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BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) show an ever-growing lack of consensus regarding the adoption of reforms required by the EU, even though the country submitted its membership application in February 2016. As for B&H's two entities, the government of Republika Srpska (RS) continues to resist strengthening state institutions, while political decision-making in the Federation of B&H (FB&H) is also based on national interests rather than citizens' needs.

In 2016, the Constitutional Court of B&H ruled as unconstitutional the use of January 9 as the RS National Day. The ruling resulted in a September referendum on National Day in RS, which was considered illegal by state-level institutions and many observers in the international community. It sparked ethnic and social divisions and reopened dialogue on unresolved political issues in post-war B&H. Media coverage of the referendum was heavily sensationalist and biased, inciting hatred, panic, and fear among citizens. January 9, 1992 was the day that the Bosnian Serb Republic was declared.

The verdict of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia on former RS leader Radovan Karadžić also split B&H society across ethnic lines. Citizens in the two entities had radically contrasting reactions to Karadžić's prison sentence of 40 years for his role in the 1992-1995 war. Unfair media reporting and hate speech across the country fueled the clash.

Local elections, held in October 2016, were marked by aggressive and divisive political campaigns, rhetoric on possible new armed conflicts, and claims of irregularities during the election process in some municipalities. The results fortified the dominant position of the main nationalistic parties. One particular controversy arose concerning the first election of an ethnic Serb—who denies that the 1995 murder there of 8,000 Muslim men and boys was genocide—as mayor of Srebrenica. The election was problematic because displaced persons could not easily vote. Srebrenica had been the only municipality in RS with a Bosniak mayor in the post-war period.

After years of lobbying by civil society organizations, FB&H amended its criminal law to define "hate speech" as a criminal act. The amendment harmonizes the law with already existing legislation in RS and Brčko District. However, journalists in both entities remain vulnerable to threats and hate speech, and several journalists have reported leaving the country because they feared for their safety.

According to the EU Progress Report 2016 and the Alternative Progress Report 2016 conducted by B&H's civil society organizations, the key problems that media members face are inadequate action on attacks on journalists, poor funding of public broadcasters, and insufficient media transparency. In the 2017 MSI, the overall score for B&H (1.78) dropped by one-fifth of a point compared with 2016, reaching one of the two lowest scores in the past eight years. All five objectives moderately dropped in comparison to last year, confirming the increasingly negative trends in the media sector. Panelists identified the same problems from the previous year, then emphasized that the increased threats and attacks on journalists, low professional standards, and business difficulties are the most crucial hurdles facing B&H's media.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA at a glance

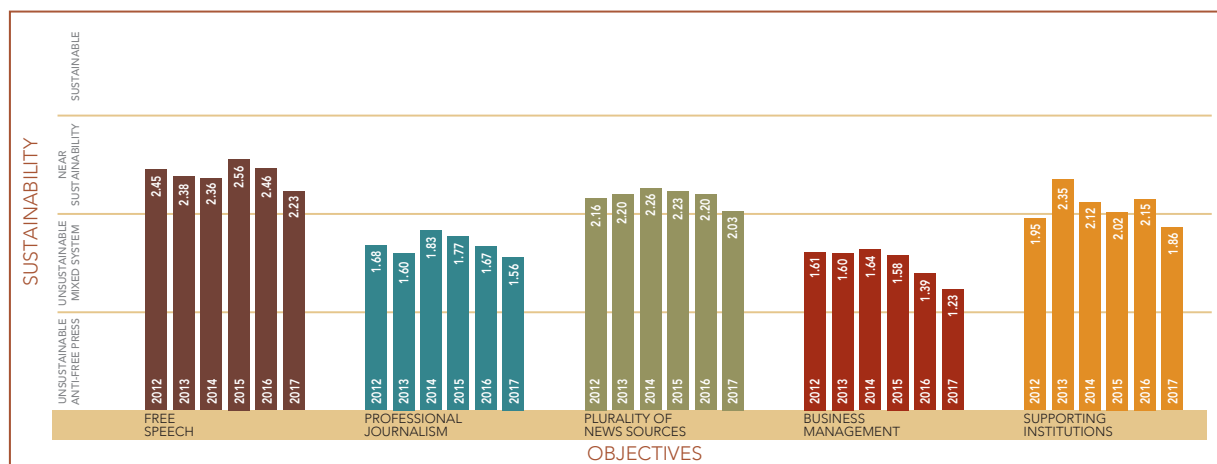
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 3,861,912 (July 2016 est., CIA World Factbook)
- > **Capital city:** Sarajevo
- > **Ethnic groups:** Bosniak 50.1%, Serb 30.8%, Croat 15.4%, other 2.7%, not declared/no answer 1% (2013 est., CIA World Factbook)
- > **Religions:** Muslim 50.7%, Orthodox 30.7%, Roman Catholic 15.2%, atheist 0.8%, agnostic 0.3%, other 1.2%, undeclared/no answer 1.1% (2013 est., CIA World Factbook)
- > **Languages:** Bosnian (official) 52.9%, Serbian (official) 30.8%, Croatian (official) 14.6%, other 1.6%, no answer 0.2% (2013 est., CIA World Factbook)
- > **GNI (2015-Atlas):** \$17.80 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2017)
- > **GNI per capita (2015-PPP):** \$10,680 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2017)
- > **Literacy rate:** 98.5%; Male 99.5%, Female 97.5% (2015 est. *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** Members of BiH Presidency: Bakir Izetbegović (since November 10, 2010), Mladen Ivanić (since November 17, 2014), Dragan Čović (since November 17, 2014)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active media outlets:** 10 daily newspapers, 189 other print periodicals (Press Council of B&H, 2015); Radio stations: 144; Television stations: 43 (Communications Regulatory Agency, 2014)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** N/A
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top three television stations: RTVFBiH (11.96%), OBN (10.18%), Pink BiH (9.75%) (PeopleMeter between January and November 2015 by Audience Management, Fabrika)
- > **News agencies:** FENA (state-owned), SRNA (state-owned), ONASA (private), NINA (private), MINA (Islamic Community in B&H), KTA BK B&H (Conference of Bishops of B&H), Anadolu Agency (owned by Turkish government), Patria (private) (Press Council of B&H, 2015)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** \$52.3 million in 2014: television 69.34%, print 12.66%, out-of-home 9%, radio 5%, online 4% (est. Fabrika)
- > **Internet usage:** 2.516 million (July 2015 est., CIA World Factbook)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA



Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0–1): Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

Unsustainable Mixed System (1–2): Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

Near Sustainability (2–3): Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

Sustainable (3–4): Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

Scores for all years may be found online at <https://www.irex.org/msi>

OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Score: 2.23

The score for Objective 1, Freedom of Speech, dropped from 2.46 in 2016 to 2.23 this year. Panelists noted many longstanding unresolved issues affecting most indicators, even without specific deteriorations in 2016. However, indicator 4 (crimes against media professionals) scored more than half a point lower compared with last year, signifying worrying trends of decreased safety for journalists and bloggers.

