

MEDIA

SUSTAINABILITY

INDEX

2005



IREX

IMPORTANT PROGRESS WAS MADE AS WELL ON MEDIA REGULATION. THE KOSOVO PARLIAMENT WAS FINALLY ABLE TO PASS, AND THE UN'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL SIGNED, A LAW ESTABLISHING AN INDEPENDENT MEDIA COMMISSION.



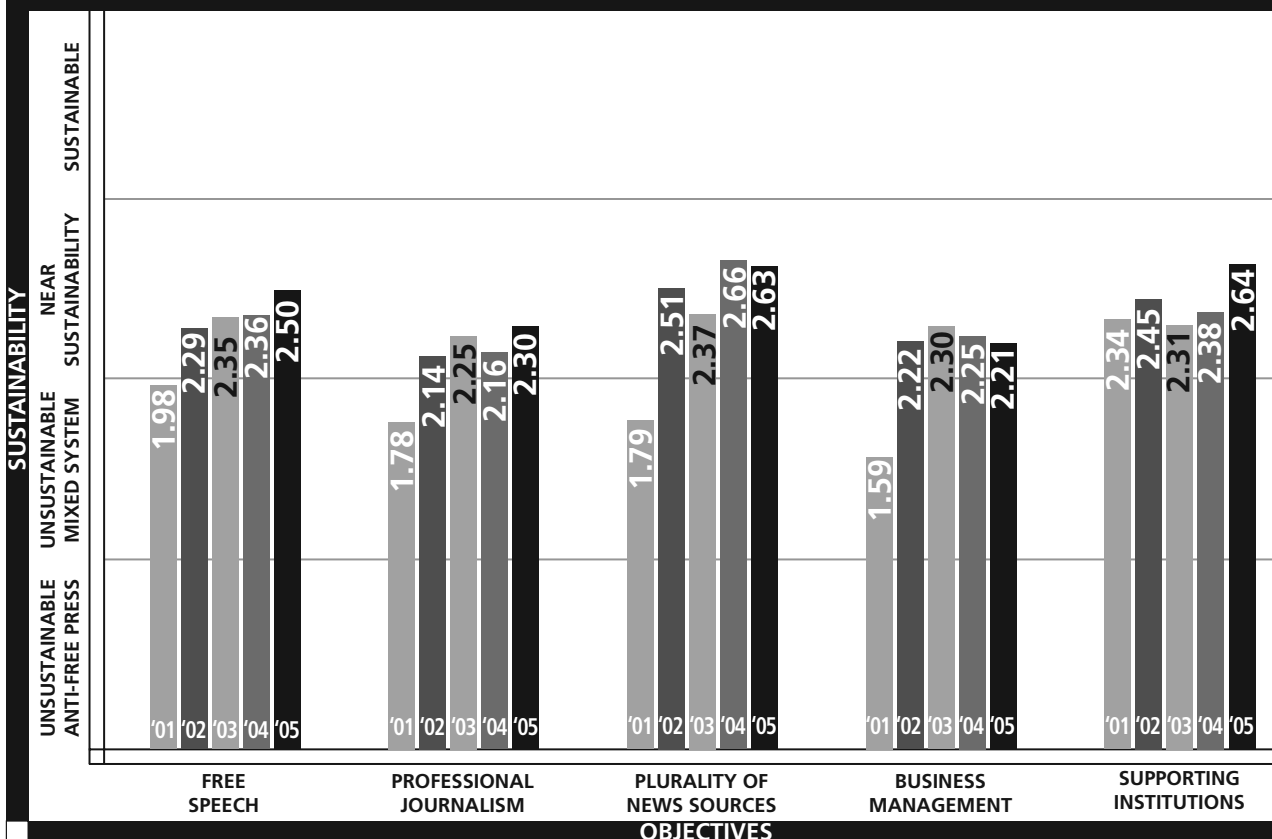
The long-awaited progress toward final political status of Kosovo was by far the lead story in this United Nations protectorate. Six years after NATO troops first entered the province and drove out the Serb military, the UN Security Council gave the go-ahead for status talks. A UN envoy, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, was expected to begin a process of shuttle diplomacy among Belgrade, Pristina, and western powers.

