

Circom Report

CIRCOM Regional Newsmoonthly CR is the European Association of 380 Public Regional TV Stations April 2000 / Issue 7

Great success for a concept of pan-European media policy

Stability Pact agrees to support CR "Partnership Project for SE TV"

Within the framework of a media aid programme for Southeast Europe, the coordinator of the Stability Pact in Brussels has been inundated with more than 120 applications for support in a variety of radio, television and press projects. The Stability Pact has chosen to support the implementation of just 13 of these applications, one of which will be CIRCOM regional's request for financial support for a feasibility study to precede its "Partnership Project for Southeast European TV".

This positive decision gives us cause to expect that the various governments involved in the Stability Pact, as well as the World Bank involved in the whole process, will approve the project itself: a the concept and its developer, Reimar Alferdt.

The project will involve the set-up of a team of editors, two-thirds of whom will be journalists from Southeast European television stations and one-third journalists from Central, Western and Northern European television stations, who will come together under a public service broadcasting structure to produce a daily television programme, including news broadcasts, which will last several hours and be designed especially for the Southeast European region.

It will be broadcast throughout the night via satellite (Eutelsat) and will be able to be received by all regional and national television stations across Southeast Europe.

Programmes produced by the team will be provide free of charge to all non-profit-making Southeast European television stations, who will then be able to edit them and broadcast them in their own language, thus guaranteeing Southeast European television stations complete autonomy in their programme planning.

Contributions will be filmed by Southeast European journalists in their native

countries and produced and composed at a central location in consultation with experienced television journalists from the other European regions.

The programmes will be provided by pean region, thereby avoiding the assumption of any form of "media imperialism". The project will provide our colleagues in Southeast Europe with practical programme-making and professional training at the same time: so-called "learning by doing".

The "Partnership Project for Southeast European TV" has been designed on an initial period of 5 years. It will provide the countries of Southeast Europe with an example of high-quality television programmes, which will be produced along public service broadcasting guidelines.

The long-term objective of this project is the implementation of public service broadcasting in all countries of Southeast Europe, a task which promises to be extremely difficult given the current political, economic and social conditions in the region.

The feasibility study will be carried out over a period of 6 months by experts from CIRCOM regional's member stations, together with experts from the European Broadcasting Union, and will begin with an initial discussion at the 18th Annual Conference in Potsdam on 1 June 2000.

Big changes in Croatia's HRT

Following January general elections and big changes in the Croatian society since then, Croatian parliament Sabor on March 16, 2000 elected Mr. Mirko Galić as the new general manager of HRT. Galić, being himself a well respected journalist, was unanimously elected as a person who will enable full transformation of HRT to real public service broadcaster. As a part of this role, Galić is expected to help formulate a new Law on Croatian RadioTelevision which will help reorganize HRT itself, enabling privatization of the HTV 3rd channel and privatization of transmitters network, thus enabling formation of the first private national competitor. One of his first moves in this position was to name an interim editor-in-chief of Croatian Television that would enable him to start with the imminent changes even HRT Council approved Mrs. Neda Ritz (current Editor-in-Chief of Cultural Programme at HRT and well known TV journalist) as an interim editor-in-chief on April 10, 2000.

Biggest ever training workshop

The Television Journalism Training Workshop, to be held before and during the Potsdam conference, is likely to be the biggest ever organised by Circom Regional. Over 50 young journalists from 21 different European Countries are expected to attend the twelve-day workshop. Training Coordinator, Rick Thompson says "Financial support from the Council of Europe has enabled us to plan a large and ambitious course, and it has also helped considerably that several member-stations are releasing experienced trainers and technical staff at no cost to Circom Regional".

The Workshop will use digital cameras and field-editors provided by Sony, to ensure that there are plenty of practical exercises, with groups of young journalists working in small teams to produce news reports and features. ORB are offering their news studio for half a day, for an exercise in live broadcasting. a video report about the training workshop will be transmitted across Europe on the EbS system. The workshop will also attempt to produce 15-minute TV reports during the three main days of the conference, to be shown to delegates each evening on the internal TV system.

Sixteen judges view 136 programs for the Prix Circom 2000

Circom Regional's judges have now chosen the winners of the regional programme awards worth more than 40,000 euros top be presented at the Potsdam conference.

The sixteen judges met for three full day of viewing and discussion in the Carinthian lakeside village of Portschach near Klagenfurt. There were 136 entries from almost all of the Circom Regional member countries, about 25 more than last year.

There were six categories: the Grand Prix for both News and Documentary, Europe Matters (sponsored by the European Parliament), Cross-Border programmes (sponsored by the European Commission's Regional Policy Directorate), New Technology (sponsored by ISPO) and the France 3 Award for the most original entry (sponsored by France 3). Winners and commendations have been agreed in all categories.

David Lowen, chairman of the judges said: "We have been delighted by the quality and range of the programmes we have seen. Some are very good. They prove that brilliant and important programmes can be made in all regions of Europe.

"The winners will be informed very soon and they will be invited to attend the conference and collect their prizes at the ceremony in Potsdam. Anyone who comes to Potsdam should make sure they leave time in their diary to view these winning programmes at the teletheque and to come to the workshop

with the winning producers."

"We were delighted to be made so welcome in Carinthia and we all wish to thank ORF, Alfred Dickermann and Anita Piery for the warmth and generosity of their hospitality."