B&H is a potential candidate for entering the EU, with freedom of expression and the media part of the Copenhagen Criteria for EU membership. The 2016 *World Press Freedom Index* of Reporters without Borders ranked B&H number 68 worldwide, based on its media freedom in 2016. The index pointed out that B&H has some of the world's most liberal media freedom laws, but implementation is held back by a saturated judicial system.¹

In 2016 alone, the Association of BH Journalists (BHJ) registered 13 physical attacks on and threats to journalists—by far the largest number in the last six years. Several journalists and bloggers (e.g. Vuk Bačanović, Lejla Čolak, Slobodan Vasković) left the country, noting that their lives were in danger after publishing stories or sharing opinions that are against the political elites or dominant ideologies.

¹ World Press Freedom Index 2016. *Reporters without Borders*, 2016 <https://rfsf.org/en/bosnia-herzegovina>

LEGAL AND SOCIAL NORMS PROTECT AND PROMOTE FREE SPEECH AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION.

FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS:

- > Legal and 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 offended parties 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.

According to Emir Habul, BHRT journalist and editor, “Public broadcasting services are facing shutdown. Funding hasn’t been resolved; the influence of those in power on the election of steering boards is evident.”

State-level Security Minister Dragan Mektić allegedly threatened SRNA news agency’s editor-in-chief, Milica Džepina, in April 2016 over the phone and via text messages, saying: “When we come to power, you will vanish from the face of the earth.” While it was noted that the threats came after an article written by SRNA questioned the details of Mektić’s official biography, both the SRNA content and the minister’s reactions were seen as politically motivated reflections of clashes between two political camps in Republika Srpska.²

In July 2016, Salmir Kaplan, a parliament member and former minister of culture of FB&H, accused BHJ’s general secretary, panelist Borka Rudić, of being a “pro-Gülen” lobbyist. The government of Turkey has claimed that Muhammed Fethullah Gülen was responsible for the failed coup that month in Turkey. The accusation came after Rudić’s criticism of the crackdown on media in Turkey after the coup. Also in 2016, two men that Rudić did not know confronted her on the street, accusing her of defending Gülenists and Chetniks (right-wing Serb nationalists). She filed a complaint with police and prosecutors.

The Council of Ministers of B&H has admitted that journalists are often targets of threats and political pressure. The council made an official recommendation to the Institution of Ombudsmen for Human Rights of B&H to compile a report on the status of journalists and cases of threats targeted at journalists. The report is slated to be completed in 2017.

After years of negotiations, FB&H legislators amended the criminal law and defined “hate speech” as a criminal act, and adopted the Declaration Condemning Hate Speech. Similar declarations were adopted by RS and are being discussed by the state-level Parliamentary Assembly. While RS decriminalized defamation more than a decade ago, lawsuits under civil law jurisprudence are frequent.

The Communications Regulatory Agency of B&H (CRA) regulates electronic-media licensing, which is based on the principles of transparency and non-discrimination. For radio and television broadcasts via terrestrial broadcast, licenses are issued on the basis of public tenders; while permits for broadcasting via other electronic communication networks (cable, satellite, IPTV, and

² Hodžić, Sanela. The Editors’ Role in Media Integrity Protection in B&H: Between Strong Interference and Weak Support. *Media Integrity Matters*, 2016 <http://mediaobservatory.net/sites/default/files/Between%20Strong%20Interference%20and%20Weak%20Support.pdf>

Internet) are issued to everyone who meets the prescribed requirements. A new CRA director, Predrag Kovač, was approved by the Council of Ministers of B&H in April 2016. The decision finally ended an eight-year-long deadlock and confirmed that political reasoning mainly determined the appointment. CRA agents did not formally discuss further the 2013 Draft Law on Electronic Communications—which, according to some media experts, could have diminished the CRA's independence.

Print and online media do not have to be licensed. They are self-regulated, with the Press Council of B&H in charge of monitoring self-regulation of their content.

B&H media are not granted tax relief. Various lobbying initiatives to decrease value-added tax (VAT) on media have so far been unsuccessful, and the 17-percent tax is still a legal obligation. Some print media representatives advocate for VAT to be paid only on sold copies of newspapers, but the legal framework has not changed. According to Mehmed Halilović, independent media expert, the media sector is “formally equalized with other industries. However, for media, this is not a mitigating but an aggravating circumstance, because it's hard to [run] media today—and particularly to create new media—unless you are paid from Istanbul or Ankara. That's why they are shutting down.”

The different political interests of the parties in power influence the founding of public service broadcasters (PSBs) and interfere with crucial decisions and leadership. The steering boards of all three PSBs (BHRT, RTRS, and RTVFBiH) are known to be influenced politically in the wake of many scandals concerning nominations and resignations. Another attempt to nominate members of the Steering Board of RTVFBiH failed in 2016. It still has only one member and a director “in a technical mandate,”³ which is an indicator of the ruling parties' neglect of these broadcasters. The PSB system is severely damaged by the current license fee collection process, which becomes increasingly inefficient as political interference continues. According to Emir Habul, BHRT journalist and editor, “Public broadcasting services are facing shutdown. Funding hasn't been resolved; the influence of those in power on the election of steering boards is evident.”