The Security Council decision came after months of intensive speculation, as UN Envoy Kai Eide made several visits to Kosovo to determine whether the former province of Serbia had made adequate progress in meeting the political and social standards set by the UN. The standards process was dealt a serious blow early in the year when newly appointed and popular Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj was forced to resign after being indicted by the Hague Tribunal. Much political in-fighting followed, and even as talks were finally expected to begin, the negotiating team, representing major political parties, was still struggling to establish a unified position. To add to the uncertainty, longtime Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the negotiating team, was being treated for lung cancer.

Important progress was made as well on media regulation. The Kosovo parliament was finally able to pass, and the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary General signed, a law establishing an Independent Media Commission. Since the end of the war, broadcast media licensing and regulation has been the responsibility of the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC), under authority of the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The new IMC will be responsible for bringing order to the crowded broadcast sector, where 118 broadcasters (including 23 television stations) serve a population of only two million people. The council of the IMC will include seven members selected by the Kosovo Assembly and the SRSG. The IMC will be charged with awarding new licenses to broadcasters (seven years for radio, 10 years for television). An OSCE report recommended a

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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.

reduction in the number of stations but did not provide guidelines on determining who should survive. That and many other contentious issues will face the new IMC early next year.

The number of daily newspapers increased to seven during the year, sharing a miniscule total circulation estimated at approximately 25,000–30,000. Passage of the IMC law had an impact on the print sector as well. The TMC, which enforced a print code of ethics, through the levy of fines, will no longer have that power. A self-regulating mechanism was established when the newspaper publishers signed a press code of ethics and agreed to participate in a Press Council that will initially be supported by the OSCE. The Press Council is expected to hear complaints against publishers and journalists, determine the validity of complaints, and issue sanctions.

The greatest changes in the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) from 2004 occurred in the area of supporting institutions, which witnessed continuing improvement in the capacity of associations. Other changes were less significant, although free speech and professional journalism scores were noticeably higher. The professionalism scores, which rebounded after the media's much criticized performance during March 2004 riots, still reflect slow progress in developing professional journalism in Kosovo. The remaining two indicators, plurality of news sources and business management, were virtually unchanged. The business climate in Kosovo continues to be poor, although hopes are high that a resolution of the status issue will lead to outside investment and economic growth. If that occurs, and the new IMC finds a way to bring order to the broadcast licensing issue, there could be substantial improvements in the coming years.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREE SPEECH

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.50 / 4.00

In theory, free speech is embraced and practiced routinely in Kosovo, with few, if any, overt challenges or restrictions. But in practical terms, particularly for journalists, there are many impediments. Government and political leaders still seek to manage information by restricting access to public officials and documents. In the worst cases, free speech is limited by threats and violence against journalists and media outlets. Mimoza Kusari, who served as spokeswoman for former Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi, said very bluntly that "most of our public officials have no respect for journalists; they use them only for their promotion when it comes

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.

to the political campaigns, the elections. But when it comes to giving accountability to the people for what they do, they say it's their own business and they treat public money as their own."

The Kosovo MSI panel agreed that while there is broad support for free speech, there are practical limits, particularly when it comes to reporting on ethnic issues. Although the constitutional framework calls for rights consistent with the European Union, US Agency for International Development (USAID) Media and Civil Society Advisor Argjentina Grazhdani says the UN administration has promoted freedom of expression as a democratic rather than a legal concept "and this happened because of their fear of interethnic violence."

While it is widely accepted that broadcast licensing is apolitical, there is frustration that few licenses have been issued in recent years pending action on the IMC law. There is likely pent-up demand for new licenses, particularly in Pristina, where there is no television station licensed solely for local broadcast. However, most agree that considering the poor economy and the large number of stations already licensed, there

are practical and technical limitations to the number of stations that can be permitted to operate.

On the issue of tax structure, there is agreement that the media are treated the same as other businesses. However, not all thought that this was a good idea. Panelists representing media companies believe they should be given tax breaks, arguing that the practice is common in some European countries (such as reduced value-added tax [VAT] for print media).

“I want to see that investigations are moving and this is not happening when journalists are attacked or a crime is conducted against them,” said Fatmire Tërdevci.

