists and the media outlets in BiH must be improved and increased. When reviewing at least five newspapers every day, he notes that several examples of the impact of shallow reporting can be found. To highlight his case, he considered the example of a story about an elementary school in Stolac, and the role of the school director in the distribution of computers to Bosniak and Bosnian Croat children. The story was simply reported. It did not contain any context or background on the issue, there was no fact-checking, and no interviews were undertaken with the range of people involved. Consequently, Mr Dzemic drew attention to the fact that the lack of context can lead readers to a variety of conclusions and raise a variety of questions. For instance, did the school director distribute the computers based purely on the ethnicity of the children? Were the computers funded by a political party or other interests? Was the distribution process fair and transparent, or personal? Mr Dzemic observed that without such analysis, fact-checking, and follow-up, a newspaper simply serves as a transmitter of gossip or rumour, and can trigger dangerous consequences. As a consequence, journalists have the obligation to find the truth, and to look at all sides of a story.

Speaking in a personal capacity, Mr Dzemic stated his impression that readers are often underestimated by the media outlets, and are increasingly beginning to realize

that the quality of reporting is the most important aspect of a newspaper. As an example of a paper that could be held up as a model for best practice in several areas, Mr Dzemic drew attention to *Nezavisne Novine* as the only newspaper in BiH that offered state-wide news, and which maintained bureaus in both Sarajevo and Banja Luka to provide effective coverage. In conclusion, Mr Dzemic noted that while there are positive signs of change in the role of the print media in improving minority-majority relations in BiH, there are still many challenges ahead.

### *Comments and Discussion*

In the ensuing discussion, the participants addressed some of the points raised in the presentation and introduced a number of related issues. Vladimir Maric of the Nansen Dialogue Center in Mostar, for example, picked up the idea of ethnic labelling in reporting. He noted that the sports pages of newspapers were often unique in that they did not discriminate among people through providing labels, though on occasion a national affiliation might be mentioned.

Dervo Sejdic of 'Braca Romi' also corroborated this assertion by pointing out that the Roma populations were particularly affected by negative reporting and stereotyping in the press. He noted that articles would often begin "Roma stole, robbed," etc., then continue to mention the full name of the accused, rather than just noting the initials of the suspect as was common practice.

He further noted that while the newspaper *Dnevni Avaz* had recently given more attention to Roma issues, there was still a need for improvement. He drew attention to the time slots for Roma broadcasts on Radio BH in the Federation, which were often in the middle of the night, and thus of little use to the listening community. According to Mr Sejdic, media outlets failed to report adequately on problems that the Roma were experiencing, and he compared this neglect and its subsequent negative social effects to a form of ethnic cleansing.

On a related issue, Dusan Babic of the Media Plan Institute noted his concern about the self-regulation of the print media. He noted his scepticism concerning the ability of print media outlets to regulate themselves, and he expressed his concern that there

were no substantive penalties for outlets that failed to adhere to standards and regulations, either in general or in terms of minority reporting. Mr Babic went on to comment that in general, the quality of the newspaper *Oslobodjenje* had decreased, manifesting itself in poor reporting and writing.

Mr Dzemic responded to several of these comments and concerns, and provided some additional insights. He began by noting some positive examples of journalistic professionalism in BiH. *Nezavisne Novine*, for example, provided strong, professional coverage of the spring riots in Banja Luka (during the cornerstone laying ceremony at the Ferhadija mosque site), and is very professional in its scope of reporting. Similarly, in its coverage of the same incident, Television Hayat in Sarajevo had used a report prepared by ATV of Banja Luka. These examples, Mr Dzemic noted, showed that media outlets were capable of operating properly and professionally. The question that remained was the extent to which outside politics have an impact on the professionalism of journalists.

According to Mr Dzemic, the war had created media that lacked a generation of professional journalists. During and after the war, people had begun to work for media outlets, without having been professionally trained as journalists. Therefore, as experienced journalists left, they were often replaced by unskilled ones. As a consequence, Mr Dzemic pointed out issues of basic professionalism which needed to be addressed through training, and through support mechanisms such as journalists' associations.

