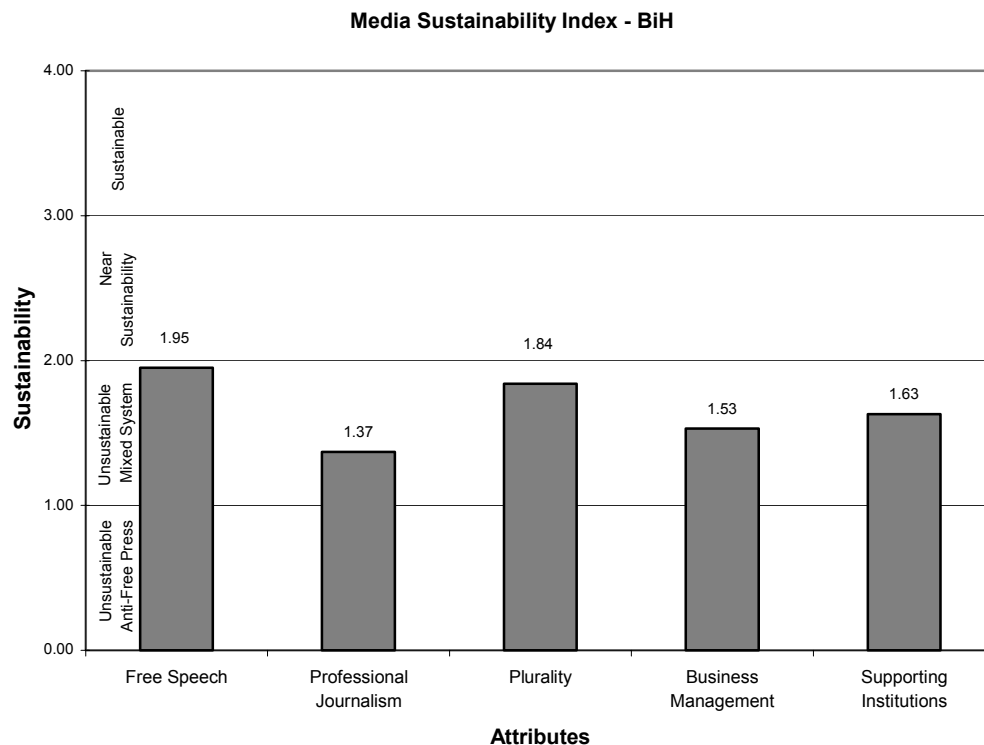


Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) operate under very dynamic conditions. A total of 272 active media outlets, both print and broadcast, survived the war and media expansion was encouraged by the liberal conditions for launching new outlets and by significant foreign support. By the beginning of 1997, the number of media outlets had increased to 490. Independent media has received the most vigorous foreign assistance, as they are critical for BiH's ongoing process of national reconciliation, economic restructuring, and democratization. However, the development of independent media is all too often hampered by controlling political interests of ethnically based ruling parties whose priority is to maintain their power and resist serious reforms. Often, the same political actors who used media to pursue their goals during the war and the immediate aftermath continue to influence media outlets today. Political pressure on media in general is a widespread problem in BiH.

In the past two years, the period of media expansion has given way to a period of market consolidation, particularly for broadcast media. In 2000, the Independent Media Commission (IMC) identified 268 broadcast organizations using nearly 700 transmitters, which made Bosnia one of the highest per-capita broadcast markets in the world at the time. Cooperating with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the Independent Media Commission (IMC) granted temporary broadcast licenses to selected stations and began implementing measures to curb piracy. These actions caused many small broadcasters to go out of business. The Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) replaced the IMC in 2001 and is currently in the process of granting local, regional and national concessions. The issuance of permanent licenses will decrease the number of stations as well.



Scoring System

- 0** = Country does not meet indicator; government or social forces may be actively opposed to its implementation.
1 = Country minimally meets aspects of the indicator; forces may not be actively opposed to its implementation but business environment may not support it and government or profession not fully and actively supporting change.
2 = Country has begun to meet many aspects of indicator but progress may be too recent to judge or still dependent on current government or political forces.
3 = Country meets most aspects of indicator and implementation of indicator has occurred over several years and/or change in government, indicating likely sustainability.
4 = Country meets the aspects of the indicator; has remained intact over multiple changes in government, economic fluctuations, changes in public opinion and/or changing social conventions.

The scores for all indicators are totaled and averaged for each objective.