The chairman of the Documentary judges was Olivier Brumelot (France 3 Nord, Pas de Calais, Picardie). The chairman of the Europe Matters and Cross-Border awards was Dr Jurgen Hassel (WDR Koln) and the chair of the News and New Technology awards was Kathy Nelson (BBC London), The chair of the France 3 award was Charles White (EC Regional Policy).

The other judges were Dr Alfred Dickermann(ORF Karntnen), Svein Prestvik (NRK), Per Eric Nordquist (SVT), Miodrag Ilic (RTS), Branko Lentic (HRT), Zoran Medved (RTVS), Eva Zombori (MTV), Eelco van den Kerkhoff (TV Noord), Marie-Paule Urban (F3), Qadar Baksh (ERT), Jerzy Boj (TVP), Christel Hinrichsen (BR Munich).

Limits of governmental influence in S.E Europe

Public Service Broadcasting: Limits of Governmental Influence is the topic of a conference to be held in Vienna (Austria), May 3 5

The conference will examine the legal situation of public service broadcasting in the reforming countries of South Eastern Europe.

The Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (Vienna / Austria) together with the Institute of European Media Law (Saarbr ucken / Germany) are responsible for the conference.

Professors of Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungaria and Poland will participate as well as Dr. Werner Rumphorst (EBU / Geneva).

Subjects of discussion are:

- Basic Structures of Public Service Broadcasting in Eastern Europe
- Media in Transformation
- Limits of Governmental Influence on Public Service Broadcasting
- Broadcasting and Market Situation
- The Importance of Public Service Broadcasting in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe
- Democratic Dimensions of Media Law

CIRCOM Regional will be represented by President Reimar H. Allerdt.

The conference intends to portray the legal situation of public service broadcasting in Eastern and Southeastern European countries as well as to develop models for the implementation of public service broadcasting as part of a longterm process of democratization.

General directors and their representatives from 17 public broadcasters in South East Europe (SEE) have agreed to initiate a regional co-operation in the following areas of Media Policy, Programm Co-operation and Training. The representatives of the stations met in Bornholm (Denmark) beginning of April, hosted by the Baltic Media Centre. EBU-representative Antonio Riva participated to the conference as well as Charles Angus Fletcher from BBC-training London, Antti Kuusi from UNESCO SEE Sarajevo and the president of CIRCOM Regional, Reimar H. Allerdt.

With the aim of promoting peace, democracy and stability in the South East Europe the objectives of the intended collaboration are:

•To ensure well functioning independent public service broadcasting in SEE.

To further co-operation between public broadcasters within the SEE and with rest of Europe.

To promote co-operation between public service broadcasters, regulatory bodies and political

SouthEastern Europe public broadcasters initiate co-operation

decision makers within SEE.

•To work towards that media legislation in SEE is in alignment with European standards for public service media as expressed for example in the Council of Europe recommendation The guarantee of the independence of public service broadcasting .

•To enhance the already existing programme collaboration between the public broadcasters in SEE.

To continue strengthening the professional standards of the public broadcasters in SEE through training.

•To promote good ethical working standards within public broadcasters in the SEE especially within the area of covering minorities and promote conflict preventing programming.

•To work where possible for a co-ordination of regional assistance activities implemented through international organisations.

The conference participants have discussed and

agreed to the conclusions from the working groups within Media Policy, Programme Cooperation and Training as a basis for the development of a 2-year-programme. The conference recommends that the regional collaboration among the public broadcasters in SEE will be implemented through working groups at the relevant level within each activity.

* For more detailed information on Media Policy, Co-operation and Training please contact the homepage of Baltic Media Centre www.bmc.dk and of CIRCOM regional www.circom-regio.si

CIRCOM has to change its attitude

Circom, worldwide the biggest organisation of regional TV-producers, must adapt to the changing environment. Most of our colleagues agree with this opinion, mainly on our objective, perhaps less so on the method we should adopt to achieve it.

By preparing CIRCOM regional's 18th annual conference, hosted by the German TV-station ORB in Potsdam, it is to recognize a certain stubbornness, few are prepared to change the past, to re-examine or even abandon favourite practices. We have thought too little about Circom's responsibilities and objectives, about our structures. We have trusted too much to chance in the last few years, and relied too heavily on the willingness of some of our most dedicated members to take on all the tasks.

If we believe that we must adapt to the changing environment, to changing social conditions and the changing media landscape, how should we go about it? It seems that there is some kind of a tendency to stubbornness within the organisation, to clinging to the past, to favourite methods, fear of the past, along the lines of: "we have always done it this way and it has worked, so we should keep on doing it this way".

We need to come to a decision on the direction CIRCOM regional should take in the future, the attitude of its corporate identity. Those interested in this subject must come up with some concrete suggestions which should go before both European Committee and European Board. We should start this discussion immediately after this years conference and ultimately present the results at the annual conference in Porto, in 2001.

Discussion of new forms of activities has to be allowed and is by no means condemning the successes and doubtless good performances of the past, it is not about criticising the past; this is about adapting to the extremely fast developing needs of our days and about our ability to survive as a large community, not only to confirm our presence through quantity, but through quality, through clear-cut, professional activities. If we do not do this, we will soon begin to lose members and general interest as well.