Vehid Sehic of the Citizens' Forum in Tuzla noted that it is futile to speak only about the responsibility of journalists on this issue. Rather, the responsibility of society has to be considered as well. While change is needed, BiH media could learn from positive examples in the region.

He further noted that media outlets in the FRY offered several good practices concerning minority broadcasts and minority coverage. Yugoslav RTV offers national minorities-focused programming, including broadcasts for populations in Vojvodina, and for the Macedonian and Albanian populations. However, in BiH, three different streams of media were being developed, based on the three dialects of the three

constituent peoples. While the interests of the three constituent peoples were being pursued, no one was aware of the number of media offerings available to Roma and other national minorities. While people were therefore presumably trying to integrate society, the Roma were being only further isolated in the process.

Mr Sehic noted, however, that he was also concerned that observers of the media in BiH could be overcritical, noting that some people could argue that non-Bosnian media outlets such as CNN or BBC did not act objectively when covering highly politicized issues such as the Gulf War, the war in Afghanistan, or other similar events either. From his experience in regulatory meetings and media working groups, he felt that foreigners were requesting more of the media in BiH than they did of their own media outlets at home.

In terms of media regulation, Mr Sehic was uncertain if legal penalties were the correct solution for the regulation of the print media. If everyone in the media community is interested in protecting their own interests, he noted, then these interests, and the interests of the public (media consumers) would have to be well-defined and understood. He concluded by emphasizing that BiH had to accept and adhere to European standards in terms of its media development.

In a related point, Amir Telibecirovic, a journalist in Sarajevo, noted that the former Yugoslavia addressed media and nationality issues more effectively than the present system. The GFAP had created new minorities through the framework of the three constituent peoples, he alleged, thereby creating room for the neglect of the interests of real minorities. He noted that the neglect of minority issues inside BiH could unfortunately stretch beyond the region. To substantiate this, he pointed to the development of 'Balkan Blues', the largest compilation of Balkan Roma music, in which no members of the BiH Roma community were invited to participate. This, he claimed, reflected the general low profile of Roma in BiH.

He further suggested to the Roma representatives present that they should demand to use their language more frequently in media outlets in BiH. He personally would like to hear it more, and it would remind people that there were real minority languages in BiH.

Saban Mujic of SAE Roma in Tuzla noted that Mr Dzemidzic's summary outlined the situation of the media in BiH very well. However, he noted that solutions to minority access to and representation in the media that were based on the forces of a market economy were not a reality in BiH today. According to Mr Mujic, products and services are not available simply because of the laws of consumer demand.

Mr Mujic further noted that he had worked on Roma issues with Nedo Milicevic of the Centre for Minority Rights in Sarajevo, and produced a short report that could be useful to the group. He added that the media were only interested in covering Roma issues when it suited them, not as a regular, mainstream content item. He provided one example in which the Roma community had 50,000 KM to produce a Roma radio programme. However, they had difficulty finding a radio broadcaster that would broadcast the show. He noted that while there were approximately thirty Roma organizations in BiH, the media nevertheless failed to cover their events, comments, and awareness-building activities. Whenever the media got involved, it was usually a 'one-time' event, and was not maintained or followed up as an ongoing story or concern. He wondered whether journalists actually ever visited Roma communities to see the issues first hand.

In addition, Mr Mujic noted that every law in BiH had to support all minorities in BiH. He remarked that while the concerns of refugees and displaced persons had been at the top of the list of BiH's 'distressed peoples', the situation had changed over the past six years, and the concerns of Roma should as a consequence now be at the top of the list. Unless the needs and rights of the Roma were protected and satisfied, he commented, the needs of other minorities would not be assured either.

Mr Mujic further remarked that marginalization in the media was an extension of marginalization in politics and society in general and he went on to review several of the injustices that had been suffered by the Roma, including war casualties, poverty and lack of education. In these and other ways, they are the group most likely to experience discrimination in BiH. According to Mr Mujic, politicians manipulated the Roma population to gain their votes, yet the Roma were not able to gain a seat in any parliament in BiH. Census figures were also damaging to the community as papers claimed that 9,000 Roma lived in BiH when there were in fact closer to 70,000. A

new, up to date and comprehensive census is therefore needed to rectify these mistakes.