The process of obtaining information through the country's Law on Freedom of Access to Information can be burdensome, and government bodies do not always respect the law. These complications discourage journalists from requesting official information. Rubina Čengić, editor-in-chief of *Start B&H* magazine, shared her experience with information access. “When you ask institutions for an explanation for something, they refer to the law. And after 15 days, they send you a

conclusion that they cannot give you a particular document, [although you are actually] seeking an explanation on why a particular decision was made, and things like that. To me, that's a very serious and grave abuse, and a way of making journalists' work more difficult.”

The non-governmental media organization Center for Investigative Reporting (CIN) Sarajevo has so far filed seven lawsuits against B&H institutions unwilling to provide requested information. Five of the cases have been settled positively. The court decisions demanded that respondent institutions provide information to CIN's journalists. But the journalists said that in some cases, they still had to wait for years before the information was delivered. Panelists noted that, in order to avoid giving requested information, public institutions sometimes refer to the Law on Salaries of Civil Servants or Law on Protection of Private Data. “Institutions use all possible means of rejecting journalists' requests,” said Azhar Kalamujić, journalist at CIN. “As we at CIN have a lot of time and are able to ‘play tag’ with them, they use that opportunity with other media that don't even have time to wait for the 15-day legal time limit. Therefore, thanks to administrative silence and responses in which they quote other laws...they gain time and people give up on requesting information.”

The new Draft Freedom of Information Law, created by the Ministry of Justice of B&H, is considered more restrictive than the current law. The new law does not oblige institutions to conduct a “test of public interest,” but it requires a person who submits a request for information to elaborate on the reason for asking, and it does not specify how the overall implementation of FOIA should be monitored. It remains unclear what the mandate and duties are in this matter for the Ministry of Justice, which should act for the Institution of Ombudsman for Human Rights B&H. Public consultations were organized in December 2016 and some civil society actors have reacted negatively to the proposed law's provisions.

Media in B&H have no government-imposed restrictions on access to or use of news and sources. Journalists and editors can use the Internet freely to reach all available national and foreign news sources. The government places no restrictions on working as a journalist and does not require official requirements or licensing procedures for journalists. However, as panelists said last year, some reporters do not have permits to attend certain government events (e.g. at the Presidential Palace of RS). According to Rudić, despite the appeals made by national and international journalists' associations, officials at the Presidential Palace still deny access to journalists from BN TV and Beta Agency.

³ “BHRT prolongirao gašenje programa, najavili smanjenje obima usluga koje pružaju FTV-u.” *Klix.ba*, Jul. 2016 <http://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/bhrt-prolongirao-gasenje-programa-najavili-smanjenje-obima-usluga-koje-pruzaju-ftv-u/160630115>

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Score: 1.56

The ethics of reporting is neglected, and journalists apply professional standards inconsistently. Journalism as a profession is underappreciated by the public, and the typically low salaries and irregular pay for journalists sometimes allow for political pressure and even self-censorship. The MSI showed no improvement in quality of reporting in the last year, and thus the average score for Objective 2 amounts to 1.56. That score shows a slight decrease from 2016, when the objective score was 1.67.

Despite the finely developed and widely recognized Press Code of B&H, many media follow professional standards insufficiently. Journalistic reports are often subjective and biased, and often both sides are not presented in news stories. Panelists noted that published articles sometimes rely on an inadequate number of sources and are not well balanced. Čengić recounted an experience that exemplifies the poor standards. "I was once a member of a journalist award selection jury, and I was tasked with reading at least 40 works of journalists, from both radio and TV; these were works proposed for the award. The competition requirements clearly defined that the number of sources, importance of sources, and everything was being evaluated. None of the works I read had more than one source."

As a self-regulatory body for print and online media, the Press Council of B&H supervises the application of the press code and mediates for citizens that are unsatisfied with reporting of print and online media. However, the council's professional principles of self-regulation continue to be exercised only by a few journalists and editors who are willing and empowered to

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).

"Underpayment of media staff is a major problem," said Marijan Primorac, assistant professor at University of Mostar. "Amounts are often inadequate... And journalists, due to their insecure position, succumb more easily to newsroom politics, which can result in adaptation and self-censorship."

do so. The 2015 Ethical Journalism Network's report titled "Trust Factor" noted that, "while the acceptance of self-regulation has 'more or less' been achieved, the structures of self-regulation at national level, at enterprise level and at the level of the individual journalist are severely restricted."⁴ Since the council's principles are recommendations and not legally binding, journalists, and sometimes even editors, ignore them.

Broadcast media outlets, on the other hand, are monitored by the CRA. It has a mandate to respond to complaints on breaches of professional standards with warnings, fines, and even license suspensions. One of its most radical recent decisions was to limit broadcasting of reality shows to the period between midnight and 6 a.m., due to their sometimes-violent content. In 2015, CRA received a total of 72 complaints, most of them regarding failure to publish a denial of published information, and presentation of false information and hate speech. Fines usually range between \$16,000 and \$26,000, and all previous fines have been issued because of broadcasted hate speech.

Even though some media producers have their own ethical standards (e.g. CIN, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, etc.), panelists noted that the vast majority of media organizations do not put enough effort into publishing fair and objective news. Some panelists stated that the majority of media lack good editorial work, and few editors insist that their reporters thoroughly explore their stories or apply professional standards. A well-known case of a public poll of *Dnevni avaz* daily newspaper of March 2016 indicated that such breaches are sometimes part of editorial policies. According to media reports, during a court trial implicating *Dnevni avaz* Director Fahrudin Radončić of obstruction of justice, correspondents of *Dnevni avaz* were instructed to prepare public polls asking citizens for their opinion on the trial. While all citizens in the published polls were supportive of Radončić, it was later discovered that correspondent Adnan Džonlić from *Zenica* had used photos of random people found on different web sites (even one of a

⁴ The Trust Factor. Ethical Journalism Network, 2015 <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/assets/docs/142/118/79dd78e-837b376.pdf>

British celebrity actor) and matched them with supposedly fake statements.

