

**THE FUTURE  
OF MEDIA ASSOCIATIONS  
IN BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA**

**Survey and Recommendations**

**By Stephen Schwartz**

**International Research  
and Exchanges Board**

**ProMedia**

**(IREX)**

**Sarajevo, May 1999**

## **Contents**

Executive Summary 3

Prefatory Notes, Disclaimer and Acknowledgements 4

Introduction 6

Historical Overview 6

Organizational Review 8

General Recommendations 14

A Postscript on the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) 15

## Executive Summary

Bosnian journalists remain unsure of themselves and their role. Bosnian media consumers have grown extremely cynical about the manipulation of public opinion. In addition, international observers, and some Bosnians, blame media propaganda for the onset and many atrocities of the war. Some foreign agencies operating in Bosnia have so placed blame for ethnic polarization and fighting on media as to have assumed that Bosnian media must be thoroughly monitored, controlled, and directed so as to prevent a new outbreak of combat.

The efficient, modern, and service-oriented organization of the media communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina must be regarded as a leading priority for the country's successful reconstruction.

Bosnia-Herzegovina presently encompasses five professional associations of journalists, a trade union, and two publishers' associations.

IREX ProMedia, to best assist the Bosnian media associations to pursue their work, should implement the following general recommendations:

First, IREX should fund an expert in media professional organizations for an assignment of at least four months to work exclusively on these issues. Such an individual should be an American with extensive practical experience in this area, along with a published bibliography of original research and comparative studies. Although IREX ProMedia in Bosnia-Herzegovina is currently adequately staffed for professional training, analysis, and business training, organizational issues represent a separate area of competence in which practical experience is indispensable. As an alternative, an existing post should be reorganized to include adequate work time for extensive and dedicated attention to these issues.

Second, IREX ProMedia should recommend that the professional associations, unions, and publishers' associations join and participate in a non-official, advisory press council, or, better, a liaison committee, that will focus on coordination of their activities in the direction of eventual unification. Such a body should be directed and staffed by Bosnians rather than outsiders, and the Independent Union of Professional Journalists (NUPN) should be considered the lead organization in establishing such a coordinating committee. Activities of such a press council should include study of a reform in the issuance of press cards, which should be removed from the authority of SFOR, establishment of a legal fund to assist journalists throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, and creation of a press center in Sarajevo.

Third, USAID should review its policy on assistance to state-dominated and party-oriented organizations. The reason for this is simple but dual: the Union of Journalists of the Republic of Srpska (UNRS) is undeniably the most serious and effective such association in that entity, regardless of its reputation as a state-controlled body, and the Union of Croat Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (UHN) is the sole such organization in the area of Herzeg-Bosna. Exclusion of these groups from assistance serves no practical purpose.

Fourth, IREX ProMedia must insist on annual certification of all such organizations (except publishers' associations) based on reviews of their internal and financial practices.

Fifth, IREX ProMedia must assist the Publishers' Association of Bosnia-Hercegovina (Izdavača) in becoming an efficient, functioning advocate for the business interests of media owners. Izdavača should immediately establish relations with its counterpart in the Republic of Srpska, which should also be assisted in attaining a more efficient operating status, and every effort should be made to establish such an association to represent Croat publishers.

Sixth, IREX ProMedia should supplement its training in investigative journalism, ethics, standards, and related issues with seminars on the relation between media entrepreneurship, business law and responsibility, and modern trade unionism.

Seventh, IREX ProMedia should insist on the adoption of regular consultations between all professional associations and unions, on one side, and the publishers' associations, on the other.

Eighth, in several areas of Bosnia-Hercegovina journalists' associations are absent, including Bihać-Cazin, Goražde, and the Trans-Drina area of Bosnia and Eastern Hercegovina. Particularly in Bihać-Cazin, relations between journalists and local political authorities are extremely tense. IREX ProMedia should assist the journalists' associations to extend and establish themselves in these areas.