In addition, Mr Mujic emphasized that the Roma community simply wants to be active, representative and included in all spheres of public life. As a consequence, the media should not just report on them when they are begging. Instead, journalists should report on Roma intellectuals and activities, and on people who were sitting around tables such as these, trying to improve the quality of life in BiH. He noted that his association published books in English, the local language, and the language of the Roma. He closed by noting his concern that this window of opportunity must be fully utilized.

Mr Sejdic followed this with his own remarks, noting that when he dealt with the media, he felt that he was censored by editors or others in the media business. Journalists, he noted, should not only visit Roma communities during their festivals, but on a regular basis to discuss day to day problems and issues. Journalists tend to report on Roma who are accused of begging, but they do not report in a similar way if Bosniaks are begging.

In addition, he remarked that the protection of the Roma language is almost impossible. He has used the Serbo-Croatian language for all his life, and the Roma people are not allowed the media space to present their language to the public. This, he remarked, had not always been their situation. In the pre-war, Tito era, there had been regular programming in their language, and this had been in a time in which fewer people considered themselves Roma.

Mr Dzemidzic responded that journalists were often lazy in their reporting, with the tendency to run after a story that was interesting to them, rather than after stories that might be interesting to various segments of the community. As a consequence, he suggested that the Roma community needs to identify people in the media industry whom they could approach with their concerns, and develop contacts who can and will cover events and issues. He noted the obligations that public broadcasters had in terms of minority programmes, and he advised the Roma representatives to demand media space. In conclusion, he pointed out that the Communications Regulatory

Agency (CRA) has rules on minority programming that have to be followed and implemented.

*B. Presentation 2: Challenges Facing Public Media in BiH*

In the second session of the day's discussion, Vladimir Maric of the Nansen Dialogue Centre in Mostar gave an introductory presentation which sought to provide a framework to the debate and to outline the challenges presently faced by the public media in BiH. At the outset, he noted that *Dani* research in 1996 reported that 46.6 per cent of the people in BiH only follow the news by watching television. In 1999, the Croatian TV reported that 63 per cent of the population follow the evening news at 7.30 p.m. Today, over 70 per cent of the population gets its news from TV. This constitutes a large increase in two years. In terms of audience numbers, entertainment programmes followed in popularity. According to Mr Maric, an understanding of these statistics and other demographical data could change the financial situation of public TV, and the media outlook in BiH in general. By improving the financial situation, it could then be possible to improve the situation of minority programming in BiH.

He went on to note the many challenges, both to content development and technical distribution. He noted, for instance, that *Dnevni Avaz* has a printing house, and has at times made it difficult for *Oslobodjenje* to print its own publication. He also drew attention to technical and transmission issues that needed to be addressed, in addition to basic content concerns. All of these challenges, Mr Maric remarked, affect content development, access, and distribution of media throughout BiH.

Mr Maric suggested that the CRA should as a consequence mandate the allocation of funds so that the public stations could produce programmes to be aired throughout BiH. He pointed out that the BBC and the British Regulatory Agency regularly air minority programming about people all over the world, to people all over the world. In Britain, the public (subscribers) pay, and expect to get something back in return. There is therefore a sense of accountability and responsibility among the media professionals.

Mr Maric agreed that one of the problems facing minorities in BiH today is the problem of gathering basic demographic data. It is difficult and often controversial simply to define and determine who the minorities in BiH are. However, such demographic information was needed to address the issues and concerns of national minorities. An updated and accurate census, he suggested, could provide the basis for a more accurate 'media profile' of BiH.

To illustrate his argument, Mr Maric referred to an analysis of American movies and documentaries on the Vietnam War, from which several requirements of democratic television and media can be drawn. One of these requirements is diversity, with reporters and journalists identifying at least two to three different points of view for every story. Another is the requirement for programmes that are developed and aimed at various levels of the community, addressing both local and national needs and interests. In addition, he noted that it is crucial to allow and support open criticism of local institutions in the media so that the media can freely question leading powers and structures.