Each of the objectives can receive a score from 0 to 4:

Above 3: Sustainable and free independent media

2-3: Independent media approaching sustainability

1-2: Significant progress remains to be made; society or government not fully supportive

0-1: Country meets few of indicators and government/society actively opposing changes

The development of the media sector continues to face numerous obstacles. The legal and regulatory media framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina is presently undergoing some changes but more reform is necessary. The CRA designed a new Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) that was passed by the government, but there are other areas of legislation that still require attention. Poor business management practices, saturation of the media market, and a weak economy frustrate media sector progress toward financial sustainability. Supporting media institutions—private and independent printing houses, independent distribution systems, and professional associations—do not function in the best possible way, further obstructing media development. Bosnia's journalists' associations are often split along ethnic lines, and the broadcast and publisher associations do not operate efficiently.

The overall quality of journalism remains low due to the years of conflict and the resulting brain drain that has deprived Bosnia of many talented and experienced journalists. Reports and broadcasts produced by post-war Bosnian journalists exhibit little imagination, are based on limited research or fact-checking, rely heavily on press conferences and official statements, and remain excessively focused on the politics of the principal cities (Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar).

A variety of media products are available and accessible, but media remain largely tied to their respective entities and ethnic groups, and therefore do not provide information related to the larger political or ethnic picture in BiH. In reaction to these market trends, political parties are trying to consolidate their control over media outlets and are working to tighten their grip on electronic and print markets.

The international community has been relatively successful in facilitating cooperation across entity borders and ethnic divides. Independent media have received the greatest assistance from international donors, because they are critical for BiH's ongoing process of national reconciliation, economic restructuring, and democratization. However, the development of independent media is all too often hampered by controlling political interests of ethnically based ruling parties whose priority is to maintain their power and resist serious reforms. Often, the same political actors who used media to pursue their goals in wartime still continue to influence media outlets today. Political pressure on media in general is a widespread problem in BiH.

Organizations such as the Soros Foundation, the European Union, USAID, OSCE and OHR have implemented independent media programs that are designed to help media outlets provide citizens with professional, balanced, and objective information; selected media outlets have received training and technical assistance. These activities have had a positive impact, enabling a large number of existing media outlets to survive and allowing for the creation of new independent outlets.

Attribute #1: Legal norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information

Indicators
1. Legal/social protections of free speech exist and are enforced
2. Licensing of broadcast media is fair, competitive, and apolitical
3. Market entry conditions and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries
4. Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare
5. State or public media do not receive preferential legal treatment, and law guarantees editorial independence
6. Libel is a civil law issue, public officials are held to higher standards, offended party must prove falsity and malice
7. Public information is easily accessible; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media and journalists
8. Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists
9. Entry into journalism profession is free and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists

The BiH constitution guarantees legal and social protection of free speech. The constitution's legal provisions are even harmonized with international human rights standards: Article II of the State Constitution states in Paragraph 2 that "the rights and freedoms set forth in the European Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols shall apply directly to BiH. These shall have priority over all other law." Unfortunately, there is a noticeable lack of political will to enforce basic constitutional rights. Government authorities and high officials often prohibit freedom of speech by threatening journalists with the tax police and other intimidating measures. Another obstacle to enforcement in general is the lack of independence and the level of corruption in the judiciary. Still another problem is public apathy: freedom-of-speech violations rarely cause public outrage. Only the bravest journalists dare raise their voices against violations, but even they are afraid for their security. The right to the freedom of speech remains a paper guarantee without meaningful implementation on the ground.

In 1999, the international community in BiH established the Independent Media Commission (IMC). Its major functions were to regulate media development and broadcast licensing. Recently, this commission merged with the indigenous Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (TRA) to form a new organization called the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA). The CRA has taken over the work of the IMC and continues to issue permanent broadcast licenses. To receive a permanent license, broadcasters must submit a very detailed application responding to a number of criteria: financial sustainability, ability to satisfy the needs of the region covered by the station, diversity of broadcast programs, etc. There are still some internationals on the CRA's Board of Directors, but soon the entire operation will be transferred to Bosnians. Although there are minor problems with licensing in BiH, overall the procedure is fair and competitive.

Media law in BiH does provide equal opportunity for market entry, when compared to other businesses. The legal norms regulating market entry and tax structure for media outlets are enforced. There is one tax law in BiH, which is applied equally to media and other businesses. Media must be by law 51 percent Bosnian-owned. Media with sufficient profit potential to attract foreign investment must be able to operate without hindrance over the entire BiH territory. Unfortunately, very few outlets have succeeded in achieving this level of operation so far. Nationwide broadcasting is complicated by the fact that it presently requires dual registration and taxation in the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Muslim-Croat Federation. Existing political and legal barriers between the two entities and de facto barriers between Muslim and Croat areas of the Federation effectively divide the country into three media markets, none of which function as a stable market.

