

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS

*Media for Democracy Programme*

# MEDIA AND THE SEPTEMBER 1997 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA

*Prepared for the International Federation of Journalists  
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## INTRODUCTION

Late in August 1997, Bojana Humar and Stephen Schwartz were asked by the International Federation of Journalists, acting at the request of the Council of Europe, to go immediately to Bosnia-Herzegovina to conduct an on-site survey of the role of local media and to assist journalists in the reporting of the municipal elections held on September 13-14. These elections were supervised by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO under the Dayton Agreement that ended the war in that embattled country.

Over two weeks, the two journalists traveled throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina -- i.e., both the territory of the so-called Muslim Bosniak-Croat "B-H Federation," hereinafter "Federation," and that of the "Republika Srpska" or ethnic Serbian zone, hereinafter "Republic." They interviewed dozens of newspaper editors and publishers and radio-TV news editors. While the following report is not a systematic analysis of media coverage of the municipal elections, it clearly demonstrates the achievements and problems of media in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Media issues are front-line issues in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnians themselves blame media for two key factors in the coming of the war: nationalist agitation by journalists (most of them, it must be said, outside Bosnia-Herzegovina) before the outbreak of fighting, and media passivity (disguised as "neutrality") in the face of approaching violence. But it is also a matter of pride for the Sarajevo government that no censorship was imposed on its territory during the war.

With the end of fighting, the struggle for civility, leading to reintegration of the three Bosnian nations, has been transferred to media. Under the Dayton Agreement, the country remains divided between the "Federation" and the "Republic." In both zones, nationalist politicians and the military dominate society, although both these social strata are riven with disputes between "hard-liners" and "moderates," especially in the "Republic" and in the Croat enclave within the "Federation." Since the elections, we have watched on global TV as NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) troops have seized the "hard-line" Serbian Radio-Television -- (Srpska Radio Televizija -- SRT) transmitters in Pale, the "official" capital of the "Republic." However, it is important to understand that this is merely the most-visible front among many.

Accurate and fair reporting, free of hate speech, is the standard by which the hopes of Bosnians for return to a secure and prosperous peace are judged. Hate speech is a serious problem throughout Bosnian media, but especially in the Croat-controlled enclave and in the "Republic." To cite a few of the more obnoxious examples: a Muslim Bosniak funeral procession in Mostar was labeled by Croat media as an attempt by Muslim Bosniak extremists to assault Croat children at a carnival; insults such as *balija* for Muslim Bosniaks and *bre* for Serbs frequently appear in Croat media; some Bosniak media have printed articles referring to Croats and Serbs as *Vlah*, an obscure historical term that has acquired an insulting character. "Republic" media is replete with declarations that Serbs and non-Serbs can never again live together, with or without the specific vocabulary of ethnic incitement.

The majority of ordinary people in both the "Federation" and the "Republic" want the Dayton Agreement to work; they oppose the "hard-liners" and their schemes for a permanent division of the country. Every day our colleagues face the challenge of serving as pioneers in the reconstruction of a modern society based on the primacy of law and on mutual respect. This is visible above all in the fact that monitoring of media is the main, if not the only, means the international community has of judging the situation within the communities -- both the three ethnic groups, in the larger sense, and the towns and villages, as a microcosm.

The two IFJ monitors used the IFJ Election Coverage manual, texts prepared by the European Institute for the Media and guidelines and materials provided by the OSCE. The IFJ would like to thank all those journalists and representatives of NGOs and international organisations who took time to discuss with the IFJ monitors and who helped make the mission a success.

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the ex-Yugoslav context, including both Bosnian entities, "municipal" and "municipality" does not refer, as it does in the U.S., U.K., and some other Western countries, to city government, but, rather, to the "municipality" as a basic political unit comparable to the "county" in the U.S., "regional authority" in the U.K., "commune" in Italy or "préfecture" in France.

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**Brussels, December 1997**

## **I. B-H FEDERATION**

### **1. RTV B-H**

Editor-in-Chief: Senad Kamenica

Radio Televizija Bosne i Hercegovine (Radio Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina, known as RTV Sarajevo until the war) is the official public network, ostensibly serving the whole of B-H, both the "Federation" and the "Republic." It was founded, pre-war, by the Republic of B-H Assembly. In spite of its name, RTV B-H is strongly associated with Muslim Bosniak interests and has a tendency to support the ruling party in the Muslim Bosniak zone of the "Federation," the Party of Democratic Action or Stranka Demokratska Akcije, hereinafter SDA. However, it has, to a degree, tried to preserve a multiethnic outlook

The station is supposed to be self-supporting, through advertising revenues, but this income was sharply reduced during and after the war. During the war it broadcast every day, in spite of the risk its staff underwent, and the damage its infrastructure suffered.

Televizija B-H first broadcast on July 25, 1961, and produced its first local newscast on February 5, 1971. It produces all types of programming, and was widely praised for its coverage of the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo. Before the war, it transmitted over two networks, but now is carried on only one, averaging 16 hours daily. In 1996 it began broadcasting via satellite to Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Radio B-H is the oldest radio station in B-H, having commenced transmission on April 10, 1945. It expanded to an all-day schedule in 1961. Before the war it, like its TV counterpart, broadcast on two networks, and has now been reduced to one. On medium wave transmissions it covers the greater part of former Yugoslavia, and parts of Europe. It produces all kinds of programmes, including its own music recordings.

The combined television and radio services of RTV B-H cover 60% of the territory of the country. The firm has 1,000 employees: 150 in the News Department, of which 54 journalists (35 assigned full time, the rest fully paid but not working full time.) The Independent Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Nezavisna Unija Profesionalna Novinara, hereafter NUPN), of which editor-in-chief Senad Kamenica is a member of the executive board, is present.

Ownership is unclear because the enterprise is state owned, but not state directed. In addition, the state budget ceased to exist after the Dayton Agreement. Advertising provides RTV B-H with its sole financing but funding is inadequate, as demonstrated by a five-month delay in payment of salaries.



## **Election Coverage**

Before the 1997 municipal elections, RTV B-H produced guidelines, based on OSCE media rules. RTV B-H also created a special joint radio-TV reporting team especially for these elections. Out of their 16 hours-per-day schedule, about one hour per day was dedicated for the elections. RTV B-H made a public appeal for all parties and candidates to co-operate in their coverage, which appeared after the evening news.

Production had already begun a month before, and around 60 party and candidate applicants appeared. RTV B-H did not produce any of their own election commentaries or opinion polls, and an adversarial approach was avoided.

## **Free Access**

RTV B-H prepared 10-minute presentations for each party that applied and 5 minutes for independent candidates. An interview format, presenting a profile of each candidate, included participation by on-camera reporters. OSCE projection of voter strengths were used to decide the order of appearances.

Every Monday, beginning August 8, RTV B-H broadcast a weekly electoral review of 45 minutes' duration, covering news conferences, party meetings, press releases, etc.

There were no candidates' debates for the local elections, because the number of candidates would have required too much allocation of time to ensure fairness. Only members of the B-H parliament were covered in main news reports; in a separate feature, indicated by a musical motif or jingle, RTV B-H presented pre-election campaign with notification that it did not involve news reportage as such.