Copyright laws formally protect authors' rights, but most remain in a gray zone. Public and professional awareness of authors' rights is low, and sometimes even reporters do not recognize violations of their rights or rights of their colleagues. Abuses of photojournalist rights are most common, especially by online media, which often republish photos without crediting the source.

According to some informal comparisons, average salaries for journalists and editors are generally lower than in other countries of the Western Balkan region. Unofficial data of journalists' associations reveal that journalists are paid approximately \$360 a month and that only reporters and editors working for foreign-funded media entities (e.g. Al Jazeera, TVN1, CIN) have higher monthly income. Thus, some reporters take jobs in more profitable sectors, such as public relations. Bloggers usually have other primary jobs and treat blogging as their unpaid hobbies (except fashion or beauty bloggers, who can earn money from advertising). In general, blogging and citizen activism in B&H are underdeveloped. A few bloggers that write about political and social issues have some influence on public opinion (e.g. Srđan Puhalo, Slobodan Vasković, or Hana Kazazović - Cyber Bosanka).

Editors are employed mostly based on indefinite work contracts. Short-term contracts, or engagement on an occasional and task basis, are common in media organizations, but are mostly limited to journalists. "Underpayment of media staff is a major problem," said Marijan Primorac, assistant professor at University of Mostar. "Amounts are often inadequate, while short-term work has become a widespread occurrence. In such circumstances, the institutional sphere has strong influence. And journalists, due to their insecure position, succumb more easily to newsroom politics, which can result in adaptation and self-censorship."

Low salaries, jeopardized security, and an increased number of threats to journalists are some of the main reasons for self-censorship, noted Media.ba's research report from May 2016.⁵ Self-censorship also occurs because journalists are unmotivated to write stories that can cause them problems.⁶ The media sector overall provides broad and varied coverage of key events, but reporters often do not explore topics beyond their daily duties, and limit their reporting to press conferences or use of press releases. Kalamujić said that news outlets do

⁵ "Politički pritisci i ekonomska nesigurnost najveće prepreke slobodi medija u BiH i regiji." *Media.ba*, May 2016 <http://media.ba/bs/magazin-novinarstvo/politicki-pritisci-i-ekonomska-nesigurnost-najvece-prepreke-slobodi-medija-u-bih>

⁶ Unkić, Hilma. Autocenzura novinara u BiH: Odabir teme u skladu s uređivačkom politikom. *Media.ba*, Oct. 2016 <http://www.media.ba/bs/magazin-novinarstvo/autocenzura-novinara-u-bih-odabir-teme-u-skladu-s-uredivackom-politikom>

cover events, "but in a professionally poor way...in the sense that they don't explain to people what happened somewhere. For example, if parliament passed a law that concerns citizens, I never heard in the last 100 years that an editor or journalist explained why it was important for them. Stories are [written] about conflicts in parliament, whether someone swore at someone else. Things that are important for the people are not covered at all—not just in this segment, but in every other segment of news reporting."

In terms of representation of news and entertainment programs, B&H follows global trends. According to the panelists, consumers find news programs less and less attractive. Even public broadcasters such as FTV, which are legally obligated to balance entertainment and news shows, sometimes offer predominantly entertainment programs. PSBs and local public television and radio stations all have outdated equipment, which is reflected in the quality of the programs broadcast. Al Jazeera and TVN1, on the other hand, use advanced, new technologies in program production.

Investigative reporting is esteemed by a small number of media entities (e.g. CIN, *Žurnal*, *Mreža Magazine* of FTV), most of them funded by foreign donors. Their reporters are the only ones that can explore topics of personal interest and become experts in certain fields. Other journalists do not have that privilege, and need to cover various topics on a daily basis, with insufficient time to explore or educate themselves on particular topics.

B&H has several regional and national awards programs established to promote professional reporting. They include the USAID SGIP Award, the EU Regional Award for Investigative Reporting, and the ACCOUNT Journalist Award. They seek high-quality investigative journalism stories for consideration, but due to the limited number of such stories, reporters from CIN or *Žurnal* are usually the winners or top candidates.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Score: 2.03

In B&H, only a few media offer fair representation of independent sources and various opinions, while many public and private media are influenced politically. Small media outlets often do not produce their own news content, but rather republish news produced by other media. Bigger media outlets tend to increasingly commercialize their content. Therefore, the average score of 2.03 for Objective 3, Plurality of News, dropped somewhat in comparison to last year, when it was 2.20.

According to data of the Press Council and CRA, B&H has a high number of print, radio, and television media outlets, with nine daily newspapers, 189 periodicals, 139 radio stations, and 43 television stations. Internet-based news sources are numerous

and impossible to track down and count. Despite the numbers, the offered content is far from pluralistic. Different views and interests are represented all around the media sphere, but they are fragmented, so it is extremely difficult for citizens to compare and contrast information and reach a balanced view. Many media are influenced by politics so their reporting is one-sided, or they have insufficient capacity to produce comprehensive news. An overall increase of Internet users and higher consumption of online content has resulted in broader outreach of local and regional social and political blogs (e.g. Frontal.ba, News.net, etc.).

After 20 years, the influential weekly magazine *Slobodna Bosna* stopped publishing its print version and now exists only on the Internet. Management of lesser-known *Novo vrijeme* magazine, established in 2012, made the same decision to switch to electronic format, as did the daily newspapers *Faktor* and *Press RS*. All of them stated they were motivated to make such moves due to financial unprofitability and decreased readership of print newspapers. Senad Zaimović, general manager of Marketing Agency Fabrika, said that the switchover is part of the global movement, but in B&H "... it's a little more radical, because here print died before anywhere else in the region... you have to adapt to trends."

B&H municipal governments impose no legal restrictions on citizens' access local and international news. But limitations exist that are purely economic, in circumstances of low socio-economic status. In particular, use of international print sources is limited, and international television outlets are limited by local distributors' affordable offers.

The percentage of Internet users is steadily growing, with connections reaching 72 percent of the entire population in 2015. Citizens rely increasingly on online sources of information. This is an outcome of the growing tendency of print media to

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.