The indicator that scored lowest for this objective concerns crimes against journalists or media outlets. There have been a number of well-publicized attacks on journalists in Kosovo, including

the murder of a *Bota Sot* journalist. Panel member Fatmire Tërdevci, an investigative journalist for the daily *Koha Ditore*, was shot and seriously wounded in 2004. Fatmire Tërdevci has received threatening calls in 2005 that refer to the earlier attack, but she says police have not acted. “When I reported them they did not relate it to last year’s attack. They want to treat it as a separate case, and I think this is a problem.” Fatmire Tërdevci says her case is not unusual. “I want to see that investigations are moving and this is not happening when journalists are attacked or a crime is conducted against them.” While there are no clear figures kept, journalists recount numerous cases of harassment, violence, and threats of violence against journalists.

Some panelists expressed a concern that police are not competent enough to investigate the crimes and that journalists are not the only ones being assaulted and threatened. But Virtyt Gacaferi, of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and a former journalist, said prosecution is also a problem. “I believe there are cases when the perpetrator is known, is an official, and no action is being taken.”

Another serious challenge to journalists is the potential for criminal prosecution for libel.

Although the law is not being used, the panelists believe it has a chilling effect on the practice of journalism. The prime minister’s office has undertaken an initiative to decriminalize the law, and the TMC’s media appeals board process has provided an alternative to criminal prosecution. Fines may be levied, but journalists have not been sent to jail.

In terms of practical impediments to professional journalism, access to public information continues to be a very significant issue. Journalists are regularly criticized in Kosovo for practicing protocol journalism, focusing on press conferences and staged events. But if reporters, like *Koha Ditore*’s Fatmire Tërdevci want to report independently, or investigate on their own, they will have a very difficult time obtaining access to public documents and officials. “We can only participate in press conferences” said Tërdevci, “and even if we go to the press conferences we can not ask a question which is not the topic of the conference.”

Although a law on access to public documents was passed, government workers can claim it is not applicable because institutions have not taken the next step: determining which documents should remain confidential. *Koha Ditore* editor Naser Miftari, formerly board president of the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo, says the problem applies to both local and central government: “The law is there, but it is meaningless. It stipulates in basic terms what public documents should be, but the government never made any effort to classify any of these documents.”

Although access to local documents and public information continues to be a big problem for journalists in Kosovo, access to international news and news sources is not. The same holds true for access to the profession, as there are no licensing or other restrictions on people who want to work as journalists.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.30 / 4.00

This category dropped significantly in 2004 after reports by the OSCE and the TMC showed how poor reporting by some Kosovo-wide media contributed to the ethnic riots of March 2004. Overall, the scores rebounded in 2005, although the issue of journalists’ pay is still a cause for concern. Fatmire Tërdevci said journalism in Kosovo “has begun to meet professional standards in quality. The media is becoming more professional and responsible thanks to short-term trainings and study visits abroad. Hate language is rare; information is more balanced and well-sourced.”

The MSI panel found it difficult to reach a consensus on the issue of fair and objective reporting. Most members said the answer depends on the media outlet, the journalist, or the editor. Most did agree that the mainstream Kosovo-wide broadcast media deserved the higher marks, while most of the problems in this area

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).

could be attributed to smaller newspapers representing particular political interests or philosophies. Naser Miftari said the degree of fairness and objectivity also depends on the nature of the story: "There is a tendency to be more accurate and diverse in terms of getting both sides of the story in nonpolitical stories than in political ones."

The Director of News and Marketing for Kosovo-wide broadcaster RTV-21, Eugen Saraçini, agreed that the media that are least likely to act professionally tend to be the smaller newspapers with political allegiances. But as he pointed out, it is important to remember that they also tend to be less influential. RTV Tema owner Visar Hoti credited the new dailies *Express* and *Lajm* with bringing news sources of information to the market, and he said they "have also introduced a higher level and volume of investigative reporting."

The score for ethical standards also increased slightly in 2005. Naser Miftari believes that most news organizations had their own internal guidelines, but he predicts additional improvement with the industry's newly adopted print code of conduct: "There is a broad recognition of the ethical standards" Naser Miftari said, "with the print press adhering to the press code of conduct." However, IREX Media Advisor Avni Ahmetaj argued that the widespread use of use of "anonymous sources" was dangerous.