## **Paid Coverage**

RTV B-H issued a second public appeal, asking for the commercial purchase of time by parties. The parties supplied schedules of meetings to be covered, and also paid for transmission of their video spots, which had an average duration of 2-3 minutes. For instance, paid coverage of the SDA party congress took up practically one whole afternoon, just few days before the elections. This particular item was the subject of criticism by some Bosnians, who said it demonstrated partiality to SDA by RTV B-H in a manner somewhat reminiscent of political reporting under the former, one-party Communist regime.

## **Voter Education**

With OSCE help, voter education advertisements and video spots were broadcast, lasting from a half to one minute. RTV B-H was required to present these spots, and OSCE determined when each particular advertisement would appear. They were broadcast at least three times daily.

## **Sources of Information**

Raw material for reportage was taken from state agency BH Press and party's press releases. RTV B-H had also their own reporters. Parties did not publish their political programmes.

## **Influence and Pressure**

There were no real pressures noted.

## **2. Open Broadcast Network Television (OBN)**

Editor-in-Chief: Konstantin Jovanovic

This television network has its production centre in Sarajevo, and started broadcasting about one year ago with financial assistance from some fifteen donor countries and the European Union. Its goal is to establish a pluralistic and independent medium in B-H, to overcome the ethnic blockage of communication. Its founders intend that it become, in time, the main B-H TV network. It is currently best known for its news programme TV INFO.

## **Election Coverage**

OBN did not develop any special guidelines, but they created a special team, although there are only a total of 35 employees, of which 12 are journalists. They did not produce opinion polls. About 1/6 of the total programming was dedicated to the election campaign.

## **Free Access**

Three times per day they broadcast a regular programme, Candidates Speak, lasting 3 minutes. In it, candidates were asked their views on how refugees may return to their homes, how they imagine a post-Dayton Bosnia and their broader message to the electorate.

Every Monday they broadcast a 45 minute programme called Electoral Chronicle with a survey of the activities of the political parties in the previous week. In each of these programmes a representative of the OSCE was present to explain the voting procedures.

They, like all the other media, broadcast the OSCE video spots for free. In addition, each evening around 9 p. m. they broadcast a reportage of 20-25 minutes on the Dayton Agreement and its aftermath.

They visited all regions, cantons and municipalities (frequently meeting economists rather than politicians), reporting on the achievements of the ruling party in each area (new construction, rebuilding, the numbers and ethnicity of returned refugees, aid to war invalids, unemployment, problems of pensioners).

Together with the Serb Civic Council of B-H and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in B-H, OBN also produced 5 documentaries on human rights in B-H. They dealt with freedom of movement, the return of refugees, and the right to private property, following the Dayton Agreement.

OBN Television also broadcast a talk show called Telering in which 4-5 candidates appeared at the same time. They managed to cover all of the bigger political parties, although the main Muslim Bosniak leaders, President Alija Izetbegovic (SDA) and Haris Silajdzic, the popular leader of the so-called Party for B-H (Stranka za B-H) did not appear.

### **Paid Coverage**

There was no paid coverage, because the enterprise presently lacks a bank account -- one of many problems related to its international backing, and which have caused dissension among its supporters as well as its competitors in B-H. Without a finance structure they were unable to bill political parties for services.

### **Voter Education**

They broadcast all the OSCE materials.

### **Sources of Information**

OBN used the independent Croatian news agency STINA, from Split, the Alternative Information Network, the state news agency BH Press, and the independent ONASA agency created by the newspaper Oslobodjenje.

### **Influence and Pressure**

No pressures from political parties was registered, rather, there was indifference.

## **3. Independent TV "Studio 99"**

Editor-in-Chief: Adil Kulenovic

The privately-owned Nezavisna Televizija "Studio 99" was established in 1995. It has various information-documentary programmes including the newscast Oko 22, featuring interviews conducted by the editor-in-chief. It is critical of the ruling party SDA, and vocal in its promotion of the idea of a civic, united and multinational B-H.

### **Election Coverage**

No special team or desk was created to cover the elections because the staff is too small. It counts 65 people, of who 23 are reporters for all beats. Of the overall payroll, 33 are paid only 85 DEM per month. This reflects both the absence of legal labour standards and of trade-union representation.

Guidelines were developed according to international rules, the IFJ Guidelines, and the Media and Elections booklet of the European Institute for Media.

They formerly conducted street polling, but not since July, because of accusations of manipulation. They also argue that people hesitate to publicly declare who they intend to vote for.

### **Free Access**

Free access time included debates and an evening roundup. Debates took place at 8 p.m., an hour and a half after Dnevnik (Daily Journal), the main news show. Six municipalities were covered. In debates journalists asked about local policy issues including unemployment, refugees, taxes, investment, etc. as well as about the broader issues of the B-H constitution. No abstract propaganda or slogans were included.

In addition, NTV "Studio 99", when reporting on major events and breaking news, includes reactions from the political parties if such is appropriate. Each night, a round table was broadcast with representatives of all the electoral groupings answering questions from reporters. All were provided equal time to respond.

Mr. Kulenovic observed that in the 1996 elections, the bigger parties created additional small "ghost" or "puppet" parties. These offered a false picture of pluralism while allowing the major parties to control more than one party spot in media. For example, the SDA created Stranka za B-H, the Party for B-H of Haris Silajdzic. In dealing with media, SDA and Stranka za B-H appeared as if they were separate groupings, when in fact both followed the line of President Izetbegovic.

Therefore, NTV "Studio 99" decided this year to allow access on the basis of coalition electoral lists and not individual parties. Thus the representative of the Coalition for a United and Democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina (Koalicija za Cjelovitu I Demokratsku BiH, hereinafter Koalicija) which is led by SDA and includes three other "parties", was allowed one representative rather than one for each constituent of the coalition.

Similarly, there were no phone-in programmes this year, because last year the big parties packed the switchboards with their callers.

On the last Friday before voting, during an electoral period of media silence such as is required in many European countries, B-H included, NTV "Studio 99" interviewed domestic and foreign journalists to discuss the meaning and function of the elections.

### **Paid Coverage**

Advertising time and video spots were offered in a paid basis. One hour broadcasting for instance cost 5,000 DEM. There was little success in selling time. NTV "Studio 99" only received applications for a few spots and some hour-long programmes promoting the major parties, which have adequate funds. Other parties which lack

financial resources could not pay for many video spots.

On voting day NTV "Studio 99" sent a team of one reporter and one cameraman to each of the six municipalities they cover. In addition, they have correspondents in Banja Luka (in the "Republic") and in the Croat-controlled enclave of Western Herzegovina. Elsewhere NTV "Studio 99" use ITN and other foreign services. NTV "Studio 99" cannot go to Pale (in the "Republic"), except in the company of SFOR troops, but they do work with services in Serbia (BK Telekom television and Beta news agency).

### **Voter Education**

NTV "Studio 99" broadcast OSCE voter education material free for three months. They dedicated 1 hour and 40 minutes out of 18 hours per day to voter education information.

### **Influence and Pressure**

No real pressures or influences on editorial policy were reported.

## **4. Independent TV Hayat**

Programme Editor: Alma Memic

Independent TV Hayat is a private, commercially based station founded at the beginning of 1992. It emphasises an affirmation of Muslim Bosniak culture, but all social and ethnic categories have a place in its programming. It transmits 17 hours a day, mostly documentaries, entertainment, sport and movies. It also relays the Voice of America. It employs 85 people, 76 of them full-time.

### **Election Coverage**

Independent TV Hayat created a special joint radio-TV team especially for these elections and developed guidelines for covering elections. About 30% of the programming was dedicated to the elections. They produced several street polls on voting preferences.