It is important to achieve clarity on rights, obligations and responsibilities within our organisation. Because the current statute is very vague on these points, there are no guidelines to run the management, to act internally and to act externally as well. In principle, any member of the Executive Committee can do anything he likes without consulting with anyone else; or he or she can do the

By Reimar
H. Allerdt
CR President



exact opposite: he or she can shine without doing anything at all. No obligations are set down at all.

Only the responsibilities of the general secretary have been described in any detail.

According to the current statute, there are also no guidelines as to how a president should have to act. At least he is responsible for everything. Certainly it is his responsibility to establish guidelines for the organisation's activities and to discuss these permanently with the members of the Executive Committee and the members of the European Board.

A president should both lead and harmonize. But if conditions mean he has to decide between harmonizing different opinions and leadership, in this case he has no alternative but to give his leadership role absolute priority. That is what Circom members can expect from him in the interest of the organisation.

The European Committee should draw up an agenda for how it intends to govern the roles and responsibilities in future, just like the management of a company or a government cabinet. Such an agenda of management has to be the basis for our all days work and activities. Everyone who wants to be a candidate for the EC has to be ready to take responsibility for a certain subject, has to ensure this personally and also by confirmation of the station which he represents.

Every member station should commit itself to providing its CR-representatives with the necessary time allowance and financial support for them to be able to represent Circom as efficiently as possible. It should not only be questioned which profits brings CIRCOM to the stations but also with an equal emotional engagement what can the station do for CIRCOM, in the interest of the community of journalists working at 376 European regional TV stations.

We need to ensure that, within individual member stations, involvement in Circom's activities is recorded in that employee's work contract, reporting directly to the programme management, i.e. that working for Circom should be seen as a part-time obligation by the management of all of our member stations.

I believe that some problems in the past were

the direct result of weaknesses in our organisational structure, of the lack of obligation, of our reliance upon the enthusiasm of a few individuals.

But this cannot be allowed to continue; for now these very individuals must fulfil much more complex tasks in their daily work than was the case in the past, in the good old days. Every form of change is uncomfortable. Anyway: let's make all possible efforts for the future, for the future of CIRCOM regional, an organisation which aims for better working conditions of regional TV journalist, for better regional TV programmes, for independent free media, for the success of public service broadcasting and for the solidarity with colleagues who have to work and to live under unacceptable economical and social conditions within weak democratic structures.

Last but not least I would like to broach another subject. The conference in Potsdam will consciously follow some new ideas with the objective of achieving more recognition, acceptance and support within its member stations, from external institutions, organisations and persons as well. The introduction of topics with public appeal is one way to achieve this. We must open our organisation to the public. We must be prepared to listen to expert opinion, not only in our own interest but also because it brings attention from outside our circle.

The Potsdam conference should be an attempt to think a second thought". Aiming to this each day is dedicated to a separate topic. The changes from the past are an experiment. They are by no means a criticism of the past. First reactions on the intentions of the concept, on the changes and the proposed items are more than positive. But there is absolutely no doubt: for achieving a successful conference a lot still has to be done by all who are involved in the preparations.

We cannot allow ourselves to get tangled up in petty arguments about different points of view we must remain focussed. If our conference is a success, it will not be seen from the outside as the success of certain individuals or small groups, but as the success of Circom regional as a whole. And vice versa: failure will not be seen as the failure of individuals or groups, but of the organisation as a whole. We are all in the same boat let's not forget that.

Worldwide TV viewing reported on rise

Viewers all over the world are watching more TV than ever, while broadcasters are fuelling their appetite with greater numbers of programmes centred on money, sex or voyeurism, according to figures unveiled at Mip TV. Globally, the average viewer spent 201 minutes per day in front of the TV set last year, varying from 151 minutes in Asia to a high of 236 in North America. In the past five years, Europe's TV watching has grown by nine minutes to 199 minutes a day, while US TV addicts have increased their consumption by two minutes.

Where global TV culture reigns, money-oriented shows like Celador's internationally successful format 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire' hits the spot with viewers. There also are more shows on the air that overtly or covertly concern sex in all its forms. And despite negative backlash from some audiences, new additions to the voyeurism genre, typified by 'Big Brother', continue to emerge. The report, unveiled at the Mip television market, was published by France's Mediametrie, whose Eurodata TV surveys 1.2 billion viewers in 59 countries.

During the Baltic Media Centre Conference on the co-operation of public service broadcasters in South Eastern Europe held in Bornholm, Denmark, Venera Hajrullahu, RTK Administrator, made the following presentation of Radio Television of Kosovo.

Kosovo's nascent independent public broadcasting service, Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK 1) was launched on 19 September 1999 with the first TV satellite transmission.

With the support of UNMIK and the OSCE as the pillar responsible for media, the financial pledges from the Norwegian, Dutch and Swiss governments, the technical support of the European Broadcasting Union, and a lot of enthusiasm, I think I can say today that the first months of activity have been successful.



Radio Kosovo as a component organization within RTK pursues the same objectives. With a staff of 40 members, using old equipment in facilities devastated by years of neglect and months of conflict, and with the financial support of the French government and the DFID, Radio Kosovo broadcasts at present 24 hours programs over two frequencies. One is dedicated to the core Albanian language service (91.9 FM). The second is reserved for the minority language services and experimental programming and is used by the Turkish language service for an hour daily news and information program (93.3 FM).