In Kosovo's poor economic environment, self-censorship is more often the result of financial fears than regulatory threats. Naser Miftari says those decisions are not made in the newsroom: "Often times it's not the editors that pressure the journalists; it is the managers or owners, and they are very straightforward in telling them who they can cover and who they cannot." That is not to say political influences don't play a role, too. In Kosovo, where government and international institutions are heavy advertisers, the intimidation may be political, but the threat is still economic: "It's the influence of marketing that comes from the government" said USAID's Argjentina Grazhdani, "and they can use this money that goes to ads to control which newspaper they want to subsidize."

The panel agreed that in Kosovo, where protocol journalism is the standard, media are free to cover all events. But Naser Miftari pointed out that some media may decline because of political affiliations. Niche reporting is still not common in Kosovo, although most media outlets do have business reporters, representing the growth of this specialty. Others have added reporters who specialize in certain social issues. There was a consensus that the availability and quality of niche reporting has improved, but there is still little specialized reporting on such areas as crime, the courts, health, and the environment.

There is disagreement about the pay levels for journalists and whether they are enough to discourage corruption.

All panelists recognized salaries as low. Although monthly salaries for journalists may be only €200 a month or even less, that is still very competitive by Kosovo standards, according to some panelists. "In comparison with the average salary of Kosovo, it is higher," said Argjentina Grazhdani. Others argued that the Kosovo average is dragged down by very low salaries in the public sector. Eugen Saraçini said his wife, a surgeon, could make more money at the television station by making coffee and doing odd jobs than she can by performing three or four operations a day.

Avni Ahmetaj said English-speaking journalists who have been trained in the profession often leave to take higher-paying jobs in banks and international

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institutions. And he termed an “outrage” the practice of some local stations that take advantage of young people who want to enter the profession. “They work for six months and don’t get a penny,” said Avni Ahmetaj, “Then they become a sort of journalist but then must leave because it’s time to get a salary.” He says the station then finds someone else to work for six months as an unpaid trainee.

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The panel was not particularly concerned about the balance of entertainment and news on the broadcast stations. Although entertainment programs have become more numerous and popular in recent

years, the panel felt there was still a good balance between information and entertainment. But there was also specific criticism of the public broadcaster, which some felt should provide more informative and educational programming than the private commercial stations.

There is a considerable discrepancy between the stations in terms of their technical facilities. The public broadcaster is by far the best equipped, and at least one of the two private Kosovo-wide television stations has adequate facilities. Similarly, a few local stations meet technical standards, but most others do not. Many use outdated and poor-quality VHS equipment, and some must find creative but unconventional solutions. Avni Ahmetaj said that when he was asked by one owner to assess his local station in northern Kosovo, he found a toy jammed between a camera and tripod head. “I said what is the teddy bear doing, and he said, ‘Oh, that’s to keep the camera straight.’”

Print media generally have access to decent-quality equipment and to printing presses that produce suitable-quality editions. However, as with the broadcast sector, the local print media tend to be less well-equipped. In addition, with donor funds declining rapidly for media in Kosovo and with much equipment purchased by donors reaching the end of its useful life, there will be a need for greater investment by the media themselves, which will separate the financially better-off media from those struggling to make ends meet.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.63 / 4.00

There are many media voices in Kosovo, but research consistently shows that television is the overwhelming choice for people seeking news and information. Although the number of daily newspapers rose to seven in 2005, estimates on circulation have fallen to near 20,000, meaning only one person in 200 buys a newspaper on a regular basis.

The issue of “buying” may be the greatest contributing factor in the small newspaper circulation figures. The MSI panel, once again, believes the poor economy and unemployment estimates of more than 50 percent play a large role in determining the state of media in Kosovo. But they also hasten to add that poor circulation does not necessarily correspond to low readership. Newspapers are routinely passed among family members, neighbors, and coffee-shop customers. Poverty may prevent people from buying their own newspaper, but they may be readers nevertheless. There is only one distribution company; circulation figures are not reported, and it is impossible to know precise circulation data.