### **Free Access**

All parties that run for the local elections in Sarajevo (the area this television station covers) had equal access to their programming. Independent TV Hayat gave 15 minutes to each of the smaller political parties and 45 minutes to the major ones, after the main news show. They also produced a half-hour programme called Profile of the Party, which involved indirect questioning of candidates. Independent TV Hayat produced a series of talk shows, Elections 97, with live phone-ins by viewers, and created a special time period in which they reported on all the activities of parties (press conferences, meetings).

## **Paid Coverage**

All political parties were free to purchase the time, but Koalicija, the Coalition headed by the ruling SDA, was the main purchaser. Independent TV Hayat demanded payment in advance, as they had great difficulties with collection of fees after the elections last year.

## **Voter Education**

OSCE advertisements and video spots were broadcast, but Independent TV Hayat also broadcast interviews with OSCE representatives explaining how to vote.

## **Influence and Pressure**

There was no pressure on journalists or editors.

## **5. Independent Radio ZID**

Editor-in-Chief: Nebojsa Jovanovic

Nezavisni Radio ZID (Independent Radio ZID, or "Wall"), a private local station. It began transmitting in December 1992, during the war, and demonstrates considerable creative and journalistic freedom. It is especially known for its phone-in programmes, coverage of culture, education, sport, and its children's programmes. Its own newscast has been cut down, to make way for borrowed programmes from the BBC, Radio Free Europe (RFE), and the Voice of America. It participates in a multi-media structure of the same name.

## **Election Coverage**

No special teams for the elections were established. However, Radio ZID repeatedly faxed the parties, inviting them to participate in their programmes.

## **Free Access**

ZID presented a special daily programme from 4 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Access was granted to all the parties. All press conferences and releases were covered in the programme. They also broadcast interviews with phone-ins, each taking up the full half-hour time.

## **Paid Coverage**

ZID broadcast the standard party jingles and video spots.

## **Voter Education**

The OSCE voter education material was broadcast free, many times daily.

## **Sources of Information**

They received releases from the Stabilization Forces (SFOR), the Office of the High Representative, the OSCE, the "Federation" government ministries, and the UN Police Task Force.

## **Influence and Pressure**

They have not experienced undue pressures, influences or threats.

## **6. RTV Mostar**

Editor-in-Chief: Alija Behram

Radio Mostar (East Mostar) is a local public station, constituting, with the television of the same name, RTV Mostar. It broadcast for the first time in September 1992, during the war, and promotes the reintegration of the city, which is divided between Croat (West) and Muslim Bosniak (East) authorities. Although close to the Muslim Bosniak local government, it maintains a degree of independence. Radio Mostar takes its main newscast from RTV B-H, and carries Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America. It can be heard in Mostar and around Herzegovina.

Televizija Mostar (East Mostar) is part of RTV Mostar, a local station, funded by public contribution. It came on air in September 1995, and broadcasts information programmes, newscasts, interviews and documentaries. Televizija Mostar is an affiliate of the Open Broadcast Network and carries OBN's joint programming including some of the election coverage programmes produced in Sarajevo and the news programme TV INFO.

Radio Mostar broadcasts 20 hours daily of which 4-5 hours involve their own in-house production.

## **Election Coverage**

A letter was sent to all political parties in both Mostar sectors, two months before the elections, requesting suggestions on how they should plan broadcasts. Unfortunately, nobody responded, so they created their own programme. They also sent a letter to the OSCE media commission, of which Alija Behram, their editor in chief, is a member, asking OSCE to help encourage and organize party involvement in round tables.

They have been trained in election coverage by the BBC broadcast school in Sarajevo and have been financially assisted by the international community. They also have good relations with Internews.

## **Free Access**

RTV Mostar produced 3-minute broadcasts reporting on each party and candidate in regard to the basic issues facing listeners: refugees, the economy, the constitutional system after Dayton, etc. Questionnaires were sent to all parties, but not all of them

responded to appear on TV. After 15 days of no response, they sent another letter, backed by the OSCE. The deadline was on September 8 -- the day before the mission's visit -- and a summary of the responses they received was broadcast in the main news show Dnevnik (Daily Journal). They received eight responses out of 12 requests for participation. The Croat government party, the Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica -- HDZ), said they did not need media help, and the Muslim Bosniak government party SDA also expressed a lack of interest.

One round table had been organised prior to the mission's visit on September 9. A second one was broadcast that day. The first was on the economy, the second dealing with return of refugees. Both roundtables were broadcast with audience participation and were sent to OBN for rebroadcast elsewhere in B-H.

Dnevnik, the daily news show, had a special election segment each night. All party press conferences were covered. They also produced weekly surveys for OBN.

RTV Mostar did about 13 street interviews, especially with refugees, who represent 2/3 of the people living in East Mostar. They mainly asked about expectations regarding the municipal elections, perspectives on the future, and Dayton. They asked if refugees believed they would return to their homes, and who the respondents believed would make necessary changes.

### **Paid Coverage**

A special team was created for marketing coordination and production of video spots. For instance, one second cost 3 DEM. As with other media this year, they demanded payment in advance. Last year OSCE promised to subsidize political broadcasting, but did not. Only two coalitions and two parties asked for paid coverage.

### **Voter Education**

Free OSCE voter education materials were broadcast.

### **Sources of Information**

Aside from their own reporters, they use many sources but mainly ONASA.

### **Influence and Pressure**

Given the continuing tension between Croat and Bosniak Muslim authorities, as well as the populace itself on both sides of the enclave line, it is not surprising to find that while RTV Mostar journalists have not experienced pressure from SDA and other politicians in East Mostar, they are completely blocked from entering or reporting on Croat-controlled West Mostar. This is, frankly, an outrageous and unacceptable situation, both from the point of view of fulfillment of the Dayton Agreement and with regard to the right of these journalists to fulfill their professional duties as conceived by IFJ and other such bodies.



The simple reality is that the Croat administration has imposed a situation of media terrorism in West Mostar. On the day of our visit (September 9) RTV Mostar personnel were still unsure about their safety when covering the voting itself. They were planning to meet with OSCE to ask for backup, and they also waited for OBN to schedule coordinating activities.

In addition, HDZ refused to notify them or otherwise allow their participation in press conferences. This can only be considered a form of censorship.

## **7. HTV Mostar**

Editor-in-Chief: Milan Sutalo

Hrvatska Televizija Mostar (Croat TV Mostar) was established in July 1994. Established with both state and private funds, it reflects the HDZ party line. It is based in West Mostar and covers Western Herzegovina. HTV Mostar broadcasts 24 hours per day of which only 2-3 hours is their own production. The remainder is taken from satellite services, but, overwhelmingly, from the state network of the Croatian Republic. The station is affiliated with Croatian State Television (Hrvatska Radio I Televizija -- HRT), although its local operating budget is financed exclusively privately, by advertisements.

Of its workforce, which includes 9 reporters, only some 20 clerical and related employees are paid. All the rest work on a voluntary basis.

### **Election Coverage**

HTV Mostar did not prepare any election guidelines, but decided to cover political meetings and press conferences in their main news show, Dnevnik. They received requests for coverage only from HDZ and the Party of Croat Right (Hrvatska Stranka Prava -- HSP), a "historic" party strong in the 19th century. No special team was organised for the elections, because the station is too small.

They have their own production studio, but have been using materials prepared by HRT and elsewhere.