After an initial fighting the fires phase, the priority today for us is to give RTK legal basis in order to protect its independence but this is very much related to the media situation in Kosovo as a whole, still unclear and missing a general legal framework.

In order, again, to protect its independence we are concentrating on finding solutions to have RTK financially self-sustainable. For that purpose we have developed a Marketing Department and are trying to find a way with the administration to implement a license fee system.

Editorial and financial independence is a precondition for RTK to fulfil its function as an essential institution in the development of a democratic society.

VERENA HAJRULLAHU
RTK Administrator

Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK 1)

What had initially been foreseen to be an emergency broadcasting service of news has been developed into a two hours per day transmission of original news, information, musical, cultural, sports and children programs.

In a building that was condemned even before the last year's conflicts and had since changed occupants a few times, we have managed to restore the maximum and there are today three studios, edit rooms with necessary equipment, an open air interview area and a satellite feed point.

An important donation from the Japanese Government promised for the end of the year will allow us to equip the studios and return the equipment that is currently being leased.

RTK broadcasts consist currently of one 30 minutes news show from 19:00-19:30 followed by entertainment educational programs and finishes with another language News Bulletin.

Programming is generated by the Newsroom and a small program production team.

(Due to the difficult financial situation, currently we can not buy any program but are looking to any other possibility: exchange, donations etc.)

The RTK News room has seven daily reporters, four ENG crews and three edit rooms.

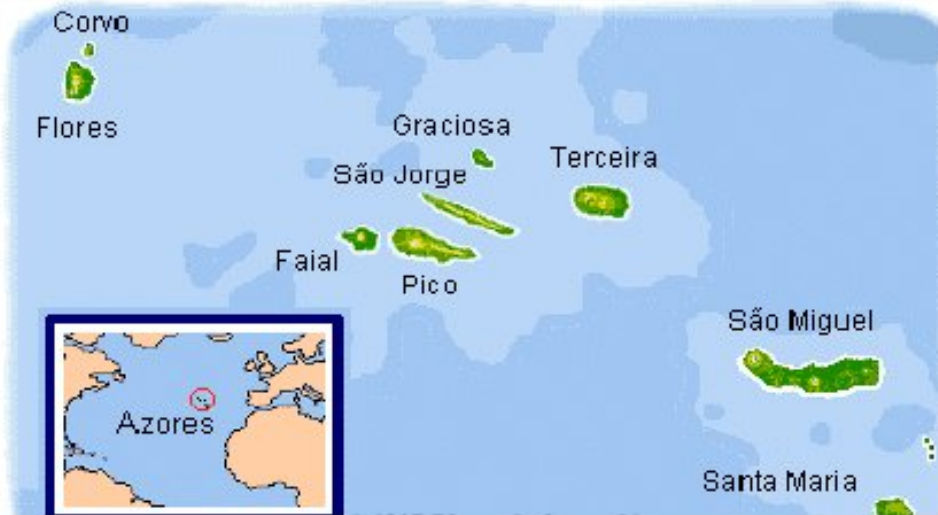
For the transport of the ENG crews we have obtained from six very old cars, four now operational vehicles.



RTK is broadcasting in Albanian, Serbian and Bosnian language and we are hoping to extend language coverage to include Turkish this year.

The transmission is done on satellite in order to ensure all territory coverage since the terrestrial network hasn't been restored yet. To receive RTK, receivers should be set to Eutelsat W2, at 16 degrees east, frequency 11489.2 MHz, with a horizontal polarization; audio is 6.6 and 7.2 MHz.

The satellite transmission allows us also to reach the important kosovar diaspora in Europe and be their source of information on developments in Kosovo. The widest possible access has its importance also in view of the elections coverage as in the near future RTK is going to be the host broadcaster for the first democratic elections.



The 16th Atlantic Television Festival in Sao Miguel

MAT 2000, the 16th Atlantic Television Festival, will take place on the island of S. Miguel, Azores, June 28-July 2. Produced by RTP-Azores the festival will award the best television programs about the sea.

The deadline for submission of programs is May 31. Prizes given to three winners are totally up to 30.000 dollars. Here are the rules and regulations.

Rules and Regulations

Objectives

Art. 1 The Atlantic Television Festival is produced by RTP-Azores with the objective of rewarding the best television programmes about The Sea.

Art. 2 The programmes, because of their quality, must have content and form and reflect the variety and wealth of the oceans at scientific and artistic levels, promote the protection and defense of the seas in a perspective of ecological balance, highlighting man's relationship with coastal communities.

Applications

Art. 3 Television Producers may apply to MAT, particularly participants from Regional Television Centres, Independent Producers and Co-productions.

Art. 4 Each participant may enter with as many productions as he/she wishes providing that the productions entered do not belong to the same series by submitting each entry on a separate Entry Form.

Programmes

Art. 5 The programmes may be presented in video form as long as they can be televised.

Art. 6 There are two categories: News Reporting and Documentary.

Art. 7 Whenever there are doubts regarding how to classify the programmes, these may be changed from one category to another after an agreement has been reached between the organizers and the participant.

Art. 8 The programmes to be submitted must have been produced during the five years previous to the date of the Festival, and the programmes that have already been submitted in previous editions of the Atlantic Television Festival, may not be re-submitted.