The picture is clearer with television. Quarterly viewer research clearly shows that large audiences tune in for nightly news programs on the three Kosovo-wide stations—the public broadcaster RTK and the private stations RTV21 and KTV. Many local television and radio stations also broadcast news and information programs. Few people have Internet at home, but access is available in public buildings and there are many Internet cafés with inexpensive rates.

There are no government restrictions to media access, but only 75 percent of the population can receive the Kosovo-wide stations because of technical limitations of the transmission system and the lack of funds for investment in expanding the network’s coverage.

In terms of the public broadcaster, the panel agreed that RTK reflected differing perspectives of the political spectrum, but only minimally. The public broadcaster does include views from the major political parties but does not reflect a broad range of opinion or alternative thought beyond the key parties. Virtyt Gacaferi said, “Sometimes the touch with the grassroots organizations and the worries of the people on the ground is hindered. You present the views of the stakeholders, but you forget about the ‘lower levels’ of society.” Argjentina Grazhdani added, “They try not to upset anybody. But being fair and not upsetting anybody, there is a big difference.”

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.

The public broadcaster has been at the center of several controversies, and the panel members felt they were very self-serving in reporting on those issues. For instance, the allocation of property owned by the former RTP (the state broadcaster prior to international oversight of Kosovo) has raised public controversies. RTK is a direct party to these controversies, as it occupies or controls most of this property. The private broadcaster KTV signed a contract with the Kosovo Trust Agency (which manages former socially owned enterprises) for use of former RTP space. RTK ordered security guards to prevent use of the space. Coverage of events like this were slanted to RTK’s point of view in the view of most panelists.

The news agency KosovaLive was established at the end of the war and continues to provide news coverage to subscribing media. But few are willing to pay for the service, and the agency is on precarious financial ground. Members of the panel felt the agency provides professional and credible news coverage, but they said KosovaLive’s service was too slow and too limited to be as valuable to the media as it might be.

Independent broadcasters do, for the most part, produce their own news programs with only the smallest local stations being the exception. The panel

found that independent broadcasters’ news coverage and talk shows may include an “edge” not found on the public broadcaster. “This is particularly true of KTV,” said Virtyt Gacaferi, “where there is a real debate with government officials.”

Transparency of ownership is clear in the capital of Pristina, where the Kosovo-wide broadcasters are located but the small communities and villages, where the local stations broadcast, is what one panel member called “the grey zone.” Although information about ownership was required as part of the licensing procedure, panel members said the small stations are not audited and the current situation is not clear. Visar Hoti said the stations must name shareholders, “but without a credible audit of those criteria in the overall media scene it is pretty unreliable.”

The most widely known media owner in Kosovo is Veton Surroi, who is also the head of a political party. As a well-known politician he is frequently in the news, but Naser Miftari says the other media owners don’t talk about each other. “I think that writing about other people regarding ownership is discouraged,” Miftari said. “Those media could go against the other media in a never-ending struggle.” Miftari said media ownership is not open for discussion, “so to that extent we are not transparent.”

Reporting on social interests is limited, too, according to the panel. There is reporting on ethnic minority issues, although journalists who do so may be privately criticized by their colleagues. But Virtyt Gacaferi said the coverage of minorities is limited, and “the media lacks coverage of other minorities in terms of social belonging or sexual orientation.”

Naser Miftari said the general public has grown increasingly frustrated because so much attention is given to the plight of minorities while the problems of everyday

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life are ignored. Argjentina Grazhdani added that even that coverage is very limited and predictable: “They show this poor family and they are eating mud and then everybody feels guilty and they build him a house and that’s not the point.” She says there are few straightforward stories or programs on problems with medical care, raising children, or other health issues that can be educational. One panel member blamed the ongoing reliance on political protocol reporting: “We

get Bajram Kosumi (prime minister)," she said. "Bajram Rexhepi (former prime minister) and whoever the next Bajram is. But we don't get life; we don't get that."

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.21 / 4.00

Business management scores were virtually unchanged again in 2005, although the panel discussion reflected general agreement that the media outlets were operating as efficient, professional businesses given the business environment. Fatmire Tërdevci agreed that "independent media are relatively well-managed businesses, but only a few of them allow editorial independence." She said most still showed an inclination to favor certain political or business interests.