### **Prefatory Notes**

The survey and recommendations contained in the following report were developed during an IREX training visit conducted in May 1999, in the Bosnian and Hercegovinian cities of Sarajevo and Mostar. The information herein is derived from group and individual interviews conducted by the survey author with officers of professional associations, trade unions, and a publishers' association presently functioning on the territory of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

As reflected in the report, Bosnia-Hercegovina has, since the Dayton Agreement of 1995, been divided into two entities, the "Federation of Bosnia-Hercegovina" grouping Bosniaks (Muslim Bosnians) and Croats, and the "Republic of Srpska," based in Serbian-majority regions. These entities will be referred to in this report as "the Federation" and "the R.S.," following common Bosnian practice. In addition, however, the Croat-majority area of Western Hercegovina has come to function as, in some respects, an unofficial, unrecognized, and in terms of Dayton, an illegal "third entity." This area will be referred to herein as "Herceg-Bosna," again following local practice.

The use of such nomenclature does not and should not imply any political attitude toward the existence, maintenance, or future changes in status of such entities.

In addition, for the purposes of this report, organizations created for purposes of professional development, establishment of ethics and standards, development of press laws, and purely political lobbying, and the economic interests of owners of enterprises are labelled "associations." Those created for the development of labor law, labor standards, negotiation of contracts, and other economic interests of employees are described as "unions." As will be seen, the lack of clear definitions in these categories is a significant feature in the organizational landscape of Bosnian journalism.

It should also be noted that while the organizations described in this report draw their memberships from both print and electronic media, as well as from publishers, editors, reporters, staff writers, photographers, free-lancers, and other employees, the major interest of this survey has been in print media.

The organizations and individuals surveyed and interviewed in this report consist in the following. All named officers were interviewed with the exception of those specifically mentioned as "not interviewed":

1. **The Independent Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Hercegovina (NUPN)** Headquarters: Sarajevo. Mehmed Husić, President. Borka Rudić, Secretary General.
2. **The Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Hercegovina (Savez)**. Headquarters: Sarajevo. Edis Mesihović, President. Milan Pekić, Secretary-General (not interviewed).
3. **Union of Journalists of the Republic of Srpska (UNRS)**. Headquarters: Banja Luka. Branislav Božić, President.
4. **Independent Union of Journalists of the Republic of Srpska (NUN)**. Headquarters: Banja Luka. Branko Perić, President.
5. **Association of Croat Journalists of Bosnia-Hercegovina (UHN)**. Headquarters: Mostar. Milenko Karačić, President. Vlatko Menix, International Secretary. Milan Vego, Organizational Secretary. Ilko Barbarić, Assembly President.
6. **Trade Union of Journalists of Bosnia-Hercegovina (Sindikato)**. Headquarters: Sarajevo. Nagorka Idrizović, President.
7. **Publishers' Association of Bosnia-Hercegovina (Izdavača)**. Headquarters: Sarajevo. Sead Demirović, President.

In addition to the officers listed above, other members of some organizations were interviewed. In addition, none of these officers serves on a full-time or even a paid basis, and their employment affiliations are noted in the narrative. Finally, local branches of each organization, for those that maintain them, are also noted in the text.

## **Disclaimer and Acknowledgements**

The author of this report, Stephen Schwartz, has been a staff writer for the *San Francisco Chronicle* since 1989 and has served as regional secretary of the Northern California Media Workers' Guild, AFL-CIO, since 1996. Mr. Schwartz has previously consulted on Bosnian journalism, on a paid basis, for the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Council of Europe, and has coordinated international activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina for The Newspaper Guild (AFL-CIO) as part of his official Guild duties. He previously visited Bosnia-Herzegovina in such capacity in 1997, 1998, and earlier in 1999.

The author expresses his thanks for assistance in completion of this project to IREX employees in Sarajevo: David DeVoss, Resident Advisor; James Napoli, Media Advisor; staff members Dražena Peranić, Alena Begović, Jasmin Zeherović, Amela Haverić, and Amir Mehićović.

The opinions and recommendations in this report are strictly those of the author, and the contents of this report are strictly confidential.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Introduction**

At the time of this survey's completion, Bosnia-Herzegovina is at peace, after the horrors of the 1992-95 conflict and the establishment of a postwar order under the Dayton Agreement. Although war continues in neighboring Yugoslavia, and while the historic state of Bosnia-Herzegovina remains divided into two post-Dayton entities, both the "Federation" and "R.S." evince immense evidence, on the part of ordinary people, of the will to reconstruct a normal life and to build a post-Communist economy.