In view of this, Mr Maric suggested that public media have to raise the awareness of BiH citizens as well as the profile of BiH on the world stage. For instance, he pointed to the media coverage of events such as Miss World and the Eurovision song contest, which portrayed BiH as a unitary state, represented by a single representative. Such instances, he remarked, are important for the local and global perceptions of the country. As a result, additional opportunities to present BiH as a unitary country should be included in the media more often. Mr Maric nevertheless noted that such changes and improvements would come about slowly. In conclusion, he noted that while it is important to speak about the need for an improved global profile through the media, BiH newspapers such as *Oslobodjenje* do not presently cover events in other places, such as Mostar, very often. Broad local coverage is therefore as important as effective global coverage.

### *Comments and Discussion*

A number of additional comments were made to the presentation. Mr Sehic, for instance, reminded the group that the state can only mandate the public media outlets

to adhere to specific requests. Private broadcasters do not have to listen to the state, apart from fulfilling basic licensing requirements. He commented that while the BBC follows state rules and regulations, it is actually quite a commercial institution.

In response, Mr Maric pointed out that Channel 4 in Great Britain had been granted a license under the condition that 40 per cent of its programming would be imported from independent production companies for minorities. He suggested that frequencies in BiH should also be distributed and regulated under similar conditions. Mr Sehic, however, noted that private broadcasters could simply respond by saying that it was not up to others to tell them what to produce, and he voiced his concerns on the effectiveness of regulation.

In this context, Mr Babic noted that these issues are not unique to BiH. In general, he remarked, public media services have to provide 30 to 40 per cent of informational programming content. He further noted that because Television Hayat is quite professional, it actually has more informational programming than public television. Responding to an earlier point, Mr Babic commented that as frequencies are owned by the state, the government can tell private companies to accept certain standards according to the interests of the state.

Expanding on this point, Mr Maric noted that it is possible for a number of different stations and channels to exist, with varying state requirements. Moreover, he noted that while some people think that the introduction of digital TV would solve many of these problems, he noted that it would not be available in BiH for at least another two years, and would be too expensive to be widely accessible. On the issue of conditionality, he reminded the group that if the CRA put the GSM tenders and conditions out on the market, every licence to be granted is in itself conditional.

Mujo Mujic of SAE Roma in Tuzla commented that he watched TV every night, and that he finds nothing about Roma issues, needs or culture. He commented that the Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, although constituent peoples, are considered to be minorities, and can therefore monopolize available funding for minority programming. He questioned why these groups are able to claim minority status at some times, and status as a constituent people at other times, and he appealed to the

media to recognize the Roma as a national minority that had certain rights, both in general terms and in terms of media access.

*C. Presentation 3: Comments on RTV Mostar*

Maja Džililović, a journalist with RTV Mostar, provided further insight into media implementation on the ground by providing a brief presentation on media practice. She began by noting her long-time experience, having worked for Radio Mostar for the previous eight years. In response to previous comments from the Roma representatives, she stated that RTV Mostar in fact devotes considerable space to Roma needs. A representative from a local Roma association had visited the station, and the staff of RTV Mostar had welcomed the opportunity to learn more about their problems and concerns. She noted that she had herself visited a Roma community in Mostar to spend the day there, and she had to admit that it had been a very enlightening experience. Ms Džililović further noted that RTV Mostar produced a show on Roma needs that was included in the 8 o'clock news, with the Roma representative as the guest. This was a positive example of RTV Mostar's commitment to minority programming.

Ms Džililović then turned to her practical experiences as a representative of the media in BiH. Radio Mostar, she noted, is the most popular radio station in Mostar, a city that is unique in BiH, owing to its status as a divided city. She gave several examples of unusual challenges that they face every day, concerning reporting on refugee return, politics, and events in surrounding towns. She further added that RTV Mostar has always been supportive of GFAP and Annex 7 (Return) and was, as a consequence, proud of its independence. This independence and willingness to pursue newsworthy items distinguished them from other broadcasters and, according to Ms Džililović, this contributes to the normalization of life in the city.