Newspaper publishing and distribution in Kosovo can be represented by an inverted pyramid. On the one hand there is a selection of seven daily newspapers. There are fewer printing houses. But at the point of the pyramid is distribution, where there is only one company available to distribute papers to potential readers, Rilindja. The result can be higher distribution prices for publishers, and, because Rilindja refuses to release circulation figures for the newspapers, it also controls important data. "It is not public, and it is not transparent," says Virtyt Gacaferi. "And this then

influences the advertising market; it influences to whom the government should give advertising."

The issue of distribution was complicated even more in 2005 when municipal officials in Pristina removed kiosks from the city streets. Naser Miftari said most newspapers sold in Kosovo are sold in Pristina, and most of those were sold from the kiosks. "This will be a problem for the future because you don't have the independently known places where you can put your newspapers. That will be strictly up to the shopkeepers themselves."

Despite some concerns about production and distribution, most panelists agreed, at least moderately, that media outlets and supporting firms operate as professional businesses. There is, however, a wide range in business performance between the larger Kosovo-wide broadcasters and many of the small mom-and-pop broadcasters in the smaller towns.

There is also a wide array of revenue sources, some distinct to Kosovo. A recent OSCE report showed that many local television and radio stations are heavily subsidized by the military, through units of the multinational military force (KFOR) still stationed in Kosovo. Avni Ahmetaj said another source of support for broadcasters is the government. He told of one local station that was paid by the municipality for broadcasting its meeting. When other panelists suggested this was corruption, Ahmetaj disagreed: "You had the opposition who could speak, citizens could speak, and everyone could speak. Almost all of the local TV stations throughout Kosovo do this." He and other panelists said the municipality was simply compensating the local station for its production costs.

Naser Miftari said the financial relationship between government and media is not always so honest or transparent: "I have been approached by people asking me to write favorably about certain ministries in order to get advertising contracts, and I think this is the case with all the media." Although it's known that the government spends a great deal on advertising, it was agreed that this is not a subsidy, per se, because they are actually paying for a service.

The panel also generally agreed that advertising is the largest source of revenue for media and that the business is growing. Mimoza Kusari, former spokeswoman for the prime minister, said, "There are signs of improvement in the advertising business due to the awareness of businesses about contemporary marketing." Eugen Saraçini noted that subscriptions, for Kosovar Albanian Diaspora in Western Europe and the United States, are also increasing his station's revenue. He said small local stations can get by on

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.

much less revenue because their technical investments, staffs, and salaries are smaller. Ardita Zejnullahu of AMPEK said “dumping” is a problem in some local markets with multiple television stations: “You have one station in Prizren where you can advertise for one week for five euros.”

Advertising agencies are used by some media, but Eugen Saraçini says the local agencies are not well-developed. “All the nationwide stations have relationships with different foreign agencies, but here we have a lot of problems.” He said agencies may buy advertising on behalf of advertisers who fail to pay bills incurred by the agencies on their behalf. The result is a chain-reaction, ending with the broadcaster not getting paid. “With foreign agencies we don’t have these types of problems.” Dealing directly with distributors of international companies isn’t necessarily any better. Panelists said some distributors will take money for their parent company and claim to spend it all on advertising, but in reality they may pocket a large amount of the money.

There is a lack of market research in Kosovo, where the government is not even sure about the size of the population. But data on viewing of the three Kosovo-wide television stations is available. A private company, Index-Kosova, conducts quarterly research that some stations have put to good use. Radio-TV 21 has moved from third to first place in the ratings in less than two years, and Eugen Saraçini says the station found the surveys are a valuable tool: “Believe me, we use it very well in making the program scheme and on how to approach the viewers and the clients.” The ratings are only done for the Kosovo-wide stations, and local broadcasters must rely on things like public-opinion polls for what little data they do get. On the print side, Naser Miftari remarked that if market research was available there would not have been three new daily newspapers started in Kosovo in the past year.