Nevertheless, the scars of war – physical, cultural, psychological, and political – remain visible. The physical record of war includes destroyed buildings, the continuing agony of deportees seeking to return to their homes, and injured victims, along with massive cemeteries filled with fresh grave markers. Cultural, psychological, and political indicators are subtler but no less present. Above all, the legacy of a terrible conflict is to be found in the professional lives of journalists, both in print and electronic media.

Bosnian journalists remain unsure of themselves and their role. Bosnian media consumers have grown extremely cynical about the manipulation of public opinion. In addition, international observers, and some Bosnians, blame media propaganda for the onset and many atrocities of the war. Some foreign agencies operating in Bosnia have so placed blame for ethnic polarization and fighting on media as to have assumed that Bosnian media must be thoroughly monitored, controlled, and directed so as to prevent a new outbreak of combat.

The efficient, modern, and service-oriented organization of the media communities in Bosnia-Hercegovina must be regarded as a leading priority for the country's success.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Historical Overview

Prior to the collapse of former Yugoslavia, journalists in all the country's six constituent republics and two autonomous provinces were organized along the typical lines of a Communist society. As a requirement of their employment, they were enlisted in a Journalists' Union that mainly operated Journalists' Clubs (a restaurant, bar, library, and meeting rooms) in the major cities, while also administering vacation homes, pension agreements, and related state-controlled services.

These "Unions" seldom addressed issues of professional training and standards, and almost never negotiated employment contracts. This latter fact reflected their membership limitation to editors, reporters, photographers, and other professionals, whose employment status was viewed as more akin to that of a doctor or lawyer than of a salaried employee or wage worker. Such Journalists' Unions were rigorously controlled by state authorities and by the cadres of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (party).

The remnants of such organizations exist today in the form of the Savez in the "Federation" and the UNRS.

However, war and the incipient economic transformation of former Yugoslavia have stimulated the formation of various new organizations. Thus, the Savez is unfavorably viewed as a state-dominated organization, and UNRS is criticized for almost exclusively representing employees of state-owned media. To an extent, a second, party-ideological template exists on top of that derived from the history of official, state organizations, so that in the case of Savez the organization is viewed as under the influence of the ruling party in Muslim Bosnia, the Party of Democratic Action (SDA). Similarly, the newest of the media associations, the UHN in Herceg-Bosna, although having no institutional link with the Journalists' Unions of the past, is perceived as under the political control of the ruling party in Croatia, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ).

By contrast, other recently-emergent organizations, including the NUPN, NUN, Sindikat, and Izdavača, have clearly sought to distance themselves from the Communist organizational tradition and from the recurrence of party influence in non-Communist forms. This desire is reflected in their choice of names, mainly through the use of the term "independent." In this context, independent denotes a move toward freedom from state and party influence, above all.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that in most cases the ideal of independence for media is far from being achieved in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Obviously, the successful transformation of the present organizational disarray into an efficient structure is crucial to the attainment of this goal.

The main problem facing all these associations and unions in the short term is one of organizational focus and clarity of self-definition. In effect, among all of them there are two tendencies. The first is to try to do everything, and in many cases to try to combine the functions of a professional association with that of a trade union. The second is to propose self-definitions based on what the officers believe the international community wants to hear, and which will therefore lead to cash infusions to the associations, which are almost uniformly destitute of financial resources. The issue of associations vs. trade unions is especially problematical given the heritage of Communist era fake trade unionism and the absolute lack of experience with modern trade union practice in the industrialized nations.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Organizational Review**

The survey author conducted organizational meetings and interviews over a two-week period in May 1999. These were set up on the basis of IREX convenience.

One phenomenon was repeated throughout the interviews held for this survey: officers of associations blamed poor internal functioning of their groups not on individuals or economic obstacles but on the persistence of the Communist culture of passivity and a lack of member commitment and activism.