### **Free Access**

Only HDZ participated in a 10 minute candidate interview segment broadcast as a supplement, with no phone-in. Mr. Sutalo stated that HDZ was the sole party that expressed interest in such a programme.

HTV Mostar can only be described as an "ultra-nationalist" institution. While the mission was not surprised to find "Federation" and Bosnian Republic flags and symbols noticeably absent from West Mostar, the furnishings in the HTV Mostar office included a large statue of Christ, to emphasize the station's anti-Muslim stance, and a framed portrait of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman with his defense minister, Gojko Susak.

In one of several further aspects of our visit to HTV Mostar that revealed the unacceptable practices of this medium, the members of the mission were later informed by Ms. Frederike Seidel, Press Officer at the OSCE delegation in Mostar, that HTV Mostar had received a request for similar access from the SDA-based (Muslim Bosniak) Coalition for a United and Democratic B-H (Koalicija), but they refused the request. The grounds for the rejection, according to an HTV Mostar technician, was that the Koalicija letter had been written in the Bosniak recension of the Serbo-Bosno-Croatian language, i.e. "it was written in Bosniak language and we did not understand it."

While it is certainly true that significant differences exist between the three recensions of the language, and that the Croatian Republic authorities have made a particular effort to impose a "reformed" vocabulary and orthography on media under their influence, it is ridiculous to suggest that a Croat cannot understand a letter written in Bosniak. Such a statement as was made to Ms. Seidel constitutes an impudent provocation to the international community.

### **Paid Coverage**

No interest in soliciting paid coverage was showed.

### **Influence and Pressure**

HTV Mostar operates without party influence and pressure, except insofar as it is a propaganda organ for HDZ and therefore cannot be considered a normal, professional journalistic institution such as exists elsewhere in the world -- including in the rest of the "Federation" and even in the "Republic." Indeed, the situation in the Croat enclave of Herzegovina is in some ways much worse than that in the Serb-controlled "Republic," although the latter has received more attention from SFOR as well as foreign media.

By contrast with the Serb "Republic," in which independent media exists in some parts and under restraint in others, the establishment of any independent media in the Croat enclave is illegal.

Mr. Sutalo treated the mission to an extended series of complaints against the international community, which he alleges to be "anti-Croatian," as well as against the Bosniak Muslim media and authorities on the other side of the enclave line.

He noted at the beginning of the mission's visit that he had only been serving as Editor-in-Chief of HTV Mostar for 10 days, having been named to replace Veselko Cerkez, a well-known Croat "hard-liner" whose presence running the station was deemed objectionable by OSCE.

Mr. Sutalo went on to claim that OSCE had imposed unfair sanctions on HTV Mostar and on HDZ, ordering that a number of HDZ candidates be removed from the electoral lists as reprisal for HTV Mostar's broadcast of a speech by a Croat former local police chief who referred once to Muslim Bosniak refugees by the untranslatable hate-term "balija." Mr. Sutalo repeatedly stated to the mission

members that this term had been broadcast in a context of strict newsgathering, in which the station itself was not at fault, and bitterly objected to OSCE's disciplinary measures. However, it has been clear since Dayton was adopted that the use of such hate speech was not to be permitted in post-Dayton media.

However, Ms. Seidel of the OSCE delegation in Mostar informed the mission that Mr. Sutalo's account was untruthful. The broadcast included, rather than one usage of the hate term, its repetition; rather than a harmless speech marred by an unguarded moment, the entire broadcast was a diatribe inciting violence against the Muslim Bosniaks.

Further, HTV Mostar presented the speech as a feature, re-broadcasting it, and not as reportage. Indeed, the speech was transmitted with the clear political approval of the station's controllers, as an item of propaganda.

Mr. Sutalo also complained that, according to him, a representative of OSCE had appeared at the HTV Mostar studio on September 5, 1997, just before the main news (prime time), and ordered to broadcast the standard electoral spot produced by the SDA-dominated Koalicija. A studio technician, the only person on the premises at that time, broadcast the spot because of fear of sanctions. Mr. Sutalo further protested that the spot presented a map of unified B-H colored green, the color of Islam. In fact, the image to which Mr. Sutalo objected was the official symbol of Koalicija, rather than an illustration. Mr. Sutalo asserted that the symbol represented a violation of a Dayton Peace Agreement, comparable to hate speech, as propaganda for an Islamic B-H.

The color of the symbol in the Koalicija spot was changed to blue, but Mr. Sutalo stated that this was not a solution and he argued that OSCE had grossly violated HTV Mostar's rights. Mr. Sutalo said that the station then canceled its agreements with OSCE on broadcasting voter education materials and that he had written a letter to Ms. Seidel demanding an apology from OSCE.

Once again, Ms. Seidel, whose sincerity and credibility cannot be doubted, challenged Mr. Sutalo's version of events. Ms. Seidel explained that HTV Mostar, having ignored several faxes and telephone calls from Koalicija, had thus violated the rules imposed by the OSCE media experts sub-commission, which require equal access to all media by all parties. She had gone to the station and dropped off the tape with the Koalicija announcement, but had not attempted to order anybody to do anything with it; the technician had decided to broadcast it on his own responsibility, although this was clearly a preferable decision to the maintenance of the illegal embargo on Koalicija materials. Ms. Seidel stated that she did not ask them to broadcast the tape that day or night.

As to the controversy over the color of the symbol, Ms. Seidel pointed out that inasmuch as SDA and Koalicija represent an overwhelmingly Muslim Bosniak constituency, the use of the color green was unobjectionable, as it conveyed to the prospective voter the political character of the grouping. However, it should be noted that by the time our mission had arrived in B-H all the Koalicija electoral paraphernalia showed the B-H map in blue (posters, brochures) or in gold (souvenir

pens and lighters.) The only use of the color green for the symbol appeared on the videotape in the possession of HTV Mostar.

Ms. Seidel also informed us that HSP representatives had complained about lack of access to Croat TV stations in Ljubuski and Siroki Brijeg, small towns near Mostar, because they were not members of HDZ. She confirmed that Croat media ignore SDA political activities, while, by contrast, she emphasized the fairness of the RTV Mostar (East) coverage of the election campaign. While enthusiastic and more upbeat when reporting on Koalicija, they gave equal access to all political parties.

## **8. Independent TV Zetel [Zenica]**

Director: Zeljko Lincner

Nezavisna Televizija ZETEL (Independent TV ZETEL) is a private commercial station serving the central Bosnian city of Zenica. It commenced transmission in January 1992. Its output is mainly informative-documentary, educational and musical, along with broadcasting foreign films. It is affiliated with the Open Broadcast Network OBN. Its staff includes 10 journalists out of 35 employees, 26 of whom are paid.

### **Election Coverage**

Every other day they conducted street interviews and polls. They found that pensioners, a social stratum that has greatly suffered in the aftermath of Yugoslavia's collapse, have grown hopeless and indifferent to politics, that many people skip election news on TV, and that few have decided who to vote for. About 15% of total programming was electoral coverage.

### **Free Access**

ZETEL produced six different hour-long broadcasts on specific issues, each shown three times over a week. All party representatives and candidates participated; they also held phone-ins. They gathered four to eight people in debates on the following issues: social policy, war invalids and refugees, education, human rights, culture/sport, the character of the electoral campaign. Invitations were faxed to all parties and candidates and the response was very good. They produced 16 broadcasts. However, HDZ and SDA, which are the local governmental parties, did not participate. It should be noted that, functioning outside the abnormal conditions of the Western Herzegovina Croat enclave, the local HDZ demonstrates an approach, at least at the present, with less of a "hard-line" flavor.

