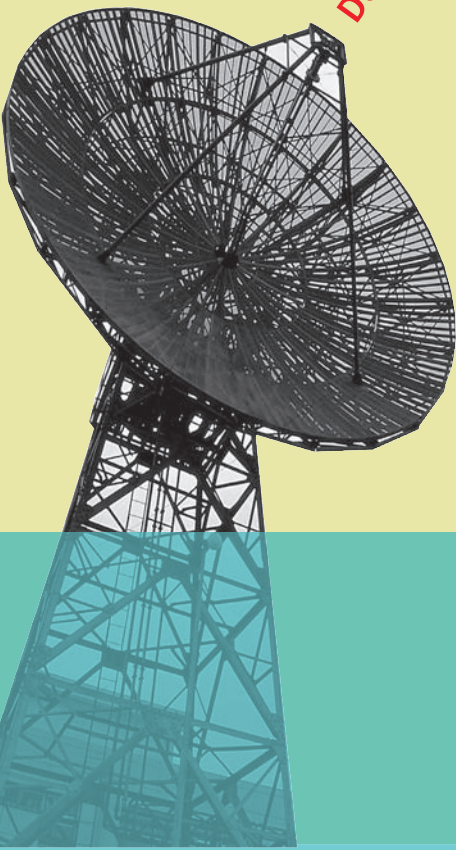


MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

2003

Development of Sustainable Independent Media in Europe and Eurasia





"Kosovo media outlets have not yet incorporated modern market research and promotional methodologies to help steer their business development strategies, but they are on their way to adopting them," a panelist said.



Introduction

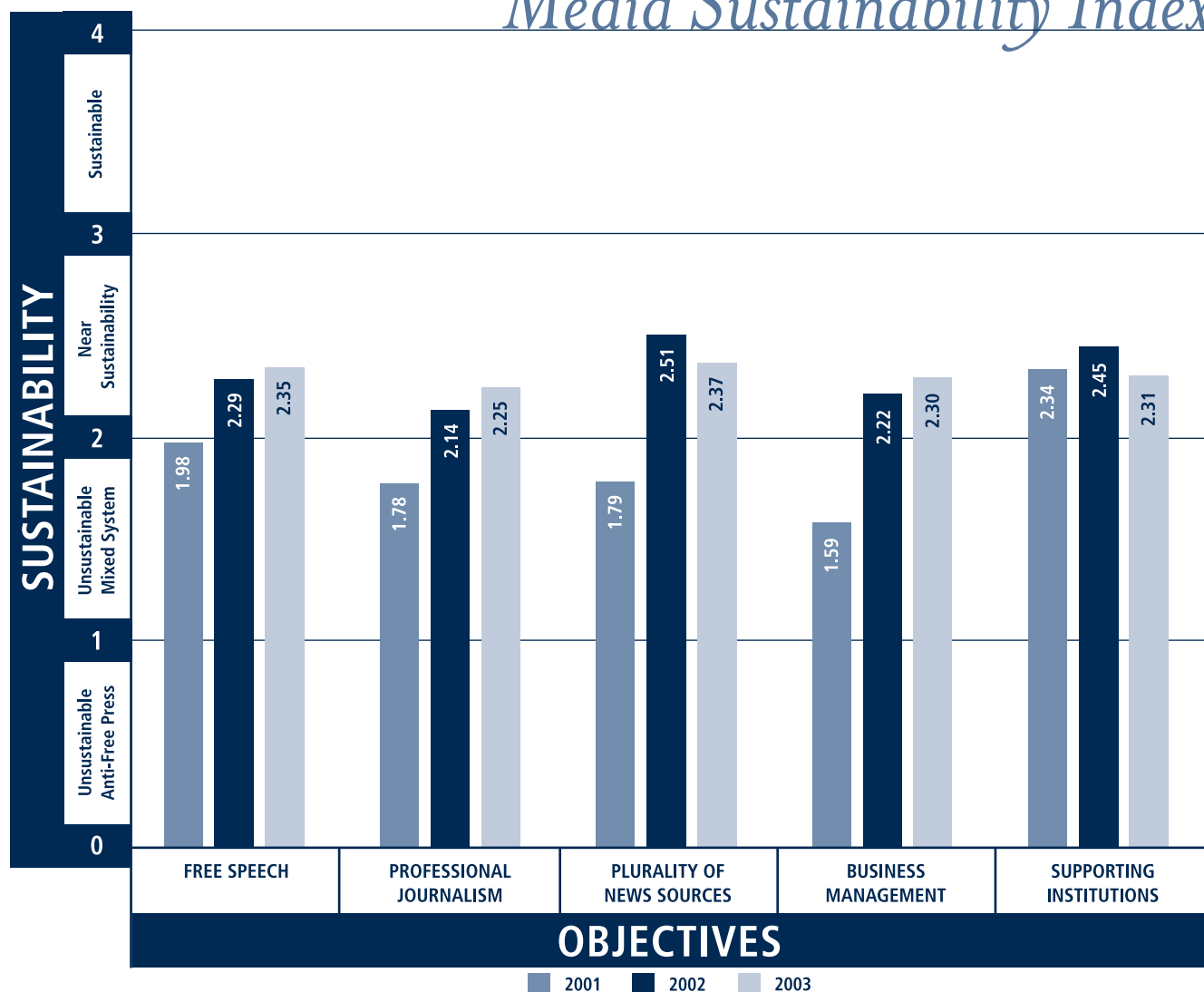
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he United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, ending a decade of oppression under the rule of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic and a year of conflict in Kosovo. UNMIK is headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN (the SRSG), who is endowed with a mandate to ensure “substantial autonomy.” Other current governing institutions are the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Government (PISG), which emerged as a result of elections in November 2001. While the PISG have significant governing responsibilities, the SRSG retains a number of specific reserved powers on vital issues such as external relations, the administration of public, state, and socially owned property/enterprises, protection of the rights of communities, and security. The strongest media outlet in Kosovo, the single public broadcaster RTK (Radio Television Kosovo), is also a reserved power of the SRSG.