### **The Independent Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Hercegovina (NUPN).**

NUPN was founded in 1996 in a split from the oldest journalists' organization in Bosnia-Hercegovina, the Savez. For some time, NUPN was promised financial support by The Newspaper Guild, based in the U.S., but little cash showed up in Sarajevo. Mr. Husić, its president, made it very clear that NUPN is a professional association only and that it had no common interest with The Newspaper Guild, which is strictly a labor union. He also stated that many members of Savez wish to join NUPN, but that the latter, unlike Savez, is, according to Mr. Husić, restricted to authentic journalists who are recommended by a current member of NUPN. NUPN has working branches in Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar, and Bihać.

Ms. Rudić called for the journalists' associations in Bosnia-Hercegovina to form a single coordinating advisory board. Mr. Husić noted that 30 legal cases are pending against individual journalists in Bosnia-Hercegovina, and expressed concern that a promise by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) to pay for their legal defense would not be honored. Ms. Rudić said NUPN should establish a press center in Sarajevo to serve foreign as well as domestic journalists with technological and logistical support in their reporting work.

Ms. Rudić later stressed that NUPN needs to adopt a more political, lobbying approach to defending the interests of all Bosnian journalists. She also supported the concept of meeting with the Bosnian publishers' association (Izdavača).



**Recommendations:** NUPN has emerged as the most stable and effective of the journalists' associations in Bosnia. NUPN should be encouraged, organizationally, to take the initiative in reaching out across ethnic lines, and to become the major functioning center for the entire profession. It should especially be assisted to focus on lobbying.

To this end, NUPN should be encouraged to relax its entry requirements, and to hold regular meetings with Savez. NUPN should also be encouraged to begin regular consultations with Izdavača. NUPN should be assisted in establishing a legal defense fund that will assist all Bosnian journalists. To the extent possible, NUPN should be assisted in establishing the Sarajevo press center envisioned by Ms. Rudić.

### **The Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Hercegovina (Savez).**

Savez is the oldest media association in Bosnia-Hercegovina, and claims some 1,200 members. As much as NUPN, its leadership is rhetorically committed to organizing throughout the country. However, it is profoundly handicapped by perception that it is a holdover from the Communist era, and by the personal style of its former main leader, Enver Čaušević, who now directs a private publicity agency.

Edis Mesihović, the present Savez leader, insisted that the organization is no longer state-controlled; yet Savez continues to be perceived as politically dominated by the ruling Bosniak party SDA. Edis Mesihović, criticized NUPN as a personal enterprise, which split off from Savez in order to obtain grants. But he also said that he supports reunification with NUPN, and said the only obstacles to such unification are personal. He said the independence of enterprises – the catchword for NUPN – is less important than professional standards.

Mr. Mesihović strongly rejected any involvement of Savez with trade unionism; nevertheless, he expressed criticism of NUPN for not assisting journalists to get out of black market employment and into structured, stable, and legal positions. He was critical of Sindikat, the only group functioning as a declared trade union, for becoming more a third association in the "Federation," than a real trade union, which he said is needed.

One problem for Savez is that many people claiming to be journalists joined it during the war, but did not pursue journalism seriously or lacked a commitment to authentic professionalism. Mr. Mesihović said the organization must now review its membership and limit it to real journalists.

**Recommendations:** Savez should be encouraged to stress professional training and standards as its sole mission. Every effort should be made to promote reunification of Savez with NUPN, perhaps through delimitation of clear, separate duties: for NUPN, lobbying, for Savez, training and professional development.

### **Independent Union of Journalists of the Republic of Srpska (NUN).**

Branko Perić of the NUN has developed a coordinating relationship with his counterpart in the "Federation," Mehmed Husić. Mr. Perić is also employed as Banja Luka editor of ONASA, the news agency run by Mr. Husić. Mr. Perić described NUN as a professional association, not a trade union, with 100 members, all employed in private enterprises, and growing. He said the organization is mainly concerned with intellectual property rights, training, lobbying. NUN has held four seminars for young journalists using U.S. models, with the topics of journalism and business, and elections. He described the main goal of NUN as continuing education of young journalists, and noted that a journalism department had just opened at the University of Banja Luka.

He said NUN supports the establishment of a separate trade union to handle contracts, social security, and salary guarantees.