ZETEL also gave five minutes to each candidate, without a reporter's involvement. In the individual candidate presentations, all political parties participated. They also covered press conferences (1 minute for each press conference), and meetings (2.5 minutes).

## **Paid Coverage**

ZETEL broadcast video spots, but only with participation by the Social Democratic Party (Socijaldemokratska Partija BiH -- SDP -- multiethnic reformed Communists); the opposition and antinationalist Joint List (Združena Lista '97 -- hereinafter "Joint List"), comprising five small parties, and two independents. According to ZETEL personnel, Koalicija reserved its funds for Televizija Zenica, which is the ruling SDA's "own station."

## **Voter Education**

ZETEL broadcast OSCE voter education programmes along with their own production on the same topic.

## **Sources of Information**

They use the Croatian independent STINA news agency, ONASA, Beta (Belgrade), the Voice of America, RFE, and Worldnet. At 11:30 p.m. daily they broadcast a half-hour Worldnet programme in the Bosniak language.

## **Influence and Pressure**

ZETEL journalists have been threatened by telephone after certain broadcasts, with callers objecting to their multiethnic approach and accusing them of being "Chetniks," or Serb extremists. They received such calls at their homes as well as in the office.

Sometimes they asked politicians for comments, but found they were delayed for several days. They were seldom informed of Koalicija activities in outlying villages. They strenuously object to this, because they and others around the "Federation" have observed that SDA politicians often adopt a more nationalist, anti-Serb and anti-Croat rhetoric when speaking in villages as opposed to in the towns. This reflects the general phenomenon in which rural areas, particularly since the war and so-called "ethnic cleansing," have become more homogeneous, while the cities remain multiethnic. In addition to the station's commitment to a multiethnic B-H, ZETEL is concerned to report such incidents to urban viewers, since rural and village conflicts feed refugee flight and the influx into the cities.

Even in Zenica itself, the main parties (SDA and HDZ) frequently delay informing ZETEL of events or visits to the city by leading personalities until the very last minute. It should be noted that while a considerable amount of discussion has been generated in B-H and internationally in which Zenica has been painted as a center of Islamic extremism, ZETEL personnel reported no serious problems connected to such a phenomenon.

## **9. Television Zenica**

Editor-in-Chief: Medina Delibasic

Televizija Zenica began transmitting in November 1995, and constitutes part of the public RTV Zenica. Founded by the municipal government of Zenica, it transmits 49 hours of programming weekly, and is close to the local SDA.

TV Zenica broadcasts from 17.00 to 24.00. It has a small editorial office with 11 journalists out of 20 employees, of which 15 are paid. It is privately-financed television through advertising. The municipal government only paid for equipment.

### **Election Coverage**

TV Zenica produced their own guidelines, which they sent to all parties. As public broadcasters they also published the rules. They held no opinion polls or street interviews.

### **Free Access**

They covered parties activities in the daily news show Zenica Danas (Zenica Today). In the municipal elections, Zenica had the largest number of parties (23) and 18 independent candidates. TV Zenica gave five minutes to each party or independent candidate. The only party that did not respond was the Christian Democratic party, a small Croatian grouping from the town of Livno. The order of appearance of each party and candidate was in accordance with the OSCE's roster. TV Zenica also proposed to broadcast debates, etc. but there was little response. Parties and candidates were not, in the view of TV Zenica, prepared for debates.

### **Paid Coverage**

TV Zenica sent their guidelines to all political parties, together with the rate card. Koalicija bought a two-hour segment and the SDP purchased one that lasted an hour and a half. Joint List also purchased time.

### **Voter Education**

They broadcast the OSCE voter education programmes.

### **Influence and Pressure**

TV Zenica has experienced no political pressures to speak of.

## **10. Radio Zenica**

Editor-in-Chief: Spahija Kozlic

Radio Zenica, the local public station, was also established by municipality of Zenica. Of mixed state and private ownership, it has been transmitting since 1969. It has a 16-hour daily schedule with various informative and documentary programmes, phone-

ins and entertainment.

It employs nine journalists out of 16 employees, of which 13 are paid. They broadcast from 6 a.m. to 12 a.m.

### **Election Coverage**

They did not create a special team, but all journalists covered the election campaign. They have daily news broadcasts, the main one at 4.00 p.m. They did street interviews, commentaries and predictions.

### **Free Access**

They provided two minutes maximum for each party or candidate. When a party or a candidate did not appear they reported it. Six of 18 independent candidates, and four small parties, did not appear. At 4:30 p.m. daily they broadcast a five minute presentation on each candidate that was willing to participate. They also covered party activities. The unpaid programmes were limited.

### **Paid Coverage**

While Koalicija was the main purchaser of paid time, they also sold time to SDP, Joint List, HSP, and others.

On voting days they planned to join a crew from TV Zenica and cover 55 polling stations, with reporters also live at the OSCE and Electoral Commission offices.

### **Voter Education**

They broadcast OSCE voters educational programmes.

### **Sources of Information**

The main source was direct reporting, followed by SFOR and OSCE.

### **Influence and Pressure**

They have experienced no political problems.

## **11. Tuzla**

### **Introductory Note**

The media in Tuzla, as well as the political situation there, are worthy of exceptional note as to context. Tuzla is the only major city in B-H (i.e. in both "Federation" and "Republic") that is governed by non-nationalist parties. Its mayor, Selim Beslagic, leads the Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina Social Democrats (Unija Bosanskohercegovačkih Socijaldemokrata -- UBSD), a party that is clearly more

authentically "social democratic" in the Western sense than is the larger, "reform-Communist" SDP. Nevertheless, HDZ and other "rightist" parties attack Beslagic and UBSD as "Red."

Tuzla, although affected by a large refugee influx as well as by the relative proximity of Srebrenica, site of extreme atrocities during the war, has defended its multiethnic traditions. In World War II, Tuzla residents rose up to defend the city's Serbs from the fascist terror of the Croat fascist Ustashe. During the recent war, the defense of Tuzla was organized by the citizens themselves, using Partisan tactics. Tuzla journalists also distinguished themselves by reporting on atrocities against innocent Serbs by Muslim Bosniak soldiers fleeing Srebrenica.

Tuzla residents have remained tenaciously attached to these traditions. Paradoxically, Tuzla is also known among Bosniaks as the home of the 19th century Muslim Bosniak hero Husein-Kapetan Gradiscevic, known as the Dragon of Bosnia (Zmaj od Bosne), who led a multiethnic movement for B-H autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.

Finally, Tuzla is also the home of a branch of NUPN, the journalists' union, and was the site of the first postwar media strike in B-H, at TVTPK (see below).

### **Televizija Tuzla**

Editor-in-Chief: Mirela Canovic

Televizija Tuzla is a local public station, founded by the (opposition--run) municipality of Tuzla, and, together with its counterpart radio station, is undergoing privatization. It began transmission in February 1994, and produces various informative programmes. Its editorial stance reveals a closeness of outlook to the municipal governing party UBSD. It is a member of the Open Broadcast Network.

TV Tuzla is currently a share holding company financed by advertising. They also sell their own programmes, including documentaries.