Boro Konti , director of Mediacentar Sarajevo, said that municipal and cantonal media "are all in the hands of politics. [Politicians] choose them, they give them money, and they control them. As soon as the government changes, they immediately change the editor, director."

go digital, as well as the higher number of Internet users in B&H, which increased by 14 percent between 2014 and 2015.⁷ One and a half million Facebook profiles in B&H implies that almost half of the entire population uses Facebook, with a 39 percent penetration rate, according to Internet World Stats.⁸ Aside from Facebook, Internet users in B&H often visit Klix.ba and Dnevni avaz news portals. Dnevni avaz, together with Haber dnevne vijesti and Al Jazeera Balkans, has the largest Facebook audience of all media.⁹

In March 2016, BHRT announced that it would cease broadcasting by the end of June 2016, as a direct consequence of its aggravating financial crunch. The decision was later postponed, but a solution for continuous commercial struggles of PSBs has still not been found. Because of these struggles, broadcast of the 2016 Summer Olympic Games and UEFA Euro 2016 were uncertain until the last moment, and B&H's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest was canceled. Additionally, in December 2016, the European Broadcast Union cut off BHRT's access to international news exchange.

Political interference with public service broadcasters continues. In particular, RTRS has been criticized for political bias, while BHRT is considered the most balanced among the three broadcasters. Monitoring of RTRS content in 2016, on the eve of local elections, suggested notable favoritism towards the ruling party SNSD.¹⁰ Implementation of programmatic requirements (airing educational programs, for example), is questionable, given the overall lack of reporting or monitoring. The issues with content are affected even more by the current financial crisis. For example, BHRT has reduced its programming mainly to news production.

⁷ In 2014, 58 percent of the population was using the Internet and in 2015 the percentage was 72, according to CRA Annual Reports 2014 and 2015

⁸ Internet World Stats. Data from Jun. 2016. Accessed on Dec. 16, 2016 <http://www.internetworldstats.com/europa2.htm>

⁹ Statebakers' Facebook stats – Media in B&H. Accessed on Dec. 16, 2016 <https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/pages/total/bosnia-and-herzegovina/media/>

¹⁰ Dizdarević, Zija, Monitoring uređivačke politike TVRS, Foundation Public Law Centre, 2016 http://www.fcjp.ba/templates/ja_avian_ii_d/images/green/Zija_Dizdarevic1.pdf

Panelists also pointed out that government institutions finance local public media, which makes them subject to political whims and often biased and one-sided. Boro Kontić, director of Mediacentar Sarajevo, said that municipal and cantonal media “are all in the hands of politics. [Politicians] choose them, they give them money, and they control them. As soon as the government changes, they immediately change the editor, director.”

Of B&H’s 43 local television broadcasters, 12 local stations are founded and directly funded by local governments. Sixty-one of the 139 local radio stations are funded by the government. A similar notion of bias applies to B&H news agencies, with some financed by governments and others connected to political and religious elites.

Due to financial limitations, some media outlets cannot afford subscriptions to news agencies, particularly international agencies. Media outlets often have limited personnel, so they take news from other media, which limits the plurality of provided information. Many online media, which have only one employee, copy other outlets’ news, often without giving any credits to original sources.

To attract audiences, private media tend to produce multiple entertainment programs (very often singing contest shows) at the expense of news programs. Reuf Herić, director of Novi Radio in Bihać, and president of Steering Board of Association of Private Electronic Media of B&H, confirmed that heavy entertainment content is affecting media integrity. He said that the large number of broadcasters should result in more news and fewer entertainment shows, but the balance has stayed the same. He added, “The amount of money a media outlet can invest in the programs is decreasing. This leads to people being fired, news being copied, news completely being thrown out of the schedule, and so on.”

Like other businesses, B&H media companies, have to be registered in court. Still, there is an overall lack of public information on media businesses’ ultimate owners. Numerous online media do not register in courts and their ownerships are often nontransparent. Very often not offering basic information on management and contacts, online media take no responsibility for the information they distribute (sometimes propaganda and hate speech) and cannot be called out for accountability.

Concentration of media is regulated only by the Law on Competition of B&H. The law prohibits concentration from potentially distorting competition, or if the concentration creates or strengthens the dominant position of a company or individuals. However, the effectiveness of the law is questionable, because the Competition Council acts only in cases of appeal and its preventative role is weak. The “Media and Public Credibility” project, funded by the EU and coordinated by

BHJ, has started an initiative that gives some hope for improving legislation on media transparency.

In the meantime, B&H has no major concentrations, but political and business influences on media content remain nontransparent. At the end of November 2016, the state parliament obliged the Council of Ministers of B&H to within 120 days submit a proposal for a law on transparency and concentration of ownership over media. That mandate provided institutional confirmation that the issue has finally been put on the public agenda.

Public broadcasters are obliged by law to produce programs for national minorities and in languages of national minorities, but often they do not meet the requirements. B&H has online media focused on reporting on minority groups (e.g. *Diskriminacija.ba*; *LGBTI.ba*, *Manjine.ba*), but they are financed by foreign donors and lack sustainability. The situation is similar with media in languages of national minorities (e.g. *Crno-bijeli svijet*, magazine for Roma), which are established within non-profitable projects and thus depend on foreign funds. Once a week, BHT1 broadcasts *Govor tišine*, a compilation of weekly news with gestural interpretation into sign language for persons with hearing and speaking impairments. *Mostovi* magazine is available for persons with impaired hearing, and *Zvučne novine* for persons with impaired sight.

Affirmative coverage of LGBTI-related topics in mainstream media has increased. This is mostly due to targeted media campaigns of civil society organizations (e.g. Sarajevski otvoreni centar’s support of same-sex marriages). Civil society organizations sometimes organize workshops and training programs for journalists on minority reporting (e.g. on women, LGBTI, persons with disabilities). Still, media have an obvious lack of strategic orientation to integrate a multitude of voices and interests in their regular reporting. The media’s limiting of coverage to rare specialized issues could possibly lead to further ghettoization of particular groups.