He admitted that a very poor management situation exists in NUN, which he blamed on a bad organizational beginning. He said the group had made a poor choice in its board members, who were not sufficiently committed to it. However, he said NUN had held an assembly, elected new officers, and hired an office manager.

Like NUPN, NUN faces legal problems. NUN also must deal with approximately 30 personal suits against journalists, all of whom are presently paying their own court expenses out of pocket. Many suits have emerged against state-employed journalists in the "R.S.," because of the deep political conflicts there. He complained that NUN had sought affiliation with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) but received no support from them.

Mr. Perić expressed support for the establishment of an association of publishers in the "R.S."

**Recommendations:** Although perceived as more independent than its rival, UNRS, because of the latter's representation of state media employees, NUN is handicapped by the lack of credibility of Mr. Perić as an association leader. He has not held elections to his board and is perceived more as a functionary than a journalist. In addition, he is seen as too close to the international community. His strength, according to others, is his stress on legal issues.

NUN probably cannot be reformed. Although ending USAID assistance to NUN may be, in the short term, a painful process, it is simply undeniable that NUN has proven radically ineffective. NUN should be encouraged to reconstitute itself as a branch of NUPN, reporting to the latter's officers, as a condition of receiving further assistance, and should also establish a firmer link with UNRS, with the aim of achieving a single "R.S." media association.

#### **Union of Journalists of the Republic of Srpska (UNRS).**

UNRS has organized 80% of "R.S." journalists, but it is perceived critically for almost exclusively representing state media employees. However, radio broadcaster Branislav Božić, its president, is clearly the most dynamic association leader in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nevertheless, like its counterparts, UNRS clearly suffers above

all from a lack of clear self-definition. UNRS has committed itself to virtually every area of media association and trade union work; it maintains parallel but separate professional and trade-union organizations.

UNRS expressed virtual desperation on economic issues. Without economic relief from the international community comparable to that received in the "Federation," and given the breakdown of economic relations with Yugoslavia caused by the latest war, UNRS leaders increasingly look to classic trade union solutions to defend their interests. UNRS has already called a five minute strike.

**Recommendations:** In the short term, UNRS needs to be guided away from trade-union ideology and toward a greater emphasis on professional standards and related issues. Like UHN, UNRS would benefit from comparative seminars on professional associations and media trade unions in the leading industrial nations.

#### **Association of Croat Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (UHN.)**

UHN is the newest of the Bosnian media associations, founded in 1998 in Mostar. According to Vlatko Menix, International Secretary, it has 111 members. A reliable source reports that UHN was formed after its members were expelled from the Journalists' Union of the Republic of Croatia, from which they were removed because, according to that body, they were citizens of a foreign country, namely Bosnia-Herzegovina. This offers a rare example of Croatian obedience to the provisions of the Dayton Agreement, according to which Bosnia-Herzegovina is a single nation. In general, the Croatian state of President Franjo Tuđman, the Croatian ethnic leadership in Herceg-Bosna, and the Croatian media in Herceg-Bosna, are perceived as aggressively supporting, in the short term, revision of Dayton to recognize Herceg-Bosna as a third entity, with its eventual incorporation into Croatia proper.

Perceptions of Croatian state and HDZ party control over Herceg-Bosna and its media are difficult to deny given the character of the UHN interviewees, all of whom are employed by official, Croatian state media, directed from Croatia proper. Nevertheless, the alleged expulsion of these media employees from the Journalists' Union in Croatia proper illustrates two things: the occasional insistence of the Tuđman regime on formal compliance with Dayton, so as not to provoke the U.S., and the increasing independence of the broader labor movement in Croatia.

According to the interviewees, UHN exists to defend the rights of journalists, and is open to cooperation with all other organizations. All its expenses are paid for out of the members' own pockets. They stressed that financial independence is necessary if the organization is to attain political independence from HDZ, though they were not interrogated and volunteered no information on whether such independence is even theoretically possible given the situation in Croatia and Herceg-Bosna.

Mr. Menix stated that the three main media associations in the country are clearly ethnic in composition, with UHN representing Croats, the NUPN Bosniaks (Muslims), and the UNRS Serbs. He stated that 98% of the membership of each is uniform, presented this as "reality," and argued that any claims otherwise are a waste

of time. However, he also stated that the ethnic split "continues to kill journalists." With regard to the continued division of Mostar into two zones, he repeated common remarks about the lack of personal security of Croatian journalists in the Muslim East of the city. The same comments are heard from Muslim journalists in East Mostar about the west side of the city.