### **Election Coverage**

Guidelines they produced were sent to all political parties and independent candidates (16 parties and 2 candidates), together with a rate card. (For example, 1 second cost 3 DEM.) At the beginning, they created seven teams of reporters to cover the election campaign, but the work load proved too heavy. They also analysed the probable local outcome of the elections for the weekly OBN survey. They sent reporters out to do street interviews in an effort to predict the election outcome.

They began their electoral coverage, which represented 25% of all the broadcast programme, in middle of August.



## **Free Access**

TV Tuzla covered political meetings, press conferences and releases in its programme Tuzla Danas (Tuzla Today). During their main broadcasts they advertised separate electoral segments. Each party or candidate had up to 3 minutes of time. Later they offered parties and independent candidates an additional 5 minutes each; all responded enthusiastically.

They also produced a series of three debates, with one hour for each party and candidate. They also set up an hour programme with phone ins, which was extended into two hours.

## **Paid Coverage**

TV Tuzla broadcast daily paid video spots. Some they produced, others were brought to them. They used their own archived reportage to create broadcasts on elections.

Finally, they produced political phone-ins that were clearly advertised as paid publicity.

## **Voter Education**

The OSCE voter education video spots were broadcast and, according to the editor-in-chief, seemed very effective. They also reported closely on press conferences held by the OSCE and by the Election Commission.

## **Sources of Information**

They drew on the ONASA news agency, CNN, RTV B-H, Sky TV and "lots of newspapers."

## **Influence and Pressure**

They have not had problems or felt any pressure, aside from a virtual boycott of their services by SDA, which rules the canton but not the municipality.

## **12. Radio Tuzla**

Editor-in-Chief: Hajrudin Seleskovic

Radio Tuzla is a local public station, founded, like its counterpart TV station, by the municipality of Tuzla in 1990. It transmits 18 hours daily, and is close in outlook to the locally-ruling UBSD. It is open to various political views, and promotes civic principles and multi-ethnicity.

It is financed by advertisements, not from the city budget. They have contracts with various enterprises companies for paid publicity. There are 30 employees of which 7 are reporters.

## **Election Coverage**

There was no separate team organised especially for the elections, but desk coverage with reporters rotated between parties and candidates. No analyses or predictions were made.

## **Free Access**

They broadcast their main news show three times daily, including 20 minutes free for each party and candidate. Only the major parties responded. News broadcasts reported press conferences, while meetings were accompanied by party-produced jingles. They also broadcast 20 minutes political interview programmes with participation by journalists.

## **Paid Coverage**

They also broadcast jingles and other material on a paid basis. The most time was bought by Koalicija, followed by SDP and then Joint List. The municipal authority is made up of the UBSD, which is a component of Joint List, and SDP, which is independent.

## **Voter Education**

They used the OSCE voter guidelines, especially on hate speech. They warned all the parties and candidates to avoid inflammatory terminology. In addition, they broadcast the OSCE voter education materials.

## **Sources of Information**

They use ONASA and rebroadcast RTV B-H news three times weekly. They also use RFE (1 hour broadcast) and Deutsche Welle.

## **Influence and Pressure**

No problems or pressure were felt at Radio Tuzla. However, it appears that the local SDA, lacking a radio station of its own, is more cooperative with this independent service than with its television counterpart as described above.

## **13. Tuzla-Upper Drina Canton TV**

Editor-in-Chief: Kasim Softic

Televizija Tuzlansko-Podrinjskog Kantona (Television of the Tuzla-Upper Drina Canton -- TVTPK) is the official public station for the canton, which is a middle-level, regional political structure between the municipality and the "Federation" authorities. TVTPK produces various informative programmes and is widely watched. In editorial stance is close to that of the SDA, which controls the canton government. The existence of parallel TV stations in Tuzla clearly indicates the failure of SDA to accept local political pluralism. TVTPK is partly financed by selling ads, and partly subsidized by canton government.

They broadcast from 8 to 10 hours daily, of which about 20% were election programmes. They mainly broadcast video spots produced from outside their studio.

TVTPK was the site of the first media strike after the beginning of the recent war. In February 1996 TVTPK workers walked out to protest delays in their pay as well as infringements on professionalism by the station management. The management gave way and paid the overdue salaries, making the strike a success.

### **Election Coverage**

There was no special desk or team organised for this year's elections. They produced no street interviews, but phone-ins revealed great popular interest in the elections.

No special commentaries or analyses were broadcast.

### **Free Access**

In the main news programme each party or candidate had an equal time to present itself. Also they reported on meetings and press conferences in separate segments with jingles, party video spots, etc.

They also broadcast a programme with a moderator three times per week, with 5 minutes given to each party and candidate from each municipality, of which there are 15 in this canton. They applied no special system for assignments of time.

They also produced an hour and a half weekly broadcast titled Replica, open to all party leaders and candidates in each municipality. Some did not appear, indicating they did not wish to debate, or appeared on competing media.

### **Paid Coverage**

They offered from five to 10 minutes time for party video spots during advertising programme. Some parties sent personnel to the studio, some did phone-ins, some sent video spots, etc. The most time was taken by the SDA-run Koalicija, followed (in this order) by SDP, HDZ, and Joint List.

### **Voter Education**

They used OSCE voter education spots and they also interviewed the OSCE representatives.

### **Influence and Pressure**

There were no threats or pressure on reporters except that according to TVTPK representatives Mayor Beslagic refused to appear on their station, and went instead to OBN.

## **Sources of Information**

They mainly use ONASA and CNN.

### **14. Free Elections Radio Network (FERN)**

Editor-in-Chief: Mujo Delibegovic

FERN is a radio network established with the support of the Swiss government and the OSCE. It aims to provide independent and unbiased information, to assist with the implementation of the Dayton Agreement and in the preparation for elections. It covers around 80% of B-H territory. There are 20 people employed, of which 2 are Swiss managers, with the rest being journalists paid on contract.

#### **Election Coverage**

They prepared election programmes and rules. They started their coverage at the beginning of July. No special team or desk was organised for the elections, but they assigned a co-ordinator to cover political news.

#### **Free Access**

They broadcast 5 minute portraits of about 80 towns, including ethnic composition, economic activity, culture, and the current situation, along with discussions of the parties contesting these elections. They also did street interviews on citizens' expectations about the elections.

They had a special half-hour talk show (without phone-ins because of technical problems.) Also they broadcast a 10-30 minute feature, Intervju (Interview), with politicians and government leaders.

Press conferences were covered up to 2 minutes. All political press conferences and meetings were covered, mainly using reportage from news agencies. Correspondents reported in a special daily party press programme at 2:40 p.m..

#### **Paid Coverage**

They had no political or other ads except OSCE spots.

#### **Voter Education**

They broadcast all OSCE voter education materials.

#### **Source of Information**

They use the STINA news agency from Split, Beta (Belgrade), the Serbian Republic News Agency (SRNA) from the "Republic," ONASA and BH Press.

## **Influence and Pressure**

They have received no complaints from parties. They had no pressure or access problems with political parties.

## **15. Vecernje Novine**

Assistant to Editor-in-Chief: Zlatko Vukmirovic

Vecernje Novine (Evening News) is an independent daily, first issued in 1964. It publishes zoned editions including a new one for the "Republic."

Vecernje Novine has 120 employees, of which eight are administrative, with about 70 journalists and editors. They have two daily editions, with their morning edition printed at 7:00 p.m. the night before and afternoon edition at 3:00 a.m. Changes in edition are hourly. They have daily circulation of 25,000 in 5 zoned editions: Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar and the "Republic." Six pages are redone for each of these cantons and for the "Republic."