*Comments and Discussion*

Ms Džililović then invited further comments and questions about her vocation and the activities of the station. In response, Mr Mujo Mujic commented on the issue of sports and sports coverage in Mostar, and he wondered why there is not more coverage of

the sports club Velez. Pointing out that sport is still intimately related to politics, he remarked that while the people from Mostar still support Velez, there is a new team (Zrinski), which is supplanting Velez. In response, Ms Dzililovic disagreed, noting that in her opinion Velez still receives a lot of support by media outlets and the public.

Mr Saban Mujic contended that the Roma lost their status as a minority when the Dayton Agreement was signed. He expressed his pleasure that the representative from RTV Mostar had visited a Roma community, and that at least one media outlet in the region had made an effort to understand their issues. Such visits, he noted, are important to increase awareness and to eliminate prejudices.

On the issue of minority access, Mr Dzemic again noted the difficulties involved in trying to identify and define minorities in BiH. In some ways, he remarked, the majority population consists of DPRES. In a similar vein, another participant questioned whether people of 'mixed backgrounds' should also be considered as minorities.

In this context, Mr Saban Mujic expressed his concern that media outlets invite minorities to become more involved with their work *pro forma*, simply to get their licences, and he questioned their long-term commitment to their concerns. With reference to the *Roma Bulletin* which his organization produces and which serves as an important news and information source, he observed that the authorities fall short of their obligations by neither supporting the bulletin nor reviewing its content.

Responding to the concerns raised that Roma issues are not covered in mainstream publications, Mr Dzemic noted that he would be interested in seeing some of the Roma bulletins that provide information directly to members of the Roma community.

Adela Kovacevic from CGSA Odzak introduced herself as a representative of civil society, from the Odzak municipality. She noted that the media in her region is an example of how the media should *not* work. According to Ms Kovacevic, Odzak is a small and closed community with two radio stations, exclusively financed by the SDA and 98 per cent of the programming is devoted to entertainment. The SDA-financed station sends one hour of news of BiH per week (with no focus on news in Odzak)

and the HDZ-financed station only broadcasts Croatian news and information. As a result, minority issues are not discussed. Ms Kovacevic noted that there were not many Roma in the region, and those who are there are not involved in civil society activities.

She further noted that it would be futile to depend on FTV/PBS for more or better news and information since they are not interested in issues specific to Odzak. In view of the situation, she wondered what could be done to support and improve the media in her region.

Mr Sehic drew a parallel to the position of Roma in the Czech Republic, contending that their position was much more unfavourable than the position of Roma in BiH. According to Mr Sehic, the mere fact that the BiH Roma are organizing in associations is a sign of progress. He further noted that the media would only provide more attention to the work of NGOs if they thought that they were doing something new or interesting. The practice among many organizations of planning events according to narrow self-interests that are not of interest to the community as a whole contribute to the general weakness of civil society and related media development coverage.

Mr Dzemic echoed earlier speakers in appreciating the need for an effective public TV station. State TV, he suggested, could help to promote coverage of minority events. However, he drew attention to the possibility that public TV could be politicized, noting the tendency of mayors to use local radio stations for their own purposes in some municipalities.

He further highlighted the problems of media access and distribution. While Odzak does not have access to a broad number of media outlets, he pointed out that a newspaper such as *Oslobodjenje* would probably only sell around five copies if it was available in Odzak. Similarly, *Nezavisne Novine* would not be sold in Foca. As most of the inhabitants in Foca are Serbs from Sarajevo, Mr Dzemic noted that they do not often want to hear news about Sarajevo. In contrast, Mr Dzemic drew attention to positive examples. One existed in Livno, with the operation of Radio N, where a woman leads the staff in providing quality coverage. Zvornik also provides an

interesting case study, as quality coverage is provided despite many challenges (including acts of vandalism on their property).