The most frequent crimes against journalists take the form of court prosecutions for defamation or libel. There are also cases of physical violence against journalists. In a country with a small number of free and independent media daring to publish or broadcast investigative pieces, crimes against such journalists happen relatively often. The most violent crime committed to date has been a car bomb. Zeljko Kopanja, owner and editor-in-chief of Banja Luka's top-rated independent daily *Nezavisne Novine*, lost both legs when a bomb planted beneath his car exploded on October 22, 2000 in Banja Luka. At that time, *Nezavisne Novine* had just begun publishing stories on war crimes in BiH, giving rise to the suspicion that the assassination attempt was a terrorist act aimed at intimidating journalists who investigate such issues. Kopanja's case prompted a public outcry because of its brutality, but in general other crimes against journalists do not cause significant public reaction.

As most crimes against journalists are driven by political decisions and in reality have little to do with actual defamation or libel, the security of investigative journalists is very low. Rarely are offenders in these cases prosecuted, simply because those that have instructed them to commit the crimes do not want their identities to be disclosed. The country is burdened with corruption and crimes are most often committed by high-ranking politicians or by members of their families. Nepotism and misuse of state resources are very common and journalists are well aware of this fact. In general, crimes in BiH are not prosecuted aggressively; therefore media cases do not differ from other complaints. To get a valid court – ruling, people are often required to wait for more than a year, if not longer.

No division exists between public and private media regarding access to information. While there are no laws favoring public over private media in that respect, there are some indications that such favoritism exists. Public media, be they at the entity, municipal, or cantonal level, are viewed as friendly to public officials and political parties, and therefore are the preferred clients when it comes to making public comments, granting interviews, or providing information to reporters. Until recently, public media were completely run and influenced by ruling political parties. Now powerful businesses often own media outlets and use them to further their business interests or to serve the interests of the local ethnic community. The international community has taken a lead in transforming media on both the state and entity levels, with the main goal of eliminating any potential influence on the content of media.

The High Representative in BiH decriminalized the libel and defamation chapters of both BiH entities' criminal codes in July 1999. As a result, libel and defamation are no longer criminal offenses and both fall under the jurisdiction of civil laws. This decision will be valid until the parliaments of both entities adopt new libel laws. The drafts have already been prepared and are pending decision in both parliaments' forthcoming sessions.

BiH has recently adopted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), both at the state and Republika Srpska levels. The Federation has not yet adopted this law. Except for the special provisions in the FOIA allowing the government to withhold information from the public, no other law precludes independent media from access to public information. The information deemed inaccessible to the public is related to foreign policy issues, defense and security interests, monetary policy issues, crime prevention, some confidential commercial information, and personal privacy.

The state-owned telephone and postal companies (PTT's) are the major Internet service providers in each entity, but access to the Internet is available to all who wish to subscribe and the state does not place any restriction on using it as a source of information. Although media outlets have unrestricted access to international news, it remains largely inaccessible due to prohibitively high prices. Accessing foreign sources of information by buying rights for certain programs is hard due to the generally restricted financial means of media outlets. Piracy is still a problem in BiH, but less so since the Independent Media Commission introduced a system of fines for all media broadcasting illegally acquired movies and airing foreign news programs without proper contracts.

The state does not provide any special privileges, or impose any restrictions for any specific group of reporters/editors, precluding them from freely entering the journalism profession. No licensing is necessary for reporting on special events. The government does not in any way control entrance to journalism schools.

Attribute #2: Journalism meets professional standards of quality

Indicators
1. Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced
2. Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards
3. Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship
4. Journalists cover key events and issues
5. Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption
6. Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming
7. Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient
8. Quality niche reporting and programming exist (investigative, economics/business, local, political)

Teaching the techniques of investigative journalism is still the focus of all international and local organizations providing training to BiH journalists. Since investigative journalism was, for obvious reasons, not popular in socialist times, and because most journalists are young and inexperienced, this particular knowledge is much needed. Several independent magazines in BiH are very good at producing investigative reports and checking sources, both local and international. The best examples are the reports on corruption and war crimes published in *Dani* magazine, *Slobodna Bosna*, or *Nezavisne Novine*. These magazines have received staff training and have also managed to keep some of the pre-war, experienced journalists. They are distributed in both entities and serve as models for developing the practice of investigative journalism at other publications in BiH. Unfortunately, editorials with biased comments and a lack of balance between fact and opinion are still common in BiH. Journalists employed in media outlets set up and influenced by the ruling political parties at the national, cantonal, and municipal levels self-censor their work to satisfy certain editorial policies and for fear of losing their jobs. Other reasons for self-censorship are the fear of offending political circles or officials, the need to conform to certain business interests, or pressure from chief editors.