Kosovo, a region with approximately 2 million inhabitants, hosts one of the highest concentrations of media outlets in the region. The media map includes five daily newspapers, several magazines, and 112 broadcasters, including three Kosovo-wide television stations, four Kosovo-wide radio stations, 15 more with relatively broad reach, and 90 other broadcasters with local audiences. Four years after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing and the retreat of Serbian forces, the international community continues to oversee the regulation of media. Authority rests with the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC), run by the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) until its eventual successor, an indigenous Independent Media Commission, takes over media regulation for the long term.

Kosovo

Media Sustainability Index



Objective Scoring

The averages of all the indicators are averaged to obtain a single, overall score for each objective. Objective scores are averaged to provide an overall score for the country. IREX interprets the overall scores as follows:

- 3 and above:** Sustainable and free independent media
- 2–3:** Independent media approaching sustainability
- 1–2:** Significant progress remains to be made; society or government is not fully supportive
- 0–1:** Country meets few indicators; government and society actively oppose change

Indicator Scoring

Each indicator is scored using the following system:

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

Objective 1: Free Speech

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.35/4.00

The latest indicators regarding free speech in Kosovo reveal significantly increased optimism in comparison with previous years. The Media Sustainability Index (MSI) panel agreed that Kosovo has begun to meet many of the legal and social norms that protect and promote free speech, including access to information.

However, although the Kosovo Constitutional Framework guarantees freedom of speech, intimidation and pressure do occur. Journalists often receive verbal threats, though fortunately these rarely result in action. There were cases during 2003 in which both international and national institutions and the security forces violated the rights of Kosovars to the free flow of information. The lack of safety and social protection has had a negative impact on the overall quality of journalism, particularly in the field of investigative journalism,

which is still mostly lacking in Kosovo. Journalists who cover municipalities and who live outside urban areas are the most vulnerable. In too many cases, journalists have turned into “protocol” reporters, simply relaying official actions in what MSI panelists defined as a form of self-censorship. The panelists concluded that despite legal guarantees, the situation on the ground leaves much to be improved.

While violent attacks on journalists rarely occur, public outrage against such incidents remains alarmingly low. Obvious progress has been noted concerning serious crimes in 2003, a year in which no journalists were killed in Kosovo. However, the deaths of journalists killed in the immediate postconflict period remain unsolved, with no followup on whether these deaths were related to media coverage or other motives.