Nevertheless, he said UHN supports "any steps toward concrete understanding" between the city's two sides.

Mr. Menix stressed that UHN is a professional association and not a trade union. It should be noted that, whether this is or is not a positive aspect of the situation, UHN is virtually the only one of the groups claiming to represent journalists that has a clear mission: that of advocating for Croatian ethnic interests. In addition, it is the only organization among the group that is unitary, with no rival group among its constituents. Mr. Menix observed, however, that a separate trade union organization is necessary for Bosnian journalists, to address questions of labor law and employment conditions and contracts.

Mr. Menix stressed the success of UHN's recruitment campaign, in which some 111 members joined while the group had no material base; but this also may mainly reflect a uniform, political agenda among Croat journalists in Herceg-Bosna. He further emphasized the internal unity of the group, which is probably a consequence of a single ethnic and political outlook. However, he noted difficulties in managing the organization, which he blamed the culture of social passivity engendered by Communism, in which no education in modern management and responsibility was possible.

Mr. Menix noted with regret that there is no publishers' association in Herceg-Bosna and said that the establishment of such would be desirable.

**Recommendations:** UHN needs support in improving its services to members as a professional association rather than an ethnic special-interest group. An important part of such support would be training in what a professional association of journalists in the larger, Western industrial nations is and does.

UHN also needs to decide to what extent it will participate in IFJ activities, given that the latter are clearly biased toward labor issues. A step in that direction would be to hold a comparative seminar on media unions in modern industrial societies.

UHN should be encouraged to meet with Croatian publishers, including officers of state enterprises, to support the creation of a privately-run Croatian media publishers' and owners' association.

#### **Trade Union of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Sindikato).**

Sindikato was founded in 1997 with a clear mission: establishment of a Western-style trade union that would concern itself with journalists' immediate economic interests, above all negotiation of contracts. However, the difficult economic situation of the

country, the retardation of broader trade union reform, simple ignorance of modern trade unionism, and lack of commitment by members have proven major obstacles to getting Sindikat off the ground.

Sindikrat claims 250 current members. It maintains, at least on paper, branches in all 10 cantons of the "Federation" and has established relations with "R.S." associations. It holds regular membership meetings, according to Ms. Idrizović, its president. She asserted that numerous journalists wish to join Sindikat rather than any of the professional associations.

Sindikrat leaders view their main problem as the absence of any labor law in Bosnia-Herzegovina. But Ms. Idrizović was the strongest advocate among those interviewed, except for the president of Izdavača, in supporting the strengthening of a media publishers' and owners' association, on the argument that such is needed to get employers out of Sindikat, in which some now hold membership. This confusion of professional identity on the part of some members, like the confusion of mission at the organizational level, further reflects the chaotic nature of the economic reform process in Bosnia-Herzegovina's post-Communist society.

**Recommendations:** Sindikat can benefit only from one form of assistance: serious education in the nature of trade unionism in modern industrial societies, through small, intensive seminars.

#### **Publishers' Association of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Izdavača).**

Izdavača was founded in 1994 and has 120 members.

It is emblematic of the obstacles facing Bosnian media associations that Izdavača, the organization representing media proprietors, is almost never mentioned as a press association. Further, international bodies in Bosnia-Herzegovina typically theorize actions and decisions against media owners, without providing for their representation or input. Izdavača has never been asked to participate in any internationally-run discussions of Bosnian media.

This is hardly acceptable in the perspectives of a modern media industry in a modern industrial society. Given the prospect of rapid but problematical privatization, Bosnian media owners need a body that will advocate for their economic interests as owners. In addition, once labor law is established and contract negotiations begin to take place, a strong representative group for owners of media will be an absolute necessity for the establishment and maintenance of an orderly relationship between management and employees,

Like the associations, Izdavača suffers from lack of institutional focus; many members are also members of professional journalists' associations. Izdavača sees its ultimate mission as improving the privatization process while assisting in such matters as importation of newsprint. Mr. Demirović, president of Izdavača, declared that the main problem of all media associations in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the same as that many ascribe to their individual members, writ large: they are passive rather than active groups.