They have 20 layout computers (financed by Soros), but they still use paste-up.

## **Election Coverage**

"The municipal elections are much more important than the last year's parliamentary elections," Zlatko Vukmirovic, assistant to the editor-in-chief commented. However, in the municipal elections it has not been so important to report every detail; they do not attract as much media attention. In addition, the municipal elections have been less conflictive than the 1996 parliamentary elections. Parties are not courting the media.

## **16. Dnevni Avaz**

Editor-in-Chief: Mensur Osmovic

Dnevni Avaz (Daily Voice) is the newest informative-political daily paper in the Federation, and is privately owned, but its outlook is close to SDA. The owner is Fahrudin Radoncic. Its news coverage is comprehensive. The same enterprise briefly produced an English-language weekly edition of poor quality, and has its own news agency, Bosna Link. There are two daily editions each in Sarajevo, Tuzla, and for the rest of B-H. It is not sold in the Croat enclave of Western Herzegovina.

Its circulation is about 35,000. Its payroll includes 150 employees, of which 80 are journalists, all paid. They also publish a sport weekly and Azra, a women's magazine.

## **Election Coverage**

Beginning a month before the elections Dnevni Avaz published a daily election page. They created a special team of 10 reporters in Sarajevo, in addition to their correspondents throughout the "Federation," i.e. in Zenica, Tuzla, Mostar, Bihac and Travnik. Those assigned were not political specialists but general assignment reporters.

## **Free Access**

They presented interviews with leaders of all the parties, along with commentaries and analyses, but no debates.

## **Paid Coverage**

They accepted paid materials from parties.

## **Sources of Information**

Press conferences, meetings, BH Press agency and Bosna Link Agency (their own).

## **Influence and Pressure**

No parties have denied access to Dnevni Avaz and, no political pressures or complaints have been recorded. However, it should be noted that the paper is viewed as virtually an official organ of the SDA.

## **17. Oslobođenje**

Editor-in-Chief: Mehmed Halilovic

Oslobođenje (Liberation) is the oldest and best known B-H paper. It first came out in Donji Trnava on August 30, 1943, as a Partisan organ, and is independent, although a privatization that began before the recent war is not fully accomplished. It promotes civic, multiethnic and multicultural values. Its infrastructure was all but destroyed at the beginning of the war, but it continued to appear every day. It has received many famous international awards, and has its own news agency, ONASA.

The daily circulation is 15-17,000, issued 7 days a week in B-H and 6 days in a Frankfurt edition. There are 210 employees in the whole enterprise, of which 100 work on the paper. Of them, 70 are journalists and correspondents, the latter in all major towns. It is privately financed through ad sales (45%) and street sales (40%).

Mr. Halilovic is a leader of the NUPN.

## **Election Coverage**

About 10-12% of the paper was dedicated to the elections, including reporting, analyses and commentaries. A special team was established to cover the "Republic"

with 10 reporters and correspondents. They covered the Croat enclave in Western Herzegovina through the Alternative Media Network. They used the 1990 election guidelines, which do not differ very much from the OSCE rules.

### **Free Access**

They published several parallel interviews with two candidates who were strong competitors.

### **Paid Coverage**

Only OSCE took some paid ads. They received very little from parties compared with the 1996 parliamentary elections. Mr. Halilovic noted that the main party publicity was on TV.

### **Voter Education**

They used the OSCE educational materials on an unpaid basis.

### **Sources of Information**

Press conferences, meetings, speeches, etc.

### **Influence and Pressure**

There has been no direct pressure but paper's shaky financing brings about indirect pressure. There have been no threats or intimidation connected to elections. However, *Oslobodjenje* and its leading editors have undergone continued polemical attacks by *Ljiljan*, a weekly published in Sarajevo that is close to SDA and is considered a Muslim Bosniak nationalist and clericalist organ. Similar attacks have been leveled against weekly journals that feature investigative reporting.

Enver Causevic of the Republic of B-H Journalists Union (*Savez Novinara BiH*), the trade union from which the new NUPN seceded, has joined in these polemics against *Oslobodjenje*, the investigative weeklies, and NUPN.

## **II. REPUBLIKA SRPSKA**

### **1. Serbian Radio Television-Banja Luka**

Editor: Mira Lalic

Banja Luka is the largest, as well as the most ethnically diverse, city in the "Republic." *Srpska Radio-Televizija* (SRT) is a state network, founded by the People's Parliament of the "Republic." The television has two production centres, in Banja Luka and in Pale. It broadcasts information, documentary, sport and music programmes. Programmes often rebroadcast from TV stations in Serbia.

Mrs. Lalic told the mission that on August 22, 1997 the Banja Luka staff demanded that the Pale studio cease imposing a political standard on broadcasting, which had reflected the line of the Serbian Democratic Party (Srpska Demokratska Stranka -- SDS), a stridently anti-Western and anti-Muslim force. Viewing of SRT Pale broadcasts during the mission made it clear to members that the Pale studio had consistently defied standards of media professionalism while disseminating provocative and inciting propaganda.

Because the Banja Luka staff did receive satisfaction of their demand for non-political journalism, they wrote a letter, declaring they would no longer follow the Pale studio editorial line.

The letter was signed by all employees of the Banja Luka studio. The next day the Pale leadership fired the Banja Luka deputy director and two editors and sent their own representative to run the studio in Banja Luka. The Banja Luka employees resisted and managed to run the media on their own. The SRT Banja Luka staff is strongly supported by SFOR.

SRT Banja Luka covers the town of Banja Luka and its surroundings. 148 people work for the station, with 123 permanently employed, and 43 of them are journalists.

The status of SRT Banja Luka remains unclear because of the power struggle between "Republic" president Biljana Plavsic, who governs from Banja Luka and supports SRT Banja Luka, and the Pale authorities led by Momcilo Krajisnik.

SRT Banja Luka is financed by advertisements.

### **Election Coverage**

SRT Banja Luka followed the OSCE rules. They sent written appeals to all political parties (in the "Federation" as well as the "Republic," but no party from the former entity replied). In the "Republic" only SDS and Banja Luka branch of the ultra-extremist Srpska Radikalna Stranka (Serbian Radical Party -- SRS) did not reply, out of 22 parties. SRT Banja Luka did not produce opinion polls, nor did they create a special election reporting team. The activities of political parties were covered by all journalists, while broadcasts were produced by editors.

About 10% of the total programming was dedicated to the election campaign.

### **Free Access**

They produced four programs (2 hours each) about refugee and voting problems in Brcko, the local administration, etc., with open phone lines.

In a 10 minute feature, Srpska Danas (Serbdom Today) they allowed each political party to present itself. The broadcasts were transmitted every day, except during the weekend. They also produced a 10 minute broadcast, Panorama of Banja Luka, every Tuesday, and a 10 minutes broadcast, The Chronicle of Podkozarja, on air every



Wednesday.

In the main news they reported on press conferences and meetings of political parties.

### **Paid Coverage**

Only two political parties, the Serbian Patriotic Party (Srpska Patriotska Stranka -- SPAS) and a coalition, For Banja Luka (Za Banju Luku), were interested in paid programmes, using video spots and short messages of 5-20 seconds.

On voting days they planned to report live from 7 a.m. to 7 p. m. Journalists called in from polling stations, the OSCE office, and the local Electoral Commission.