In BiH there is a code of ethics that has been adopted by the five professional associations: two in the Federation (one independent and one non-independent), two in the RS (independent and non-independent), and one in the Croatian region of the Federation. These ethical standards have been relatively widely accepted and they do not in any way contradict ethical standards developed by other European journalistic associations.

Key political events are usually covered, but a variety of other issues are not: some social topics, economic development, the environment, health, etc. War crimes and terrorist acts are also topics requiring much courage to cover. There is a certain level of freedom exercised by independent media in covering events related to security issues. Their reports are professional, balanced, and neutral. The serious economic problems persisting in BiH affect reporters' salaries, which are very small but still on par with other professional salaries in the country. The average income is between 300 and 500 DM, which discourages the independence of the profession and does result in cases of ethical violations (e.g., selling favorable coverage, etc.).

Niche reporting in any of the print or broadcast fields is rare, but it is slightly more accepted and practiced in print. Reporting in such areas as science, health, business, and social issues remains very limited. Lack of training and experience is a major constraint to broadening areas of coverage, although the assumption that the public has little or no interest in a broader range of topics is also a contributing factor.

Financial improvement of media outlets depends greatly on the share of entertainment versus news programming. Currently, entertainment programs do not eclipse news and information. However, local media outlets do tend to have a larger share of entertainment programs and the inclusion of more news

programs could force the audience to look for more engaging formats. Although television is the most popular and available news medium, other types of media offer enough information to satisfy almost everyone's needs, even though access to these sources is limited by people's inability to pay for foreign papers, cable television, or Internet connections.

Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are insufficient for BiH's needs. Only a handful of television stations—NTV Hayat in Sarajevo and ATV in Banja Luka—have state-of-the-art equipment. Several stations have received donations of equipment from USAID, the Soros Media Center, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the EU, but often this equipment is already relatively outdated. Leading newspapers and magazines are for the most part adequately but modestly equipped; the typewriter is still a common tool for many journalists in BiH. There are a total of five printing houses in BiH, but their outdated equipment often serves as an obstacle to producing timely and high-quality products.

Attribute #3: Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news

Indicators
1. Plurality of public and private news sources (e.g. print, broadcast, Internet) exist and are affordable
2. Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted
3. State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are non-partisan, and serve the public interest
4. Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media
5. Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs
6. Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates
7. A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources

The question of access to a variety of sources of information is very different from the issue of affordability. While it is true that BiH citizens can in fact access different sources of information, the reality of the situation is that very few people can afford them. In urban areas a larger number of people can afford to buy papers, but the overriding problem is that print media is expensive for BiH citizens: the average salary is approximately 400DM and a local daily costs 1DM, magazines cost 2DM and foreign publications cost four to six times more. There is a high level of unemployed or underemployed persons with irregular incomes in the rural areas that simply cannot afford to purchase print publications. Without an official survey on the affordability of print media, the estimate of the population that can afford to purchase publications is approximately 20 percent. However, this percentage of the population does not equal the number of people who actually read print editions; each copy of a newspaper generally has more than one reader as they are often passed to friends, colleagues, or neighbors.

Because it is relatively cheap, television is the most popular news medium. Radio follows television in popularity and print media is third. Internet is not available as a media source in rural areas because of the lack of computers. Even in larger cities, Internet is not used frequently. People usually have access to the Internet at their places of work, but do not have it in their homes. Internet service providers are expensive and provide only medium-quality services. The BiH state and entity governments have not imposed any restrictions on accessing information and there are no restrictions on receiving foreign televisions or print publications.

State or public media do not reflect the views of the entire political spectrum; they are not non-partisan, and their primary goal is not to serve the public interest. State-run media's main goal is to protect the interests of their founders, supporting political parties, or influential politicians, instead of providing a wide variety of objective information to the citizens. The international community is presently engaged in the long process of transforming state-run media into true public-service broadcasters. One of the many problems is that public broadcasters cannot collect enough revenue from viewer subscriptions to purchase or produce high-quality programming.