As for the television ratings research, the panel expressed confidence in the independence of the company doing the work, but there was concern that the relatively inexpensive methodology (face-to-face interviews) might not be as accurate as possible. However, Saraçini said that advertisers accepted the results because their own data confirmed the local findings.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Kosovo Objective Score: 2.64 / 4.00

This objective received the highest overall score and the greatest degree of increase over 2004’s MSI. Panel members were generally positive about the

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.

contribution of associations that represent independent broadcasters and journalists. The highest marks reflect the panel’s view that both print and broadcast private media can operate without restrictions imposed by political or other interests, thanks in part to the advocacy and lobbying efforts of the associations.

AMPEK, the association that represents independent broadcast media in Kosovo, has not grown appreciably in the past two years and it still survives entirely on donor contributions. It has 35 members out of a potential membership of more than 100. But the panel agreed that AMPEK does a good job of representing the concerns of independent media and in lobbying on its members behalf. It has been an active participant in all media law issues before the Kosovo Assembly, UNMIK, and the TMC and is accepted by those institutions as a legitimate representative of the industry.

Three journalist associations exist in Kosovo, but the panel felt that only one, the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (APJK) is functional. The association claims 400 non-paying members. APJK is quick to respond when journalists are arrested or their rights denied. However, Virtyt Gacaferi believes they should do more than react: “They should be more proactive in terms of developing journalism.” He says there should be a union of journalists “that would protect their rights in relation to employers.” Former

“You can train a person in journalism who doesn’t know journalism, but it’s harder to retrain a person who was poorly trained,” said Virtyt Gacaferi.

APJK board president Naser Miftari said that in order to turn the organization into a union they would need a feasibility study because “the

feedback we’ve had as an association is that the idea of having members pay a fee, even a minimal fee on an annual basis, is not plausible.” He says most journalists think the association is there to protect them if they have a need, but they don’t believe they have an obligation toward the association.

The nongovernmental organization (NGO) community gets lower marks, although the sector has used its influence in the development of laws that affect the media. Argjentina Grazhdani notes that freedom of expression in Kosovo is not a controversial issue, so the civil-society NGOs tend to become active because of certain issues. “The biggest issues were over open committee meetings, which affect media; freedom-of-information legislation, which affects media,” she said. “Are they doing a great job? No, because they are busy building their capacities as everyone else in this country.”

Journalism education in Kosovo received a boost with the opening of a master’s degree program at the Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication. But there will be space for only 20 students in a two-year master’s degree program. Undergraduate study is still available only at the unaccredited Faik Konica School, and although a new journalism program at the University of Pristina was announced, Naser Miftari notes that “they have no staff and no plan.” That’s not necessarily bad news to Virtyt Gacaferi, as a bad program can do more harm than none at all. “You can train a person in journalism who doesn’t know journalism, but it’s harder to retrain a person who was poorly trained.” And he says that while he believes the new masters program will be good, he is not sure the Kosovo job market can absorb the graduates.

Since the war there have been many short-term training opportunities for journalists, but Fatmire Tërdevci says that not all have been high-quality. Naser Miftari said journalists are lacking specialized training, “and there are very few organizations that provide that and it’s mostly conducted through in-house training, meaning that older journalists train younger ones.” Out-of-house trainings can be a problem, Fatmire

Tërdevci says, because editors don’t feel comfortable sending their journalists away for two or three days. “Their staff is quite limited, and they do not have the human resources to cover all the events.”

Eugen Saraçini says there have been training opportunities in journalism and sales, but “we never see trainings in how to use lighting systems, or how to use cameras. I would prefer to have people who are professionals to come to work with the media.”

The panel generally agreed that sources of newsprint and printing facilities are private and not subject to political control. The same was true for channels of media distribution, although some expressed concern about municipality plans to require licenses for future kiosk owners, where most daily papers are sold in Pristina. Local television transmitters and facilities are in private hands, and the Kosovo-wide transmission system is operated by an independent NGO, the Kosovo Terrestrial Telecommunications Network.

However, for broadcasters there is a potential problem with land use, as many transmitters are located on land of socially owned enterprises that face potential privatization. Internet access is unrestricted, with multiple service providers.