Enrolment

Art. 9 Enrolment in the Festival is free of charge. In the event of a Co-production, enrolment will be considered as a programme of the Station that submits it.

Art. 10 The programmes, submitted together with the Entry Form, must be sent at the cost of the applicants, format Betacam SP, Pal System, subtitled or dubbed in English or French, to the address referred in the Entry Form.

Art. 11 The final date of subscription is 31st May, 2000. The programmes received after 31st May and those that do not comply with the articles herein will not be accepted.

Art. 12 RTP-Azores, as the organizer of the Festival, reserves the right to do a pre-selection of the programmes submitted, if necessary.

Jury

Art. 13 The members of the Jury are prestigious personalities in the audio-visual field and are, annually, invited for this purpose by the Organisation.

Art. 14 The Jury reserves the right to withhold all the prizes, or some of the prizes, if the programmes submitted do not qualify.

Art. 15 The Jury may propose the distribution of honourable mentions for programmes that, due to their quality, are seen as deserving special recognition, up to two for each category.

Prizes

Art. 16 The prizes A or de Ouro (Golden Azor), A or de Prata (Silver Azor) and A or de Bronze (Bronze Azor), will be distributed to the first, second and third best programmes in the categories of Documentary and News Reporting presented at the Festival.

Art. 17 To the winning programmes, in the categories of Documentary and News Reporting, the following prizes will be given by the sponsors of the Festival:

- 1st Prize 15.000 US Dollars
- 2nd Prize 10.000 US Dollars
- 3rd Prize - 5.000 US Dollars

Art. 18 The winning programmes may be shown by RTP Azores, with the obligation to credit the Station that produced it and the prize received at MAT.

Art. 19 Events and situations not included in these Rules and Regulations will be solved by the Organisation.

Reality TV show stays on the air

Media regulators said a controversial 'Reality' TV show can stay on the air because producers agreed to give contestants a daily break from around-the-clock camera observation.

Despite widespread criticism of the show, media commissioners from Germany's 16 states decided that 'Big Brother' which airs nightly on the private RTL II network, does not violate the participants' human dignity - something that is forbidden by Germany's constitution. But they said they would keep the show under observation.

The programme began March 1 showing the daily lives of five men and five women cooped up in a house. They will be monitored for 100 days by cameras and microphones - even in the shower; infrared cameras will tape the two communal bedrooms when the lights are off. The broadcast airs highlights from the residents' day, which is shown nonstop live online.

Under scrutiny by media authorities from the start, the show was allowed to continue broadcasting Tuesday after producers agreed to create a room where contestants can duck out of the camera's eye for an hour each day.

Politicians and officials, including Germany's interior minister, have criticised the programme as offending human dignity. But the chairman of the media commissioners, Wolf-Dieter Ring, said that regulators saw a risk of curtailing free speech guarantees.

Authorized news website in China

Nine Chinese media companies are launching the country's first authorized news website, 21 Dragon News Network. The site, 21DNN for short, will update news 24 hours a day and will set up bureaus around the world. The website is the only Internet company in China licensed to release news. There is a number of Chinese websites that provide news without authorisation, but Chinese officials have warned that the government plans to clamp down on Internet news media companies and put them under the supervision of censorship authorities.

The highly secretive government issued regulations last month to prevent classified information from leaking on to the web and warned all Internet sites to only carry news previously published by state media.



Lufthansa

Special fares by Lufthansa for the conference

All CIRCUM Regional members and others interested to attend the May CR conference in Potsdam should contact their local Lufthansa-office and give to the LH staff the code number GGAIRLHKONG.600 to get special fares.

Lufthansa, the national airline of Germany, offers a comprehensive global network of flights linking Berlin with most major cities throughout the world.

Sad and defeating is the situation in Serbia

The summary of media state in Serbia for the first three months of the year 2000 is very sad and defeating, but more so for actual government than for independent media. Despite enormous damage done to independent media by intensified regime persecution, the strength of pressure imposed on independent and opposition media revealed regime's growing fear

of publicly spoken truth. The case list of repression is, unfortunately, very long and methods used brutal and diverse. They vary from aggressive statements and threats from highest state officials to theft of equipment, application of repressive legislation and abuse of judiciary. In this period the following methods were predominant:

1. Application of the Public Information Act

For the first three months of this year, 7 media houses were fined for violating the Public Information Act, the most repressive media law in Europe: Nedeljne novine, Nezavisna svetlost, Nin, Vecernje novosti, Danas, Srpska rec and TV Studio B. This Act enables media punishing with high fines for arbitrarily defined offences. According to this Act, the whole procedure from the moment the court summons is received must be finished in 24 hours. The same applies to the payment of fines incurred: they have to be paid in 24 hours, also. The application of this Act brought printing shop ABC Grafika, the only privately owned printing shop equipped for printing newspapers in Belgrade, to bankruptcy proceedings at the end of January. It printed several independent newspapers: daily Glas javnosti, and weekly Nin and Vreme. During last autumn's opposition rallies in Serbia, ABC Grafika printed daily bulletin of Alliance for change, the organizer of protests. ABC Grafika was charged for violation of Public Information Act for printing the bulletin, and the total sum of the fines incurred amounted more than 4 million dinars (around 200.000. - DM). At the end of January bankruptcy proceedings were imposed. ABC Grafika suggested to its creditors to come to a settlement and creditors accepted the proposal, but the settlement was refused. The bankruptcy administrator came to ABC Grafika premises accompanied by armed workers of private agency for protection. In the days to follow, they even fired guns above heads of ABC Grafika workers. Soon all 284 employees were fired, which in the country where to have a job is privilege, means literally hunger for their families. The example of ABC Grafika shows the ultimate aim of the Act: to ruin financially undesirable media through fines incurred until complete closure and seizure of their property. Independent newspapers are free to choose among state controlled printing shops.