A publishers' association exists in the "R.S.," headed by Željko Kopanja, of *Nezavisne Novine*, but is organizationally quiescent. No joint meetings of the two groups have been held.

Mr. Demirović expressed considerable concern that layoffs from overstuffed media after the completion of privatization in the next few months may lead to serious labor conflict, and charged Sindikat and other associations with using irresponsible rhetoric. He called for real education of Sindikat and other officers in modern trade unionism.

**Recommendations:** Every effort should be made to assist Izdavača in becoming an authentic, efficient body representing the interests of publishers. In addition, Izdavaca should be encouraged to meet regularly with its the "R.S." counterpart, and the two bodies should support the creation of a similar body representing Croat media ownership.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **General Recommendations**

First, IREX should fund an expert in media professional organizations for an assignment of at least four months to work exclusively on these issues. Such an individual should be an American with extensive practical experience in this area, along with a published bibliography of original research and comparative studies. Although IREX ProMedia in Bosnia-Herzegovina is currently adequately staffed for professional training, analysis, and business training, organizational issues represent a separate area of competence in which practical experience is indispensable. As an alternative, an existing post should be reorganized to include adequate work time for extensive and dedicated attention to these issues.

Second, IREX ProMedia should recommend that the professional associations, unions, and publishers' associations join and participate in a non-official, advisory press council, or, better, a liaison committee, that will focus on coordination of their activities in the direction of eventual unification. Such a body should be directed and staffed by Bosnians rather than outsiders, and the Independent Union of Professional Journalists (NUPN) should be considered the lead organization in establishing such a coordinating committee. Activities of such a press council should include study of a reform in the issuance of press cards, which should be removed from the authority of SFOR, establishment of a legal fund to assist journalists throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, and creation of a press center in Sarajevo.

Third, USAID should review its policy on assistance to state-dominated and party-oriented organizations. The reason for this is simple but dual: the Union of Journalists of the Republic of Srpska (UNRS) is undeniably the most serious and effective such association in that entity, regardless of its reputation as a state-controlled body, and the Union of Croat Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (UHN) is the sole such organization in the area of Herceg-Bosna. Exclusion of these groups from assistance serves no practical purpose. Both these organizations are crucial to

the further maturation of a consensus between all the groups, across ethnic lines, toward which they have already demonstrated their openness.

Fourth, IREX ProMedia must insist on annual certification of all such organizations (except publishers' associations) based on reviews of their internal and financial practices.

Fifth, IREX ProMedia must assist the Publishers' Association of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Izdavača) in becoming an efficient, functioning advocate for the business interests of media owners. Izdavača should immediately establish relations with its counterpart in the Republic of Srpska, which should also be assisted in attaining a more efficient operating status, and every effort should be made to establish such an association to represent Croat publishers.

Sixth, IREX ProMedia should supplement its training in investigative journalism, ethics, standards, and related issues with seminars on the relation between media entrepreneurship, business law and responsibility, and modern trade unionism.

Seventh, IREX ProMedia should insist on the adoption of regular consultations between all professional associations and unions, on one side, and the publishers' associations, on the other.

Eighth, in several areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina journalists' associations are absent, including Bihać-Cazin, Goražde, and the Trans-Drina area of Bosnia and Eastern Herzegovina. Particularly in Bihać-Cazin, relations between journalists and local political authorities are extremely tense. IREX ProMedia should assist the journalists' associations to extend and establish themselves in these areas.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **A Postscript on the International Federation of Journalists**

It should be noted that notwithstanding the serious differences and distinctions between the professional associations and unions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Brussels-based labor oriented NGO, the IFJ, formulated a memorandum, signed by the five associations and Sindikat, last year. This document, which outlines basic principles under which media associations should operate, has come to be viewed as a kind of constitutional framework for the coordination of these groups.

However, it is the observation of the survey author that IFJ presently lacks credibility in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and will not be able to effectively follow up its various pledges of assistance and promulgation of guidelines in this area.

\* \* \* \* \*