Panel Participants

Fatmire Tërdevci, Journalist, *Koha Ditore*, Pristina

Virtyt Gacaferi, Team Leader—Advocacy and Communication, UNDP, Pristina

Naser Miftari, Editor, *Koha Ditore* (former President, APJK), Pristina

Ramush Tahiri, Political Advisor, President of the Chair of the Kosovo Assembly, Pristina

Mimoza Kusari, Former Spokeswoman, Prime Minister’s Office, Pristina

Argjentina Grazhdani, Media and Civil Society Advisor, USAID Kosovo

Eugen Saraçini, Director of News and Marketing, RTV21, Pristina

Visar Hoti, Owner/Director, RTV Tema, Ferizaj

Ardita Zejnullahu, Executive Director, AMPEK, Pristina

Avni Ahmetaj, Television Media Advisor, IREX, Pristina

Moderator

Matt Shelley, Chief of Party, IREX, Pristina

KOSOVO AT A GLANCE

GENERAL

■ **Population:** 1.9 million *Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2003 est.*

■ **Capital city:** Pristina

■ **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Albanian 88%, Serbian 7%, other 5% (Bosniak, Roma, Turkish) *Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2003 est.*

■ **Religions (% of population):** Islam, Catholicism, and Serbian Orthodox are the main religions, but no reliable information exists.

■ **Languages (% of population):** Albanian 88%, Serbian 7%, other 5% (Bosniak, Roma, Turkish) *Statistical Office of Kosovo, 2003 est. derived from ethnic group statistics*

■ **GDP:** Projected €2,453 million *UNMIK*

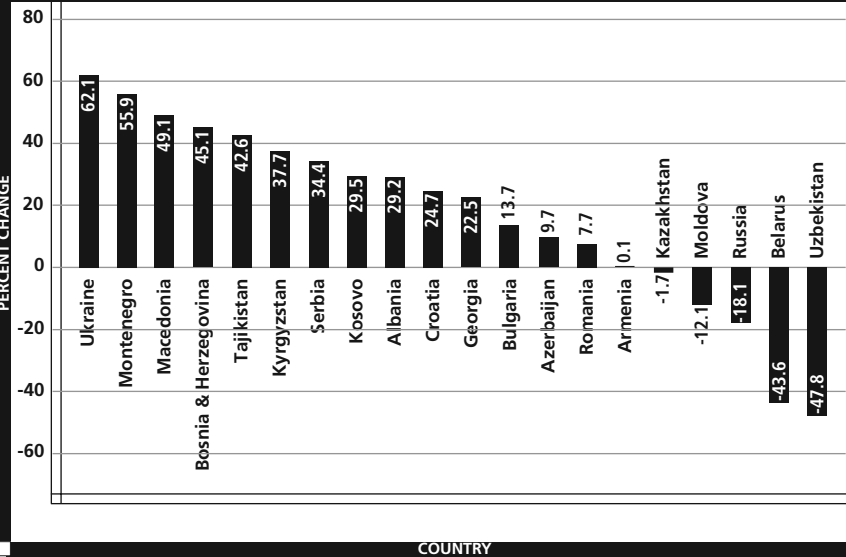
■ **Literacy rate (% of population):** 93%

Kosovo has not had a census since it became a UN protectorate, and population data are sporadically produced.

■ **President or top authority:** President Ibrahim Rugova, Prime Minister Bajram Kosumi

■ **Next scheduled elections:** Local elections 2006, general elections 2007

MSI AVERAGE SCORES—PERCENT CHANGE 2001–2005



MEDIA-SPECIFIC

■ **Newspaper circulation statistics (total circulation and largest paper):** Circulation statistics not available. Estimates place total circulation at 25,000 to 30,000 per day. *Koha Ditore* is the largest newspaper.

■ **Broadcast ratings (top three ranked stations):**

- **Television:** RTK, KTV, TV21
- **Radio:** Radio Dukagjini, Radio Kosova, Radio 21
Index-Kosovo third-quarter survey of 2005

■ **Number of print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Seven daily newspapers, two weekly newspapers; 23 television stations; 95 radio stations

■ **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** €5 million to €7 million
Estimates from advertising agencies, IREX business consultants

■ **Number of Internet users:** Households with Internet service: 6%; people claiming daily use of Internet: 6%, people claiming frequent use: 5%
Index-Kosovo

■ **News agencies:** KosovaLive (independent), Kosovapress (aligned with political party PDK), QIK (aligned with political party LDK)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: KOSOVO