2. Theft of equipment

Robbers visited premises of daily paper Blic in Kragujevac and also part of the equipment was stolen from Novine Vranjske. This period has been marked by two cases of transmitting equipment theft belonging to Belgrade opposition TV station Studio B. First of all, in the middle of January, strange thieves took from Studio B transmitter on Kosmaj the part of equipment that cut the program for 2 million of viewers in central part of Serbia. At the

Media repression



same time, they left the equipment whose theft would not cut the program, but could much easier be sold. At the beginning of March even more bizarre incident occurred. Group of thieves, wearing Serbian police camouflage uniforms, broke in Studio B transmitter on Torlak in Belgrade. They broke part of equipment and took part of it with the. Two workers of Studio B were severely beaten. Those responsible for the above actions have never been found. Studio B is Belgrade city TV under the control of Serbian Renewal Movement and the only opposition TV that can be seen in Belgrade. In accordance with agreements made by Serbian opposition parties, Studio B opened its program for other opposition parties, and it also broadcasts regularly programs made by independent producers, such as VIN, ANEM, TV Mreza and others. Beside many months of disruption of their broadcasts, thefts of expensive equipment and charges for the violation of the Public Information Act, in this period Studio B was faced with frequency charges also, which will be referred to later in the text.

3. The rhetoric of hatred

The statement made at the end of last year by Yugoslav Left (party led by Mira Markovic) that Yugoslavia needed a decantamination of the media and journalists was followed by more and more numerous aggressive statements and threats to independent media by the senior state officials. Representatives of independent grew accustomed to be referred to as traitors, NATO spies and mercenaries, and vocabulary

used resembles very much to that used during Stalin's dictatorship in the thirties.

The situation culminated after the murder of Yugoslav Minister of Defense, Pavle Bulatovic, when Vojislav Seselj, the leader of Radical Party and vice-president of Serbian government, accused journalists of independent media to be accomplices of this murder, and threatened them with physical liquidation. This kind of threat has to be taken into account in Serbia very seriously, and still unsolved murder of journalist and owner of two independent newspapers, Slavko Curuvija, is spreading its tragic shadow on new calls for lynch of independent journalists.

4. Abuse of judiciary

The end of February was marked by the case of Vecernje novosti takeover. Populist daily paper with the greatest circulation in the country was taken by the Federal public company Borba. The main rehearsal for this takeover happened in November 1998, when Borba, through the decree issued by Federal government, swallowed 11 companies. (More or less similar methods were applied to newspaper Nasa borba, Radio B92, and even big pharmaceutical company ICN Galenika). This takeover is unconstitutional and illegal, and in most of the cases the Commercial Court in charge denied already formalized privatization. By this takeover Vecernje novosti got new management and rigid censorship, and Federal public company Borba daily paper with the biggest circulation in the country and its property.

5. Abuse of monopoly on frequencies

March brought aggressive attack on the part of the Federal Ministry of Telecommunications towards independent electronic media, in accordance with the promise given by Federal Minister Ivan Markovic (senior official of JUL), that in the year 2000, order would finally be established within the realm of frequencies. Telecommunications regulations were already frequently used by the regime whenever it wanted to cover purely political reasons (for banning media) with technical ones. Federal Ministry of Telecommunications announced a competition for the assignment of frequencies in February 1998, using this opportunity to reject stations of its choice.

Number of stations got necessary permissions and rejected stations sent required additional documentation and continued to broadcast the program waiting for an answer to their application. Ministry did not find it necessary to answer for two years, tolerating their practically illegal status, and waited for the right moment to (mis)use the situation.

That moment evidently came in March, when in the period of only several days following electronic media houses were banned, their equipment carried away: RTV Pozega, Radio Tir and TV Nemanja from Cuprija, Radio Bum 93 from Pozarevac, Belgrade Radio Golf, TV Piroć and TV Kraljevo. Transmitters of TV Piroć and TV Kraljevo were opened by force, without prior announcement, and the equipment taken away, only sheet of paper was left with the signature of Federal Inspector for Telecommunications. Except for Radio Tir and Radio Golf, that did not have news program, all other banned stations had their own news program, critical to the regime.

At the same time Federal Minister announced that more than 200 radio and TV stations in Serbia owe more than 120 million dinars (around 6 million DM) for frequency charges and that they have to pay until March 31st. Frequency charges have to be paid by everybody: stations having necessary licenses, those who don't and also stations that have their licenses from an earlier period. The latter are so called city radio and TV stations that got their licenses and frequencies in the period before opposition came into power on local elections in 1996. That is the case of Studio B and majority of city TV stations in Serbia. Ministry demanded from Studio B to pay the amount of almost 11 million dinars (around 500.000.-DM) for frequency charges for the period of two years. City government decided to pay, ignoring irregularity and illegality of the whole procedure, not wanting to risk the closure of the only opposition TV in Belgrade.