Local media most regularly report news from local communities, but the reporting quality is questionable, as local media lack resources and editorial independence. Public broadcasters do not have a sufficient number of field correspondents, so local news from small communities does not regularly reach national audiences. Large private media (e.g. TV Hayat, PINK BH, OBN, ATV, BNTV) report on topics from local communities when some events are being held, but usually not on a regular basis. Social networks are the most efficient tool of distribution of information. Users post more often when the information is entertaining and less often when the content is political.

International events are part of news programs of all media, but usually reports are supplied from news agencies or international media outlets. Some of the panelists pointed out the problem of a lack of political diversity among the media sources used for

international news. One of the participants mentioned that the coverage of the U.S. 2016 presidential election was based on reporting of several U.S. mainstream, mainly pro-liberal, media. This resulted in stories being somewhat one-sided and giving false impressions of possible election results.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Score: 1.23

As in previous years, the overall score for business operations of media is the lowest among the five objectives and continues to drop (compared to 2016, it dropped by 0.16, to 1.23). Panelists said that the advertising market is suffering from further impoverishment. These conditions are conducive to increased influence on media's editorial policies by their few remaining sources of revenue, including political actors.

Although no precise data on the advertising industry are available, the advertising firm Agency Fabrika estimates that overall revenues for the advertising market in 2016 amounted to around \$39 million (including outdoor). That represents a drop by almost a third compared with the previous year, and leaves the media market far below the needed minimum. At the same time, the number of media outlets is not declining. As panelist Asja Rokša Zubčević of CRA noted, "It is hard to explain how these broadcasters survive on an already small market." Remaining sources of revenue are gaining more power, and with limited funding sources for media, they are in a position to influence editorial policies. Among them, the government has become more dominant in recent years. Major advertisers, mainly public telecommunication companies, are affiliated closely with the ruling political parties.

Cost-cutting strategies do not affect the overall number of media or even the amount of news and information programs, but rather their quality, which panelists said they perceive to be declining. The non-profit media sector remains underdeveloped, with only four registered radio stations of limited reach and mostly of humanitarian or religious content.

As indicated by last year's panelists also, tax debts of many media still have not been made public. Authorities are not initiating bankruptcy processes, possibly to avoid unpopular moves, or to put these media in a position of servility. Only a few media outlets are truly sustainable; among them are some international broadcasters, several online media, and a few large television broadcasters based in major cities. Business savvy is of secondary importance for most media; even the most cleverly designed business models can hardly ensure revenues in the small, largely corrupt, and financially devastated market. According to Herić, the majority of media managers are not focused on investment in their enterprises and "only know how

to be a little cheaper than the competition, not thinking...to send journalists to seminars, to buy new microphones, filters, etc."

International donor support is pivotal for the survival of several media outlets that engage in critical and investigative journalism. Some of these outlets do not even try to raise revenue in the local commercial market.

The un-economical organization of public service broadcasters is exacerbated by their increasing funding difficulties. Their revenue, obtained by subscription fees collected through Telekom's landline accounts, remains problematic with so many mobile customers dropping landlines. The government did not set up an improved model for fee collection in 2016; the old model formally expired at the end of 2015 with increasing migration of landline users to other platforms. Parliament and management of PSB have since failed to deliver a solution for collection but continues with two telecommunication companies. The third, HT Eronet, has chosen to abandon fee collection.

With the failure to adopt a new model of collecting RTV license fees, and with a further drop in landline usage, the already-low rate of collection is estimated to have fallen below 50 percent.¹¹ State-level BHRT is particularly suffering, with unprecedented financial troubles jeopardizing even reduced production. The station cannot be sustained much longer if the problem is not solved promptly.

Two public telecommunication companies, BH Telekom and HT Mostar, are among the few remaining major domestic advertisers, and are believed to be influenced by major political

¹¹ Some sources suggest that collection dropped by BAM 2.5 million (\$1.6 million) in 2014 and that the decline continued in 2015, but for 2016 no estimates are available.

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.

parties. Recent accusations of funneling public money from HT Mostar into private accounts ended with dropped charges against HT Mostar and the director of the agency SV-RSA. Still, the events cost many of the implicated persons their reputations and raised additional doubts about the capacities of the judiciary to put an end to corruption in similar cases.

Major international brands still have interest in the B&H audience, but they are increasingly reaching out through Google ads, media from neighboring countries, major global media, or non-news platforms that are cheaper or more reliable options. In 2016, leading international advertisers continued to include Henkel, Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, and Beiersdorf. Local media outlets, covering mainly municipalities or small regions in the country, are of least interest to big domestic and international advertisers, so local advertising markets are underdeveloped.

The role of advertising agencies in B&H remains mostly

As panelist Asja Rokša Zubčević of CRA noted, "It is hard to explain how these broadcasters survive on an already small market."

comparable to previous years. A few agencies suffered damage to their reputations as a result of the 2014 "Gibraltar" police investigation, in which nine advertising agency professionals were charged with money laundering, tax evasion, and illegal material gain. Agency S.V.-RSA was closed as a result of the charges.

Foreign owners' domination of advertising agencies goes hand in hand with migration of advertisers from domestic to foreign media distributed in B&H. As in previous years, relations between advertisers and outlets are corrupted, involving conditions on political support and/or illegitimate financial gains. The corruption is likely intensifying against the backdrop of shrinking resources.

Public and local media alike continue to lower the price of advertising as a strategy for ensuring revenue, as indicated in the previous MSI report. Advertising time on public television stations is limited to four minutes and on radio stations to six minutes per hour. But the limits are considered only a formal protection of commercial media, given the circumstances of declining advertiser demand—even these minutes can hardly be filled.

Government funding for media, around \$16.4 million per year, is marked by lack of transparency, decisions being made by

political bodies, lack of rationale and criteria of public interest, and no guarantees that funding is not used for political control over media. They disburse through several funding models, including direct funding for public media, and different contracts with media for coverage of certain proceedings and events.