In 2003, the Special Representative signed the Assembly of Kosovo’s law on access to official documents. Several areas remain off limits to the public, however: matters related to the Special Representative’s areas of jurisdiction; information related to the government’s vital interests, including security, defense, the military, and external relations; and data on the 28 percent income tax paid into the Kosovo budget that the UNMIK administration controls. In addition, journalists who fall out of favor with government ministries or even international authorities often encounter barriers to their news gathering. In many cases, access to information depends on the quality of the connections a journalist cultivates within such institutions, quite often with sources whose demands for anonymity damage the credibility of the reporting.

The MSI panelists stressed, however, that both UNMIK and the PISG have established a promising legal framework. Several panelists emphasized that the laws and regulations technically meet the norms of European standards, while others suggest that two UNMIK regulations—2000/22 and 2000/37 (governing the conduct of print media)—restrict print media. A number of laws still must be passed to ensure sustainable media development. For example, copyright guidelines were introduced recently in response to the complaints of composers and writers that the media had been using their material without prior permission or compensation.

Media regulation remains the domain of the international community. Two years after the start of efforts to establish a domestic body, formation of the Independent Media Commission (IMC) continues to be delayed. This can be largely attributed to major disagreements between commercial and public television as well

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

as international donors on whether the public broadcaster will have the right to sell advertising. Opponents maintain this would put commercial broadcasters at a disadvantage.

The international community is also responsible for media licensing. These procedures have been deemed fair overall and the criteria solid, though both the process and selection have been deemed less transparent than would be ideal. Several panelists pointed out that a monopoly exists in licensing, as the international bodies awarded initial broadcast licenses behind closed doors and without establishing a fair bidding process. In addition, owners of local radio stations believe that the licensing procedures are uncompetitive due to the small number of national frequencies allocated to Kosovo. With their national coverage making these outlets the preferred vehicles for advertising, small private radio stations say they are in a disadvantageous position. So far, no renewal of current licenses is seen in the near future.

Kosovo media outlets operate under the same conditions for market entry as other industries. The Temporary Media Commissioner emphasizes that there are neither special exemptions nor restrictions for media. No heavier tax burden for media has been applied, although media owners believe that the value-added tax (VAT) is unusually high for newspapers. Some media professionals feel that a lower tax rate should apply for media to compensate for profits lost to power outages and infrastructure problems.

The new criminal code defines libel and defamation as criminal offenses. According to the panelists, defamation should be incorporated into the civil law, as it is with most Western European countries. Currently, however, libel is still punishable by prison sentences.

Opinions were divided regarding the editorial independence of media outlets. According to one panelist, public media have not yet established the checks and balances necessary for preserving their independence from political and economic influences. According to the media commissioner, however, RTK, Kosovo's only public television station, is generally insulated by the international community from partisan political influence. The MSI panel stressed that Kosovo society is excluded from the decision-making process regarding the appointment of the RTK board of directors—twice in the past four years, the OSCE and the UN unilaterally renewed contracts of some members—and the broadcaster's independence will remain unclear until this is remedied. Although international assistance is decreasing, some panelists doubted the full independence of Kosovo media outlets because most continue to rely heavily on the remaining donor sup-

port. According to the media commissioner, however, the influence of donors is overestimated: Only 10 percent of media outlets receive such support, and funding continues to decline. Most panelists, however, emphasized that the crucial Kosovo-wide broadcasters, RTK, KTV, and TV 21, receive this 10 percent, making it a more important factor in considering donors' influence over editorial policies.

Major print media outlets are in a better situation as they are becoming more economically sustainable. Even so, print outlets cannot always resist the influence of various interest groups.

The panel agreed that media outlets have unrestricted access to international news and news sources, although broadcasters tend not to make use of this material, choosing instead to rely on press releases and news conferences to set the coverage agenda. There are no restrictions on entering the profession of journalism.

Objective 2: Professional Journalism

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.25/4.00

Kosovars view local media with strikingly different degrees of trust and satisfaction, a situation that is compounded by media's varying sense of their own responsibilities to the public. Surprisingly, a recent survey

Journalism meets professional standards of quality	
PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM INDICATORS	■ Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced.
	■ Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards.
	■ Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.
	■ Journalists cover key events and issues.
	■ Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption.
	■ Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming.
	■ Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient.
	■ Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

conducted by a private marketing research company, INDEX Kosova, revealed that a significant percentage of respondents placed greater trust in the media than in some of Kosovo's governing institutions, including UNMIK and the provisional government. The MSI panel, however, cast the situation quite differently: While quality reporting exists in Kosovo, biased and unprofessional journalism does as well.