In the moment when it seemed that all independent electronic media in Serbia will be banned and their equipment carried away to

unknown destination, massive street protests occurred in the cities in which media were banned. Those street demonstrations sent clear message to the regime that closure of local media will not be calmly tolerated. Young and ambitious, city TV stations in number of Serbian cities are important not only because they managed to gain the confidence of their viewers, but in some regions they are the only alternative to state TV RTS, as is the case in Piroć.

Faced with the massive protests in number of cities, Ministry suspended the offensive for the moment, accepted the payment from TV Kraljevo for frequency charges, agreed to return the equipment, and TV Kraljevo will start working again very soon. Other banned media also do not agree with the situation and are resolute to start working again as soon as possible. To be continued as the representative of TV Piroć said.

Conclusion

The above division of methods of repression used by Serbian regime was made only for purposes of clarifying the subject thoroughly and making the survey easier to follow. The point of all methods used is pure misuse of force, only sometimes it appeared in its naked, raw form, and sometimes it is covered with transparent veils of legal regulations. The cases of repression described are just the most characteristic and the most important ones. It is almost impossible to quote all cases of repression in this period, because it was marked by synchronized attacks on independent media with full force and with all accessible means.

The events followed each other so dramatically, that in one moment it looked not only that the regime is preparing itself for the local elections, but for something totally different, also.

Strong and decisive street protests succeeded in stopping for the moment the wave of repression. As for the latter, nobody has any doubts that the same saying may be applied. To be continued. If you try and imagine the application of similar methods on all other segments of social life in Serbia, you will maybe be able to understand the depths of crises of Serbian society and the tragic position of its citizens.

Ljiljana Breberina
Belgrade



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Around Europe
**Festivals,
Workshops
and More**

May

10-14: 3rd Meeting of Balkan TV Presidents/General Directors (Antalya, Turkey)

11-12: Interactive TV Advertising 2000-Europe (Paris)

14-17: 2nd Int'l Contest of Young Singers Mladi Upi-The Young Hopes (Radenci, Slovenia)

17-18: 3rd annual Int'l conference on News Technology (Mayfair Intercontinental Hotel, London)

30 May-2 June: CIRCUM Regional Conference (Potsdam)

June

1-5: World Television Forum (Montreux)

2-6: ECO International TV Festival:Ecology-Culture (Ohrid)

4-7: 37th Int'l Television Festival Golden Prague (Prague)



28 June-2 July: Atlantic Television Festival-MAT 2000 (Sao Miguel, Azores).

September

4-8: Le Rendez-Vous 2000. French TV Screenings (Saint-Tropez).

8-12: Widescreen Festival (Amsterdam)

October

3-7: 11th Rassegna Internazionale del Cinema Archeologico (Rovereto, Italy)

Circum Report

The "CIRCUM Report" is a monthly publication of CIRCUM Regional, the European Association of Public Regional TV Stations - available on the CR Internet site and coming to CR member stations and personnel either through E-mail or as an A-4 size printed newsletter, through the CR General Secretariat from Ljubljana. The French version of the CIRCUM Report is conceived and published by the Strasbourg Secretariat with support from the Region Alsace, the Conseil General du Bas-Rhin and the City of Strasbourg.

Director of publications is Marie-Paule Urban, CR Deputy Secretary General (Strasbourg). Editor is Lefty Kongalides, member of the CR Executive Committee (Thessaloniki). The "CIRCUM Report" is planned and edited in ERT 3, Thessaloniki, Greece. Phone (3031) 299611-610 fax (3031) 299 655. E-mail : ert3pl@compulink.gr

All member stations are considered as potential contributors for this publication, with stories about new and innovative ideas, co-productions, exchanges, modern technologies, etc. Especially welcome are short stories and one-liners.

*Sony and Eutelsat are the official CIRCUM Regional sponsors

The second CIRCOM Regional Executive Committee meeting held on March 20 through the special CR chatroom created on the Internet proved at least two things: its money and time saver and also an immediate and effective way of communication. Present were Reimar Allerdt, Boris Bergant, Marie-Paule Urban, Barbara Lewandowska, Sergei Erofeev, Roel Dijkhuis, Lefty Kongalides and Rick Thompson. Here are the minutes of the meeting as summarized by Marjana Rupnik:

- The minutes of the EC meeting in Brussels held on February 21, 2000 were approved without further remarks.

- Boris Bergant informed the members that the ISPO now finally confirmed the funds for the 99 and 2000 Prix CR category; in addition it offered some funds for future projects, which have to be discussed in the Potsdam conference. This discussion needs to be integrated into the conference programme within the framework of the already existing workshops. As far as the funding of conference participation for people

Money and time saver chatroom

from SEE and EE countries is concerned, the decision was taken that it be co-ordinated by the General Secretariat in Ljubljana upon receipt of a final list of sponsors. All national co-ordinators will be informed about this possibility by April 15, 2000 and will be requested to name some relevant names to be invited (and covered the costs of accommodation and/or travel) in addition to the regular participants from the member stations.