The independent news agencies such as ONASA, which is the only nation-wide independent news agency with offices in Mostar and Banja Luka, are gathering and distributing news for both print and broadcast media. Improvements could be made in the quality and variety of information provided by these agencies. Media outlets have the right and the opportunity to subscribe to the products of any existing news agency in BiH. In smaller communities, media outlets tend to prefer to subscribe to the news agency best suited to the needs of the community, which often means receiving news and information that is geared toward the ethnic group in their respective region. Independent news agencies do provide news in a more or less nondiscriminatory fashion, as their ultimate goal is to maintain the largest number of subscribers as possible. All public media use news agencies as regular sources of information and a large number of media outlets still rely on international donors to purchase news services for them.

Of the nearly 300 broadcast outlets in BiH, the vast majority of both radio and TV stations are in private hands and news programming is considered essential in their programming schedules. Municipal or cantonal outlets also view news as a vital part of their program, but it is accompanied by the promotion of the political agenda of the party that sponsors them. Many local stations use the Voice of America (VOA) or Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcasts as information sources.

There is limited transparency regarding the ownership of private media, partially because the public does not seem interested in this issue. Media outlets' financial operations are generally not transparent and detailed information and figures are often not available even to financial institutions. The main reason for nontransparency is to avoid paying taxes and social benefits and pension contributions for full-time employees. Another reason for the lack of transparency is to conceal financial dependency on a political party. While a political affiliation may or may not be obvious in the editorial policy of a media outlet, political funding is not appealing to the general public and most media tend to hide this information.

The issue of minority media and representation is one of special importance in BiH. Because life is so politicized, even a simple social problem can become an inflammatory political issue. The Bosniak, Croat, and Serb media cover ethnic issues such as civil rights, religious matters, or political rights in a way that would be viewed as minority coverage in other circumstances. Depending on the media outlet and the topics covered, occasionally such news coverage stirs hostile reaction. Although the three main ethnic groups of BiH maintain their own media outlets, other minority groups such as the Roma do not have their own ethnic news coverage.

Attribute #4: Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence

Indicators
1. Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses
2. Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources
3. Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market
4. Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets
5. Independent media do not receive government subsidies
6. Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences
7. Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced

There are only a few media outlets and supporting institutions operating as efficient and well-managed businesses in BiH. This is due in part to the competition between private, independent media and the state-owned or public media for advertising, but also because media managers do not have the expertise required to run a successful private operation.

There are several indicators demonstrating the level of management of independent media. One indicator is the way in which media finance their operations; the media's dependence on donor funding is decreasing in BiH and the market is beginning to dictate the survival of print and broadcast outlets. The 2001 advertising revenues, the dominant source of profit for most media, are estimated in the range of

approximately 25 million DM. Broadcast media tend to receive most of this revenue. Recently, OHR issued a temporary provision that increased the cap on advertising time for public broadcasters from four minutes to 10 minutes per hour; this was done to allow the public media to generate more revenue but in effect it has put the private broadcasters at an economic disadvantage. State-owned and public stations tend to have a problem with overstaffing; the successor to RTV BiH inherited approximately 1,500 staff members, when 500 would be closer to the optimal figure. Local program production is a big-ticket item in the local outlets' budgets and the stations usually seek donor funding to offset production costs. High-quality productions are expensive and at times are well beyond the economic reach of even publicly funded media.

Print media are slowly increasing their advertising revenues as well but they still trail behind the broadcast media. International donor funding is the second most important source of revenue for private media. Few print publications receive any substantial revenue from subscriptions, partly because the collection of subscription fees is poorly organized.

In the past few years, several successful local advertising agencies have been established in BiH, including SVRSA, Fabrika, Euromedia, McCann Ericson, and Satchi and Satchi. Media outlets and potential clients did not realize at first the importance of ad agencies in media development, but their attitudes are changing gradually. Media professionals are not sufficiently skilled in using ad agencies, but as international support to media scales back, BiH media are realizing that the only way for them to survive is by selling ad time and space. Currently, TV is the most desirable medium for ad agencies because of audience accessibility and higher-quality products. However, outdoor advertising is increasing as billboards become more popular.

In many cases, the municipal or cantonal governments share ownership of radio or television stations with the stations' employees. These outlets are financed in a slightly different way; the municipality or canton provides either a direct subsidy or a contract to the station to cover what they consider to be the most important events. Interference in editorial policies in these cases is usually insignificant. Independent media occasionally receive subsidies from the government, but this is not a common practice.