In this context and picking up on an earlier comment, Mr Sejdic reiterated that the media outlets themselves first have to be interested in a story before they would cover it. However, he noted that it is also the responsibility of the editors to consider both the financial aspect and responsible coverage. In this regard, he reiterated that it is inappropriate to include the full names of Roma citizens in crime reports when this practice is not applied to the non-Roma population.

Referring once again to the case of Odzak, Ms Kovacecovic added that the specific problems encountered there have to be considered at the same time as larger national issues. She questioned the need for two stations in Odzak, which had been granted licences, and asked how she, as a displaced person, could affect the local media if the two stations that were granted licences are controlled by a party.

Mr Dzemic suggested that it is the responsibility of NGOs and civil society organizations to monitor the press, and to report problems to the CRA. Citizens should make full use of the Freedom of Information Act.

Ms Kovacecovic further commented on an initiative in Odzak, in which a group of citizens demand to attend all municipal council meetings, and to have full access to related information. Only once this initiative is underway, she noted, would they be in a position to begin to make a change.

#### *D. Presentation 4: The Role of Satire in the Media of BiH and the Region*

In the final session, Mr Amir Telibecirovic gave a presentation on the role that satire plays, and could play, in the media, both in general and in BiH. He noted that the *Feral Tribune* was one of the first newspapers to write about Roma needs in Croatia. He and many others agreed that the reporting in the *Feral Tribune* is often more honest and objective than anything in BiH. There are other examples of satirical press, including *Krmaca* ('Pig') in Belgrade, and the former *Alcak* in BiH. These all are

examples of publications that cover serious issues but are not yet taken seriously in BiH.

According to Mr Telibecirovic, it is important to find a format that will work in BiH, in which serious issues can be covered, and which encourages all BiH citizens to begin to think and laugh. Information and entertainment do not exclude each other, and quality satirical programmes appeal to people in the cities as well as in the villages. Satirical publications could therefore be targeted towards either broad or more specific audiences. However, there are many challenges, including the financial challenges inherent in a system in which media depend on funding from political parties and political interests. People interested in and dedicated to these kinds of media have to convince the local and international investors, potential advertisers, and donors of the important role satirical press plays in a democratic society.

#### *Comments and Discussion*

Mr Saban Mujic (and many of the others) concurred with Mr Telibecirovic's description of pre-war humour in BiH. Mr Saban noted that shows such as *Top Lista Nadrealista* provided (it is no longer on the air) a full picture of current events and social and political life. They were also the first to really anticipate the war and post-war environment. Mr Dzemic also agreed that the problems faced in BiH today could be tackled using different techniques, such as satire. He noted the similar role of political cartoons and suggested that a satirical project be proposed to a radio, TV, or newspaper to facilitate a start-up.

In a final round up session, the participants were invited to give various comments and clarifications. Mr Sehic questioned the quality of local coverage of domestic events. He commented that there was no local coverage of events in Bocinje Donje until *The Washington Post* investigated and wrote about it. He asked why journalists or citizens in BiH need someone to come from abroad to push them to investigate and discuss local issues, and he wondered when Bosnian journalists would begin to break news that was important to BiH. It is for this and other reasons, he remarked, that he and many others in BiH do not trust the current newspapers.

Mr Babic repeated his scepticism concerning self-regulation of the print media. According to him, regulation and self-regulation are two complementary processes. He disputed comments that broadcast frequencies are limited and thereby made them a different case from print media. He noted, however, that while broadcasters can have broad reach and influence, print media can have this as well. Mr Babic further suggested reviewing a Council of Europe meeting that had taken place in Budapest two days earlier, in which hate speech had been discussed.

Beth Kampshror, a freelance journalist in Sarajevo, pointed to the role of journalists in the process, noting the need to engage journalists more frequently and to ask them why they do not play a more active role in press conferences. She noted that in BiH, press conferences are a resource that journalists in BiH fail to take advantage of and that this issue relates to the core importance of professionalism, and the need to develop quality content.