No decisions were taken in this regard. The Secretary General informed the EC that Mr. David Lowen, the Prix co-ordinator worries about the low number of programmes submitted so far, yet experience from previous years has shown that programmes are usually submitted very late.

Rick Thompson reported that the arrangements for the Training Workshop are running according to plan. The team of trainers and technical staff is complete. The ORB will provide airport transport and a welcome reception. For now, 33 applications from Albania, Moldova, Germany, Hungary, Montenegro, Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland, Croatia, Poland, Yugoslavia and the UK have been submitted. The Council of Europe has submitted their contribution of 7,600 Euros and is confident that CR will be able to get some additional funds from their Stability Pact fund for the participants from SE Europe.

- The EC confirmed in Potsdam the associate member status for some stations from Kosovo and Serbia, which are not up to fulfil the financial conditions of full membership. The present members agreed that these associate members are allowed to participate in the training workshop, as well as to submit programmes to the Prix.

The 7th Co.Pe.A.M. annual conference in Casablanca

The Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audio-visual Operators (Co.Pe.A.M.) organizes the 7th edition of its annual conference in Casablanca, April 25-29, at the invitation of 2M, Morocco TV Channel. This year's meeting has a particular significance. It must be able to provide the opportunity to introduce a number of proposals and actions that are supposed to be concretely dynamic and credible, in order to have the Mediterranean Audio-visual Industry placed at the level it deserves. As the organizers underline The phenomenon of globalization of the Media and communication industries in Industry, inscribed within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, can and ought to play an important role in spreading common cultures and identities.

Int I Festival of archaeological Film in Rovereto

The Museo Civico di Rovereto, in conjunction with the magazine Archeologia Viva organizes the XI International Festival of Archaeological Film, which this year will take place October 3-7. The participation in the XI Festival is open to any film in the fields of archaeological, historical, palethnological and anthropological research and to any documentary aimed at preserving and valuing the cultural heritage. Because of the increasing number of participants, a selection of the films to be shown during the Festival will be necessary. Anyway, all the works will be listed in the museum data-bank. The Festival, in conjunction with the magazine Archeologia Viva, also promotes and values the documentaries through a variety of cultural, scientific and educational events. All films selected for Rassegna can receive the award Citta di Rovereto-Archeologia Viva given by the public to the most appreciated film. This year the main theme of the Festival will be: Origin and development of the European culture and civilization, but this does not exclude the participation of works on different subjects. Interested parties should bear in mind the following points:

1. Send the entry form, completely filled in, with a short synopsis of the film.
2. Enclose a VHS of the film
3. Enclose (if the film is not Italian) the complete film text (including interviews, dialogues etc.) corresponding to the VHS cassette, preferably in English or in Italian or, if this would not be possible, in the original language
4. Send at least three photos, frames or slides concerning the documentary

The entry form and the enclosed material have to arrive at the Museum by May 8 to enable organizers to select the works for the Festival and to publish a catalogue. The participation in the Film Festival implies understanding and agreement of all the regulations. After the selection, the films have to be sent to the Museum in one of the professional formats (Betacam, Betacam SP, Standard PAL.)



The Balkan Pegasus award goes to ERT 3

Greece's ERT3 was the recipient of the Pegasus award, for the best TV program of the Balkan TV Magazine series in 1999. The award goes to the program AIDS in the world: after the hurricane written and narrated by Kostas Tsarouhas, which was also turned into ten 45 - minute episodes covering the issue, in detail, around the world. The prize is a creation of the Bulgarian sculptor Ivan Kulinsky. The annual award goes to the best of more than 70 programs proposed by the participating public TV stations of Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Turkey, Serbia, FYRO Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Greece. The Pegasus award ceremony was part of the 38th meeting of the Balkan TV Magazine member stations held in Tirana, March 14-15, at the invitation of TVSH. Present were the representatives of Romania (Corina Cosma), Bulgaria (Rossinka Radoikova), FYRO Macedonia (Stalin Lozanovsky), Albania (Engel Ndocaj and Mira Shuteriqi) and Greece (Lefty Kongalides and Petros Yianatsis). Non present members were TV stations of Moldova, Turkey and Serbia. RTSH General Eduard Mazi and Director of the Albanian TV Ilir Resnja met with their guests, who were also welcomed at the City Hall by Tirana's mayor Albert Brojka. Next meeting of the Balkan TV Magazine members will be held in Antalya, Turkey, May 10-14.

Amsterdam hosts the 6th Int I Widescreen Festival

The 6th Int I Widescreen Festival Le Nombre d'Or will be held in Amsterdam, September 8-12, as part of IBC 2000. Popular, quality programs, shot in widescreen formats are promoted by the Festival. With the advent of DVD and the continuing evolution in HD, widescreen has become the new format of television. The festival is open to all genres of programs shot in standard definition (525 or 625) widescreen or in High Definition (all formats) and is also open to programs shot on Super 16 and 35 mm film formats. Programs are only screened on video however. IBC, the International Broadcasting Convention, is the world's leading electronic media event. The exhibition and conference now attract over 38,000 visitors and 700 exhibitors from 120 countries. Deadline for nominations is Friday 19 May. Deadline for submission of Festival Screening Tape: Monday 31 July. The awards will be presented on the evening of Sunday 10 September. Entry forms may be downloaded from www.ibc.org