Audience research for measuring audience preferences has only recently come into practice in BiH. While the quality of market research products is quite good, rating companies are not used to their full capacities and the number of clients approaching them for research projects is insufficient. Advertising clients are more apt to commission such studies rather than media outlets, which have limited resources and lack knowledge about the value and purpose of market research. Media outlets and other organizations need training to understand how to use the findings.

There are currently two organizations in BiH, Prism Research and Mareco Index Bosnia, which produce good ratings. Both are privately owned and independent in their work. In the past two years the amount of market research has increased to meet a growing number of requests from advertisers and the international community. The quality of the research is exceptional for BiH, but such companies are small in number and charge relatively high prices.

Attribute #5: Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media

Indicators
1. Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services
2. Professional associations work to protect journalists' rights
3. NGOs support free speech and independent media
4. Quality journalism degree programs exist providing substantial practical experience
5. Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills
6. Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are in private hands, apolitical, and not restricted
7. Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted

The Association of Electronic Media (AEM) was established two years ago as an independent association with the prime task to lobby governmental agencies and international organizations on professional issues. Currently, AEM is working most closely with the Communications Regulatory Agency on the issue of permanent licenses in BiH. Although AEM has about 200 members from all over the country, it is still not officially registered and therefore cannot collect membership fees. The association continues to rely on international support in the form of training and technical assistance. AEM has made significant progress in increasing its membership and representing the needs of its members.

BiH is in a unique position regarding professional journalists' associations in the print sector. There are five different associations: two are independent and nationwide, two are politically oriented and nationwide, and the fifth is exclusively for Bosnian Croats. The division of associations along ethnic and political lines creates problems for journalists and hinders the work of these associations. Membership in professional associations is growing and the legally registered associations regularly collect membership fees rather than relying on assistance from the international community. BiH does not yet have a publisher's association, but one is in the process of being created.

The general role of the NGO sector in BiH is not well defined and organizations that serve as public watchdogs are still in the initial phases of development. These organizations' activities are mainly focused on increasing government transparency and increasing citizens' participation in political and economic life. BiH citizens do not understand what NGOs are; nor do they have enough knowledge about the role of the NGO sector. The international community plays a very active role in BiH on issues that are naturally the province of the NGO sector. However, NGOs have recently become more involved in the creation of new legislation and monitoring or regulatory bodies.

Journalism education programs in BiH tend to be theoretical and do not meet the students' needs for practical training. Bosnia does not have any private universities that offer a journalism degree and there are limited opportunities for students to go abroad for their education. Even though the international community has provided several training programs for journalism students, the media market cannot support the flow of so many young and inexperienced journalists and the vast majority of them end up leaving the profession because of the lack of jobs.

In-country journalism training programs sponsored by the international community are fairly accessible and training providers are trying to include as many participants as possible. The Soros Media Center has operated the BBC school for both radio and television journalism training for the past three years. Media Plan and the Canadian International Development Agency have plans to open and operate journalism schools, and the local office of Internews works in conjunction with the journalism school of the University of Sarajevo. The IREX/ProMedia Program also offers short-term and on-site training programs for its local partners. These international programs offer more practical experience than local journalism programs.

International organizations have begun using local experts and instructors to train local media professionals; expatriates are usually involved only on a consultancy basis. Training courses are generally offered on basic journalism skills and investigative reporting, as well as business, marketing, and management for media. Training in specific topics such as economic reporting, the functioning of state institutions, or relations between NGOs and media are still much needed but rarely offered.

Printing houses and channels of media distribution (e.g. kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are most often in private hands. Owners of the printing houses usually have close contacts with the government and tend to be influenced by them, which can result in restricted or politicized access to printing and other services. Media distribution channels tend to be political and restrictive, since individuals affiliated with political parties or high government officials control them. Kiosks are probably the best source of income in BiH. Printing companies, apart from their own distribution networks, also own kiosks and maintain monopolies

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on them in certain key areas. Independent press publications cannot be sold at kiosks and are forced to use the services of newsboys on the streets.

In the broadcast sector, public broadcasters own the majority of transmitters and the most significant problem for independent electronic media in BiH is signal distribution. Because public media have the monopoly over transmitters, and renting them is not a possibility, it is difficult and complicated for small independent stations to distribute their signals.

Participants

USAID/Bosnia requested that the participants in the Bosnia session not be identified.