Mr Telibecirovic reminded the group of the issue of safety and security of journalists across BiH. He said that it is important to recognize and praise journalists who actually cross ethnic lines in order to provide quality reporting.

Mr Babic noted that another problem concerning the content of media coverage in BiH is that journalists cover issues only sporadically rather than consistently. More consistent reporting, he noted, including follow-up reporting, is therefore needed. He also indicated that the problems concerning minority reporting are not limited to BiH. In this context, he noted that he also reviewed reports from Greece and Bulgaria in which minorities are not mentioned or recognized.

Mr Sejdic remarked that while they had made suggestions on how to improve media coverage of Roma, they had not developed any specific or concrete suggestions. He wondered if the Roma in BiH could learn from the Roma community in Macedonia, noting that it would be interesting to compare their experiences. He further noted that Radio Zid would include a one hour broadcast (weekly) for the Roma. Local stations should similarly include ten to fifteen minutes per week of programming for Roma and other national minorities, he suggested. He also noted that newspapers and other media outlets should be informed of a 'Roma information clearing-house' in Tuzla,

from which information on Roma issues can be accessed and used to provide context to reports.

Ms Kampschorr added that marketing experts need to be involved in future minority/media efforts, as without financial stability, minority issues would continue to be inadequately covered.

Mr Sejdic suggested to include young people, including Roma youth leaders and representatives from other national minorities, in future related efforts.

Mr Saban Mujic suggested that a public announcement be made to let the media know that minorities are not satisfied with the status quo of their inclusion in and access to the media.

In conclusion, the organizers reviewed the general themes discussed throughout the day. They also reviewed some general conclusions and recommendations that had emerged from the discussion, and they outlined their plans for further work. All participants expressed their interest in the process and looked forward to further progress on the role of the media in the development of strong and diverse interethnic communities.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the course of the proceedings, as well as during pre-workshop interviews and discussions, a number of suggestions and recommendations were made by the group and other media experts. These recommendations can be divided into the following six categories, and are outlined below:

##### *Ongoing Media Content Review*

While media content review was an important part of the international community's immediate post-war efforts, there is a need to continue to monitor the print and broadcast media in terms of treatment of minority issues. This is particularly important as media outlets begin to 'normalize' in their production, and as implementation of rules and regulations continues throughout 2002. Specific topics for review should include the following:

- The extent of stereotyping of constituent peoples and national minorities;
- The extent to which national minorities such as the Roma participate in media Space;
- The availability of minority language media programming;
- The existence of 'ethnicity/community-blind' reporting techniques and standards;
- The extent to which minority issues can be included into *mainstream* journalism;
- The amount of locally-developed content, including both news and entertainment productions.

##### *Identification of Best Practices*

While it is clear that the media industry in BiH will face many challenges as it continues to professionalize and improve, there are best practices from inside and outside BiH that could serve as examples of positive steps forward. A compilation of these best practices could serve as a useful tool for media experts, minority rights advocates, and editors and journalists. While a range of specific examples must be identified, the following serve as a starting point:

- Participants noted positive examples of broad, minority-oriented programming in Macedonia, and in parts of Yugoslavia;
- RTV Mostar, as a media outlet in a divided city, has considerable experience in dealing with difficult issues in a multiethnic region;
- Radio stations in Livno and Zvornik have played a positive role in developing an environment more conducive to minority return and development of diverse communities;
- Television Hayat in Sarajevo, and ATV of Banja Luka, offer examples of cooperation, information and resource-sharing that illustrates the increasing professionalism of the media industry;
- Training programmes have been organized that address issues specific to reporting on minority issues, such as those conducted by the Centre for War, Peace and the News Media.

ECMI should utilize information and best practices already available through other relevant institutions, as well as identify newly developed, unreported, or low-profile cases.

#### *Regional Media Access Review*

As minority return continues, the population of BiH will have a growing need for broad access to a range of quality print and broadcast media offerings. However, at present, media access is often very limited, particularly outside the larger cities and population centres. Odzak is an example of one such underserved area, and there are undoubtedly many others. The development of a *media profile*, based on the changing demographical situation of a region, could form a key part of an overall, regionally-based ‘media report card’, illustrating the range of media content and access of issues that exist in communities throughout BiH.