Entity governments continue to fund media, primarily through supporting the two public news agencies SRNA and FENA. Municipalities and cantons directly finance local public broadcasters. Panelists said that they consider non-transparent financing the main factor in media sustainability, as well as the cause of decreased integrity in the face of shrinking revenues. They questioned the legitimacy of government fund allocation, given the scarce transparency and the questionable criteria. Accountability is not ensured, and ultimately public interest is neglected in these funding models. Even less transparent are the advertising practices of public companies that are major buyers of domestic advertisements. Those transactions are also believed to be similarly misused.¹²

Only rare media outlets use market research results for strategic planning and programming responsive to audience interests. Zubčević described the experience that she and her CRA colleagues had in conducting research. "We carried out a round of consultations with our licensees and, among other things, we specifically asked them if they do these things, and we received a disastrous result."

Similarly, the public's interests are not at the center of public media functioning, nor are they substantially considered or strategically promoted in practice. The majority of media go in the direction of reducing costs rather than investing in programmatic developments. Media outlets are further discouraged from using measurement data due to its questionable reliability in the television media sector and lower quality of measurement in other sectors. Only a few online media use paid audience measurement with more substantial audience data, while the majority use data from Google analytics and Alexa only. Print media in B&H have never showed an interest in developing a measurement system. In the radio sector, the use of audience data is more the exception than the rule, while the television sector still uses audience data widely. They are based on people meters as nominally the most developed method, but the reliability of television audience measurement has been questionable for the past five years.

The market is largely affected by previous controversies surrounding television audience measurement. The controversies over ownership of the measurement provider, its entry in the market, and alleged issuing of false data on broadcasting of

¹² See more in Hodžić, Sanela. Media Integrity Report: State-Media Financial Relations in B&H. *SEE Media Observatory*, 2015 <http://mediaobservatory.net/radar/media-integrity-report-state-media-financial-relations-bosnia-and-herzegovina>

advertisements were never resolved, and a new controversy has followed. In March 2016, the Council of Competition of B&H ruled that the television audience data provider, Audience Measurement, violated rules of competition by forming different prices for same or similar services, as well as illegitimately conditioning access to data from previous years with new contracts.

While this ruling could be viewed in a positive light, panelists have considered it only a formal satisfaction because nothing has yet changed in practice, and panelists do not expect any changes in the future. They would like to see a media/advertising joint advocacy platform, through which they could resolve these problems, but have seen no progress in this area. A previous initiative to restore the role of the Association of the Media Industry, which would balance the interests of different actors on the market through a new audience measurement contract, has so far proven to be fruitless. State institutions did discuss some of the controversies, but so far have failed to bring any definite decisions, thus leaving the concerned parties in the lurch. Meanwhile, the integrity of television measurement remains poor and the market is now a muddy pond of uncertainties.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Score: 1.86

The average score for Objective 5, Supporting Institutions, dropped from 2.15 in 2016 to 1.86 this year. While scores for most of the eight indicators remained mostly static, indicator 1 (trade associations) and indicator 8 (ICT infrastructure) each dropped significantly. Panelists noted that the decline in media infrastructural support is manifested in media owner associations and journalist organizations, which play weakened roles in protecting journalist interests. The long-awaited digitalization process is still in its initial phase, and its completion, though imminent, is not set firmly.

Even without legislative barriers, trade associations do not adequately represent the media industry. Some formerly active media associations have lost their powers, while others are fragmented, representing deferring interests and becoming mostly inactive.

The Association of the Media Industry, which had united the main broadcasters and advertising companies in B&H and had been a contractor for audience measurements until a few years ago, has never restored its role. Its membership decreased and the task of audience measurement was given to the company Audience Measurement, which media outlets contract directly. Panelists shared the impression that publisher associations are not relevant, while associations for the advertising industry

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 in private hands, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- > Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.

and online media do not exist. In May 2016, broadcast media associations (the Association of Private Electronic Media, known as PEM, the Association of Electronic Media, and the Association of Radio Stations of RS) formed an agreement with author rights associations for protection of payment procedures for use of copyrighted music. However, commitment to full implementation of the agreement remains to be seen.

Panelists noted that PEM is mentioned as the most active among broadcast media associations, but this collective organizing fails to unite the interests of the entire industry, while also struggling with scarce internal capacities. "It's a drop in the sea," said Herić, president of the PEM Steering Board. "It's basically impossible for one association to solve problems in the whole media industry." He said that the media sector has a large number of managers that lack managerial know-how, and are not focused on what they are supposed to do to drive the industry forward or themselves forward. He added that his association has internal problems and expressed concern about what would happen "if it became more massive."

Similarly, B&H has several journalist associations that were established in the post-war period across the country, but most are not active and rarely speak out for their members. These include Association of Croat Journalists of B&H, Union of Journalists of B&H, Union of Journalists of RS, Independent Union of Professional Journalists, Association of Reporters from the Court of B&H, and BHJ. Sarajevo-based BHJ is an exception, and is often the only organization that publicly reacts on behalf of its members and journalists in general. BHJ belongs to the International Federation of Journalists and European Federation of Journalists. It currently has 780 members, which represents one-third of the total number of journalists working in the country, according to some informal statistics. The number of members is increasing: it had 87 new members in 2015. BHJ delivers services such as legal aid, counseling, and

training programs. It has so far established journalists' clubs in eight locations (Zenica, Mostar, Banja Luka, Brčko, Bihać, Goražde, Srebrenica, and Tuzla) to support journalists in local communities.

B&H has several active journalism trade unions, whose members work for public broadcasters. They include the Trade Union of Media and Graphic Workers of RS; Union of Publishing, Graphic and Media Workers; Independent Trade Union of RTRS; and Independent Trade Union of Public Service Employees. Panelists said that some unions are perceived as financially and politically influenced by political structures, and expressed doubts regarding their independence. Thus, many journalists do not affiliate with their activities and do not participate in their work. Trade unions at the entity level have branch unions of graphic, media, and publishing workers, but panelists did not mention any relevant results of such organizing.

The panelists had a consensus that civil society organization support for journalists and their work is scarce. Panelists could not name any organizations that regularly react to pressure against journalists. They gave the example of the case of CIN journalist Selma Učanbarlić. She wrote a critical story about Emir Talirević, a doctor and owner of a private healthcare institution. Talirević launched a nasty verbal attack against Učanbarlić, but it did not gain much attention from civil society organizations. Panelists mentioned another case, in which former Klix.ba journalist Lejla Čolak was a victim of brutal speech inciting to violence. An online group of women's civil society organizations, Women's Network, published a statement condemning the attack,¹³ but no further action was taken. Several civil society organizations reacted to proposed retrograde changes of FOIA in December 2016, which is a positive example of engagement in defense of the right to information, but without visible support of wider civil society their advocacy efforts remain limited.