Panelists agreed that the process of creating an independent, objective, and professional media is a work in progress, with some improvement in the timeliness and accuracy of reporting during 2003. However, the quality of content in both electronic and print outlets still suffers due to unethical conduct and a lack of professionalism on the part of journalists. Many reporters remain subjective, biased, and politicized. In many cases, the self-censorship practiced by both journalists and editors has become more a habit than a necessity. Panelists also mentioned that large ad purchases can lead to favorable print media coverage of companies.

"Electronic media continue to run primarily political topics from the official government point of view," said one panelist. The perception exists that some generally boring entertainment programs qualify as news bulletins. Local broadcast news also is poorly balanced. In general, the panel suggested that reporting lacks originality and a critical approach toward issues, in particular failing to select top stories well or handle breaking news. Many focus on routine political events, no matter what other pressing subjects more dramatically affect their audiences. For example, coverage of the high rate of unemployment (more than 40 percent in Kosovo) will rarely be the material for a headline; the frequent UNMIK or government news conferences are regularly given prominent positioning. According to a panel member, "In most cases journalists are loyal to politicians and political parties and forgo professional reporting in order to serve as a politician's mouthpiece."

While specialty reporting generally remains embryonic, Kosovo's major newspapers have begun to develop business and economic beats and do some investigative reporting as well. The lack of strong law enforcement and an inefficient judiciary system discourage investigations, particularly when neither journalists nor their sources find protection. And some outlets find the cost of such reporting too high. One of Kosovo's few investigative journalists, Fatmire Tërdevci, has the support of her newspaper, the daily *Koha Ditore*, when she faces pressure after some of her stories are published.

She recently was designated *persona non grata* in one government ministry and several years ago was accused by UNMIK of fabricating a story about illegal pipelines on the border between Kosovo and Montenegro, only to

have the story proven true a number of months later. Other media outlets, however, often discourage journalists from tackling issues in depth, and international and national authorities in Kosovo also do not support thorough airing of issues by refusing, for example, to provide data on corruption cases. On that issue, despite the authorities' claims to be battling corruption, the media are most often the first to reveal specific cases, only to hear official denials in response.

Many journalists find their work controlled by political and business interests. According to the panel, three of Kosovo's five newspapers exhibit bias or carelessness. Panelists emphasized that few journalists produce objective materials, failing to check facts or include multiple sources. During 2003, the media commissioner received 60 complaints, 90 percent of which concerned print media and overwhelmingly addressed the right of reply. Many of the complaints came from ordinary citizens who sought to protect their integrity from what they saw as careless journalism and improper sourcing.

Although the average journalist's income is about double the national average, the panelists agreed that it is not sufficient to increase professional standards and discourage corruption. Not only do pay levels lag behind those for media professionals in other parts of the world, but there is also a striking disparity in the salary levels of private and public media. At private media outlets, salaries are lower and sometimes not paid for several months. However, panelists noted that corruption is more of an issue among media owners than individual journalists.

Facilities at major media and many smaller local outlets are limited, but adequate. There is a problem with outdated technical facilities, with little investment in newer technology in order to achieve modern standards of news gathering and distribution. With many journalists still lacking necessary skills, the panel cited quality

"Electronic media continue to run primarily political topics from the official government point of view," said one panelist.

journalism training as an important factor in developing professionalism, and recommended the establishment of an academic journalism program.

Objective 3: Plurality of News Sources

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.37/4.00

The number of media outlets in Kosovo has grown significantly over the past few years. Not all media outlets are self-sustainable and many rely on donor support, although the panel concluded that most have a good chance to survive in the long term. While Kosovo-wide media outlets have received much assistance, regional media outlets, especially a number of regional television stations with sizeable audiences, have benefited little from an international community that is seen as underestimating them. “Media in Kosovo are at a very early stage of their development as the watchdogs of the public good, but most are learning quickly how they can and should operate,” one panelist said. For some outlets, it has been more important to keep afloat than to provide objective, accurate information.