### **Voter Education**

They broadcast the OSCE spots.

### **Influence and Pressure**

Aside from constant conflict with Pale, they did not experience pressure or threats.

## **2. Independent Television Banja Luka**

Editor-in-Chief: Zoran Kalinic

Nezavisna Televizija Banja Luka (NTV Banja Luka) began transmission on the eve of the 1996 elections, and was founded by six private organisations. Its output consists of newscasts, documentaries and interviews. It takes a critical stance towards SDS. It supports the RS Socialist Party of the "Republic" (Socijalisticka Partija RS), which is the local wing of the neo-Communist party run in Serbia by Slobodan Milosevic. Thus, although its cadres supported the original Serb aggression in B-H, it is now seen as a pillar of Dayton.

NT Banja Luka's signal covers the Banja Luka area. It employs 90 people, of which 19 are permanently employed and 12 are journalists.

They are financed by advertisements (one third), U.S. Agency for International Development (which subsidizes particular broadcasts), the Soros Foundation, and donations of different people that want to remain anonymous.

### **Election Coverage**

NTV Banja Luka did not develop their own guidelines, but followed the OSCE rules. They did not create a special desk and they also did not produce street interviews, commentaries, analyses or opinion polls. About 10% of programming dealt with the elections.

## **Free Access**

Press conferences and meetings of the political parties were included in the main newscast, but were not separately marked by a jingle, which had been the case with the rest of media.

NTV Banja Luka allowed 15 minutes to every candidate, with the order of their appearance determined by lottery. Only SDA and SDS were unwilling to participate.

From 5-6 p. m. they broadcast a show in which four parties were interviewed by a moderator in a debate format. Candidates had to answer questions involving their proposals if elected, their position on Dayton, the problem of refugees and similar issues. Due to the lack of technical means they did not open phone lines.

## **Paid Coverage**

Parties typically purchased one hour of programming, costing 2,500 DEM. Journalists were rather unimportant figures. NTV Banja Luka also broadcast video spots, produced in house. A fifteen-minute segment of a party meeting could be purchased at a cost of 600 DEM for production and broadcasting.

## **Voter Education**

They broadcast the OSCE election education programmes.

## **Sources of Information**

NTV Banja Luka used the independent news agency Beta from Belgrade, the Yugoslav government agency Tanjug and the recently-established Flash news agency, based in Banja Luka.

## **Influence and Pressure**

Mr. Kalinic told the mission that he had been called by SDS for an "informative talk" after a broadcast including Miodrag Civanovic, president of the "Republic" Social-Liberal Party (Socijalno-Liberalna Stranka RS) and Milorad Dodik, president of the Independent Social-Democrats (Stranka Nezavisnih Socijaldemokrata RS), who strongly criticized SDS.

"Republic" financial police conducted a search of the offices of the insurance company Osiguranje Krajina Kopaonik, which owns 20% of NTV Banja Luka and is owned by Mr. Kalinic. The investigation lasted one month and a half.

Mr. Kalinic suffered tax levies of 100,000 DEM. He believes the tax investigation was ordered by the "Republic" secret police. NTV Banja Luka journalists were twice assaulted, and documentation confiscated from them, a month before the election, when they reported on conflicts between the Banja Luka and Pale police forces.

### **3. Dnevni Nezavisne Novine**

Editor-in-Chief and Owner: Zeljko Kopanja

Dnevni Nezavisne Novine (Daily Independent News) is a private newspaper issued in a weekly and a daily edition. It was first published in 1996, and its stance towards SDS is very critical, while it is deeply involved in research into social issues and scandals. It co-operates with media in the "Federation," and copies are sold in Sarajevo. It employs 45 people, 31 permanently, of which 31 are journalists. The circulation is 5,000 copies in the "Republic" plus 3,000 in the "Federation." It is financed by sales, USAID and the Soros Foundation.

#### **Election Coverage**

In covering the pre-election campaign they followed the OSCE rules. Mr. Kopanja told the mission that in the "Republic" the elections were overshadowed by the difficult political crisis (Pale vs. Banja Luka), with more attention focused on the latter. They did not create a special elections desk. They contacted the parties' headquarters by telephone, but they did not offer space to parties in the "Federation," because of space limitations. They only print 16 pages daily and have had to contend with paper boycotts. They do not conduct street interviews. However, almost half of the paper was dedicated to the elections.

#### **Free Access**

Dnevni Nezavisne Novine reported on press conferences, meetings and the releases of all political parties, along with short interviews and statements. They also interviewed independent candidates. Only SDS refused an interview with the weekly. Equal space was given to all candidates.

#### **Paid Coverage**

No political party expressed any interest in paid coverage.

Voting was covered mainly through the news agencies, but also by their reporters and six correspondents around the "Republic."

#### **Voter Education**

Dnevni Nezavisne Novine published OSCE materials on a paid basis.

#### **Sources of Information**

Dnevni Nezavisne Novine uses Reuters, Beta, Tanjug, ONASA from Sarajevo, SRNA, the Alternative Information Network and the Flash agency.

#### **Influence and Pressure**

They experienced no pressures, threats or complaints.

## CONCLUSION

The Bosnian people, with the help of the SFOR military authorities, have clearly entered on the road of peace and reconstruction. The breakdown of the country into separate ethnic zones, which could never have been easy given centuries of integration, has not succeeded. The mission observed evidence of this on all sides. While fanatics in the Croat enclave and politicians at Pale continue to intrigue and incite violence, and a handful of Muslim Bosniaks contribute to an unstable future by indulging in absurd fantasies, ordinary people concentrate on returning to their homes, building new lives, and opening businesses.

We found that even in media, notwithstanding the bleak perspectives often advanced by representatives of the international community, a considerable level of professional responsibility and commitment to the role of journalists in maintaining peace has been achieved.

It could be said that the greater part of Bosnian media has learned the lessons of the prewar and wartime experiences. Few of the country's journalists are willing to purvey the ideology of nationalist particularism and the ethnic stereotyping that marked the beginning of the war. Few are interested in returning to the pre-war days of one-party opinion and blindness to weaknesses in the social fabric.

With a few exceptions, Bosnian media acquitted themselves well in the recent municipal elections, and they continue to merit the support and assistance of the international community.

### **The mission recommends:**

1. A continued firmness by SFOR and the international community in forcing extremist media in the "Republic" to adhere to the rules established under the Dayton Agreement. This means, bluntly, continued vigilance over Pale and continued support for Banja Luka.
2. New and forceful measures to open the media field in the Croat enclave of Western Herzegovina to greater ethnic and political pluralism, including serious police action to ensure the safe access of East Mostar journalists in reporting on the Croat enclave. If necessary, SFOR and the OHR should establish a separate independent medium in the enclave.
3. Adoption of a detailed and efficient plan to support Bosnian journalists in their struggle to protect their standard of living, and to normalize privatization of enterprises while securing employees' equity, through modern, Western-style trade unionism.
4. Strengthening of the judicial authorities in both entities to prevent criminal infiltration, influence, intimidation, and control of media and to promote the role of media as the public watchdog against rising corruption.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

(The descriptions of media included in this survey, aside from data on personnel numbers and labor representation, are mainly taken from the brochure Elections '97 Guide for Journalists in Bosnia & Herzegovina, published by Media Plan, the specialized organization for media reconstruction and development, based in Sarajevo.)

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