### *Development of Cooperative Initiatives*

Cooperative initiatives should be developed, presented, and pursued in order to begin to include minority coverage into large, high-circulation media outlets. For instance, publishers of minority-focused publications such as the *Roma Bulletin* should pursue arrangements with larger newspapers to share their content and resources. Other national minorities could follow this model as well, providing the basis for regular news and features in mainstream papers. The media outlets would benefit by gaining a low-cost content augmentation and new community sources, while minority groups would gain by reaching a broader audience and potentially cutting their own production costs.

The lack of quality satirical commentary in BiH could be similarly addressed. Current editors and writers of satirical magazines published in the past should develop cooperative efforts with larger papers in order to secure print-space on a regular basis.

### *Ongoing Media Monitoring*

In order to measure the effectiveness of regulation and self-regulation, media organs must be monitored to ensure their adherence to legal or general professional and ethnical standards. As the Communications Regulatory Agency's (CRA) long-term licensing process continues, those outlets receiving licences will be responsible and accountable for following certain standards. As public broadcasting continues to mature, broadcasters will be obliged to meet certain minimum requirements in terms of minority programming. Mreza+, although a private television network, has the capability of reaching a state-wide audience and should be similarly monitored for its performance and standards. Finally, the print media must be held to close scrutiny to ensure that the self-regulation system is adhered to and effective in ensuring accurate, accountable, and responsible reporting. Monitoring compliance is a key element in minimizing the gap between policy and practice.

### *Further and Continued Engagement with the Media Industry*

Future meetings and workshops should include more representatives from the print and broadcast media outlets. Editors, producers, and journalists should be strongly encouraged to participate and to contribute to the dialogue.

Additionally, national minority citizens' associations (such as the Roma organizations represented in this workshop) should be supported in their efforts to develop links and contacts with media outlets in their communities.

Finally, the participants suggested that the group should let the media industry know that they are not satisfied with the current state of affairs of minority reporting, and that change is needed. Media outlets should receive copies of all materials generated throughout the project to ensure that they are aware of the concerns and recommendations so that they may make a contribution to the debate as well.

## **V. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

The workshop and research participants agreed that future, ongoing work should include the following issues:

- Identification of one or more experts to write background expert papers on specific, relevant topics;
- Ongoing research on the issues identified, particularly concerning the development of a 'media report card';
- Continued communications with all workshop participants to report on progress and research findings, and to solicit feedback;
- Periodic meetings of a working group to review progress and develop strategies to present information and recommendations to the policy
- Broad distribution of all related project materials to the policy community, academic, and civil society communities.

## VI. APPENDIX

### *List of Participants*

NAME	AFFILIATION
Babic, Dusan	Media Plan Institut
Dzelilovic, Maja	RTV Mostar
Dzemidzic, Muhamed	Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, BiH
Kampschorr, Beth	Freelance Journalist
Kovacevic, Adela	CGSA Odzak, Center for Civic Cooperation and Activity
Maric, Vladimir	Nansen Dialogue Centre, Mostar
Miletic, Aleksandra	United Nations Mission in BiH
Mujic, Mujo	Association 'SAE Roma', Tuzla
Mujic, Saban	Association 'SAE Roma', Tuzla
Muratovic, Salko	General Secretary, Association 'SAE Roma', Tuzla
Mustafic, Mustafa	Association 'SAE Roma', Tuzla
Sehic, Vehid	Citizen's Forum, Tuzla
Sejdic, Dervo	'Braca Roma', Sarajevo
Telibecirovic, Amir	Journalist, Magazine 'Start' (BiH); Slobodna Bosna (BiH); Peace Office Outpost (The Netherlands); Mladine (Slovenia)
Wyspianski, Alek	University of London

### ECMI staff

Holliday, Graham	ECMI Balkans Projects Coordinator
Perry, Valery	ECMI Regional Representative
Porca, Ermina	ECMI Local Assistant