Journalism schools teach students across the country. Journalism departments are at public universities in Sarajevo, Mostar (at two universities, Univerzitet u Mostaru and Sveučilište u Mostaru), Tuzla, Istočno Sarajevo, and Banja Luka. Journalism programs are offered also at the private College of Communications in Banja Luka and at the Department of Computer Science and Communicology of the Faculty of Humanities of Međugorje. According to Media Plan's research "Two Sides of the Same Medal," the eight schools enroll a total 465 students each year. Such a high number of journalism schools is not a result of actual needs of media outlets and communication institutions, but is rather a consequence of the

country's division into entities and cantons—and even more of the country's ethnic fragmentation.¹⁴

Journalism programs sometimes fund small-scale student newspapers and magazines to enhance the practical skills of their students. Their readership is very limited, with the exception of the student magazine of the University of Mostar, which is published in the *Večernji list* daily newspaper.

But overall, the quality of university journalism education is considered rather poor and does not comply with the needs of the industry. Journalism graduates usually do not get sufficient practical experience at universities, so newsrooms must teach them the trade. Outlets will take students or graduates for unpaid internships or probationary work, during which they train them with the goal of selecting the best. Tatjana Sekulić, multimedia producer for TVN1's web portal, said that universities are losing their knowledgeable professors to retirement, and schools are not stirring young students' interests. She has observed journalism graduates as having poor basic education and cultural knowledge.

In the last couple of years, the number of in-service training programs, previously provided by media associations and foreign organizations in B&H, decreased significantly due to lack of funds. Fully funded fellowship programs, such as BIRN's Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence and RFE/RL's Jiri Dienstbier Program, are still available to B&H journalists. Training programs abroad are expensive and journalists usually cannot afford them, while the offer of free-of-charge programs in the country has become very limited. But neither journalists nor their editors see continuous education as a professional priority. According to Boro Kontić, director of Mediacentar Sarajevo, "There is no interest, at media outlets for example, in this kind of training. We are committed; we mainly work with students. Students come to us for a while, we send them to web portals to do practical work, and that's it. What we once had here was almost an industry; it virtually no longer exists."

In 2016, BHJ organized workshops on freedom of speech, labor rights, and trade unions, and continued with its Journalists' Academy program for students and young journalists. Mediacentar Sarajevo delivered a training for students on freedom of speech and multimedia production. The program included internships at CIN, Žurnal, and RFE/RL (funded by Civil Right Defenders), as well as four training classes for 40 journalists on the topic of media and peace-building (funded by USAID). It also coordinated two United Nations Population Fund programs for journalists on reporting on sexual violence in mass conflicts and on sexual and reproductive health.

The government places no restrictions on access to material and equipment for media production, and sources of equipment

¹³ Osudujemo svaki oblik nasilja! Javno reagovanje protiv nasilja. *Zenskameza.ba*, Aug. 2016 <http://zenskameza.ba/osudujemo-svaki-oblik-nasilja-javno-reagovanje-protiv-nasilja-2/>

¹⁴ Udovičić, Radenko. Two sides of the media medal. *Mediaonline.ba*, Nov. 2016 <http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/pdf.asp?ID=3416&n=TWO%20SIDES%20OF%20THE%20MEDIA%20MEDAL>

and printing facilities tend to be apolitical. Contracts are market-oriented and are based on quality of services and financial offers rather than on media editorial policies. Printers cannot monopolize their positions to prevent media pluralism given the multitude of printing options.

Channels of media distribution are mostly free of state control and the country has various distributors of print, television, Internet and mobile phone services. A total of seven mobile phone operators (BH Telecom, Telekomunikacije Srpske, Hrvatske Telekomunikacije, IZI Mobil, Logosoft, Blicnet and Telrad Net) offer increasingly varied services at lower prices. The percentage of Internet users reached 72 percent of the entire population in 2015.¹⁵ Similarly, mobile penetration in B&H is increasing, and at the end of September 2016 climbed to 89.55 percent, from 84.84 percent at the end of the previous quarter.¹⁶ Internet and mobile services are used widely, and the law places no restrictions on access. However, some cable TV providers claim that the company Telemach has monopolized the market. Telemach has bought several cable operators, making exclusive deals with several media outlets and offering popular channels only to users of their cable television packages, thus hurting their competition. The Council of Competition of B&H has warned the United Media company (of which Telemach is part) that it should offer its channels to all cable providers based on same terms and conditions.

The years-long process of digital switchover is still far from being completed. Even though digital signal has been tested since October 2016, the testing phase began more than a year after the deadline for complete digital switchover (June 2015). Panelists expressed skepticism about its finalization, which caused the score for ICT infrastructure to drop in comparison to last year. The test signal is being transmitted only in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar. The quality of current analog broadcasting in remote areas is far from adequate, and citizens living in rural areas are sometimes left without access to information. Zupčević commented that some rural populations do not even receive public broadcasting signals, let alone have an Internet connection or 4G network capacity.

While generally consumers have multiple choices for purchasing ICT devices from foreign or local distributors, options for people living in rural areas are sometimes limited. However, media outlets are following global trends and increasingly using the Internet and mobile services to reach their audience through websites, podcasts, and social media.

¹⁵ CRA Annual Report 2015, <http://rak.ba/bos/index.php?uid=1272548129>

¹⁶ Bosnia's end-Sept mobile phone subscribers rise 5.6 q/q. SeeNews.com Accessed on Dec 24, 2016 <https://seenews.com/news/bosnias-end-sept-mobile-phone-subscribers-rise-56-q-q-548256>

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The following participant submitted a questionnaire, but did not attend the panel discussion:

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Disclaimer: The views and opinions presented in the chapter on Bosnia and Herzegovina are those of the panel participants and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of Mediacentar Sarajevo or of other associated institutions.