With five dailies and a variety of weeklies, there is some diversity among the Kosovo-wide newspapers. Two newspapers are closely aligned with political parties, while two others are clearly independent. Reflecting the poor economy—the Gross Domestic Product per capita is below €750—circulation is low, but readership is higher. The estimates for daily circulation vary due to lack of transparency by media owners in presenting these numbers. One panelist declared that despite remarkable joint efforts to rebuild the media and attract readers in postconflict Kosovo, overall sales of all five newspapers have not reached the “peak level” of a single daily Albanian-language newspaper published in the region 15 years ago. Illiteracy and low school-enrollment also account for reduced sales and readership.

Panelists suggested that Kosovars traditionally are inclined to watch television and listen to the radio, giving broadcast media an advantage compared with print. The panel believed that broadcast plurality is high with 112 broadcasters, including three Kosovo-wide television stations and four Kosovo-wide radio stations. However, 29 percent of Kosovars do not have access to national Kosovo-wide television stations because the terrestrial transmission system has not yet fully developed in certain areas. RTK is still the most-watched television station, followed by TV 21 and KTV. Among radio stations, private station radio Dukagjini remains the major player.

In general, urban residents enjoy greater access to a larger variety of media sources than those who live in more remote areas. This is especially true of newspapers and Internet news sources. There are no legal or political barriers preventing access to foreign news sources. In addition, major international Albanian-language programming (through Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, BBC, Radio France International, and Deutsche Welle) is rebroadcast by Kosovo stations. Cable television is neither well developed nor regulated, though satellite television is common. Economic factors inhibit the influence of international news sources, especially the Internet, but less so every year. While only 2.8 percent of Kosovo households had access to the Internet four years ago, experts estimate this number could be five times higher today.

The opportunity to represent the wide spectrum of public opinion exists, panelists said, but the media does not take advantage of it. A participant emphasized that “most journalists and editors have been employed based on their affiliation, rather than through an open, competitive process of selection.” UNMIK, the PISG, politi-

Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news	
PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS	■ A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists.
	■ Citizens’ access to domestic or international media is not restricted.
	■ State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
	■ Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media.
	■ Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs.
	■ Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
	■ A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.

cal parties, business interests, and, to a certain extent, civil society were among the groups panelists saw as influencing editorial policy. Of these, UNMIK maintains perhaps the strongest influence on the three Kosovo-wide television stations, not through direct interference but rather because inex-

perienced staff tend to follow the authorities blindly. The PISG wields less influence, though certain interest groups within political parties, and especially their leaders, have sought to determine the journalistic agenda. According to another panelist, the public broadcaster generally strives to balance its coverage of the main political parties, though its efforts to give all parties equal airtime at times seems “artificial” to some viewers. RTK devotes significant time to culture but at present offers very little educational programming. The main private broadcasters are also oriented toward public service, and through competitive pressure help ensure that RTK is as well.

KosovaLive and Kosovapress are the most active news agencies that gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media. KosovaLive is independent and considered reasonably professional. However, relatively few news outlets can afford this service without donor assistance or other financial support. Instead, many news media outlets use sources without proper rights.

The leading independent commercial broadcasters produce extensive news and talk-show programming, which meet the basic standards of professionalism. A number of local broadcasters also produce their own news in addition to using broadcasts of foreign news, including programming of the Serbian state broadcaster RTS.

Ownership of the major broadcasters is clear, but that is less true for major newspapers. There is cross-ownership between the leading and most professional newspaper in Kosovo (*Koha Ditore*) and the Kosovo-wide commercial television network KTV; both, however, are politically independent. Similarly, TV 21 has the same ownership as Radio 21. Some panelists noted that ownership of private media is concentrated mainly in family businesses, though most formed with the help of dona-

“Media in Kosovo are at a very early stage of their development as the watchdogs of the public good, but most are learning quickly how they can and should operate,” one panelist said.

tions during Kosovo’s postconflict period. While there is a lack of transparency regarding financial transactions, there appears to be no monopoly of media outlets. Ownership of small radio and television stations is as diverse as the stations themselves. Objectivity, the panelists concluded, is best judged by program content, not ownership.

A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected in leading outlets, although bias is clear in the two party-aligned newspapers, *Epoka e Re* and *Bota Sot*, which sometimes pursue a propagandistic approach. Programming is also available in all local languages. The public broadcast RTK is required to allocate time to minority-language broadcasts in Serbian, Bosniak, Turk, and Roma.

Objective 4: Business Management

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.30/4.00

There have been dramatic changes in Kosovo media in recent years. New technologies have altered forever the way the public accesses information. The most significant challenge in measuring the impact of this, however, is the lack of accurate data. Generally, the panel believed that supporting institutions such as distribution networks and printing houses are open, stable, and successful. Media outlets themselves face greater difficulties. A

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

Radio enterprises in Kosovo are simply surviving. The panel generally believed that stations with local licenses are more oriented to their sponsor rather than their listener, a result perhaps of the struggle for the advertising that traditionally goes to nationwide broadcasters.

profitability as well. There is a lack of data on where other daily newspapers and several magazines stand, and it is assumed that those who openly lean toward certain political parties are not financially independent.

The low circulation of newspapers remains a significant problem. Overall daily circulation is estimated between 20,000 and 25,000 domestically (not including distribution in the Albanian diaspora). With the average price of a newspaper in Kosovo at €0.30, advertising, sponsorship, and sales account for most revenue. Costs of newsprint, printing, and distribution pose particular problems for publications that struggle with sustainability, as does the system of distribution and delivery and high taxes.

Radio enterprises in Kosovo are simply surviving. The panel generally believed that stations with local licenses are more oriented to their sponsor rather than their listener, a result perhaps of the struggle for the advertising that traditionally goes to nationwide broadcasters. Claims of disadvantage exist not just between local and national broadcasters, but also among Kosovo-wide television stations, given that the public broadcaster RTK enjoys unlimited access to advertising. Some believe that RTK's ability to receive revenues from the government, donors, licensing fees, and advertising places private media in an unfavorable position. The two other Kosovo-wide television stations, KTV and TV 21, neither

variety of funding sources has not necessarily promoted better-run media. Thus, while some see a declining dependence on donors, others fear a further set of problems. Print media appears more successful than most broadcasters in reaching sustainability. For example, Kosovo's largest daily newspaper, *Koha Ditore*, is considered well managed and is generating a profit. The daily *Zeri* is moving toward

receive financial support from the government nor can they collect license fees. Yet while problems in managing media as for-profit organizations persist, the panel expressed optimism about media business development.

The MSI panel agreed that independent media is a cornerstone of good governance in Kosovo. The international community has supported the establishment of the only public broadcaster in Kosovo, which also is mandated to ensure minority rights are upheld, and it is important to ensure it has sufficient capacity to become fully sustainable. The panel agreed that other leading media, including KTV and TV 21, which both receive support from the international community, follow the standards of independent journalism.

Advertising agencies in Kosovo generally lack capacity, professionalism, and appropriate management education. A small number provide professional marketing services; even fewer offer a complete range of communications, brand and media strategy, advertising, new media, and technology solutions. Limited databases from these agencies provide some relevant information for major industries. Most services, however, are ad-hoc, aimed toward particular marketing projects, or concerned with brand-building. The government statistics office conducts some research, as do local companies Riinvest, Index Kosova, and Gani Bobi.

The panel viewed most media managers as needing further professional development, particularly in their ability to delegate responsibilities and to practice financial transparency. Media, however, do not limit advertising. They publish and air as many ads as agencies and other stakeholders can offer, though the price of the ads is high and their quality below conventionally accepted standards. Media do not offer marketing agencies attractive concrete strategies aimed at securing long-term business relationships. At the same time, marketing agencies did not examine media readership or audience until recently. "Kosovo media outlets have not yet incorporated modern market research and promotional methodologies to help steer their business development strategies, but they are on their way to adopting them," a panelist said.

Panelists recommended establishing standards to encourage a mature, sustainable independent media, including an association for media standards that would work toward, among other goals, banning cigarette advertisements and advertising that specifically targets children.

No ratings research has yet been conducted, and there is little reliable data from independent research.

Objective 5: Supporting Institutions

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.31/4.00

Independent associations existed in Kosovo before the fall of communism, when most journalists were members of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) based in Brussels. They received membership through the Kosovo Association of Journalists, which was also a member of the IFJ in the early 1990s. Journalists then sought to replace the monopolistic system with a pluralist one, joining in new movements, independent trade unions, and political parties. A number of these journalists currently head the largest commercial media outlets in Kosovo today.

Throughout the decade of control under the Milosevic regime, the Kosovo Association of Journalists and the Independent Trade Union of Journalists survived despite economic struggles and daily dangers. During the 1998–1999 conflict, supporting media institutions were paralyzed, while association members fell victim to Milosevic’s mass expulsions.

In postconflict Kosovo, independent supporting organizations have had to start from scratch to unite a variety of journalists and media managers. Over the past four years, the international community and local journalists failed twice to create a workable association. The third attempt

led to the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (APJK), a functioning association with a membership of more than 350 journalists. APJK does not yet collect membership fees, making it reliant on international donors. The organization, however, is looking for ways to better meet journalists’ needs while becoming fully independent and

sustainable. Last year, the association focused on attracting a broader membership, responding to threats to the rights of journalists, and providing legal and professional advice as well as advocacy. APJK also operated under an approved ethics code. The association is developing but remains at a starting stage, panelists said, and from a reactive to proactive approach.

Kosovo has two other media-support institutions: the Association of Independent Electronic Media of Kosovo (AMPEK) and a newly organized association of publishers. AMPEK’s mission is to represent the interests of independent broadcast owners, while the new publishers’ association is expected to represent the interests of their colleagues in print media. One panel member stated that AMPEK is “perceived as an active association that successfully articulates the interests of private broadcasters” while also serving as a strong voice for drafting and implementing copyright law among the media. Most other panelists, however, believed that these associations are too nascent to offer much support or protection.

Most nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) blossomed during the immediate postconflict emergency phase and have faced their own problems of consolidation. Now, four years later, the situation is improving, giving hope that they soon will be more deeply engaged in media and advocacy work. Some Kosovo NGOs, such as the Kosovo NGO Advocacy Program, actively promote the Freedom of Speech Act and have been advocating for establishment of the Independent Media Commission.

The Kosovo educational system still does not offer a formal university degree in media or communications. Short-term training is available, primarily through

One panel member stated that AMPEK is “perceived as an active association that successfully articulates the interests of private broadcasters” while also serving as a strong voice for drafting and implementing copyright law among the media.

Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS

- Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services.
- Professional associations work to protect journalists’ rights.
- NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist.
- Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.

the international community, while some larger media outlets have developed in-house programs. A panelist mentioned that short-term training can polish the skills of active journalists, but the MSI panel countered that such courses are too short to have any sufficient impact on the overall quality of journalism. Currently, one school of journalism exists, but according to the panelists, it does not offer an appropriate level of education. Most panelists agreed on the immediate need to establish an academic and mid-career journalism degree, and to develop journalism curricula.

Channels of media distribution, kiosks, transmitters, and Internet are in private hands and, in most cases, are apolitical and unrestricted. Broadcast transmitters are protected by the international community. Printing facilities are rarely subjected to political influence and mostly are recently established, for-profit organizations. Newspaper distribution is not geographically proportional, leav-

ing some rural areas without coverage and adding another key reason for low readership. Twenty years ago, Rilindja, Kosovo's single newspaper distribution company, had 450 kiosks across the entire Kosovo region; today, this is the number of kiosks in Pristina alone.

Although there are three national television stations, distribution of news for electronic media remains problematic. The nongovernmental Kosovo Terrestrial Transmission Network (KTTN) was initially created to serve the three Kosovo-wide television stations. The network is expanding its services, but at present, its towers only cover approximately 75 percent of Kosovo's territory. Frequent power cuts also affect the media's reach. According to recent audience research, 80 percent of respondents experienced power cuts during the week the survey was conducted. At times, almost one-third of those surveyed could not view television programs due to power outages.

Panel Participants

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Ibrahim Berisha, journalist and media analyst

Robert Gillette, Temporary Media Commissioner

Argjentina Grazhdani, Office of Democracy, USAID

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Naser Miftari, president, Association of Professional Journalists of Kosova

Ramush Tahiri, political and media advisor, parliament of Kosova

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