

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

2006/2007

**The Development
of Sustainable
Independent Media
in Europe and Eurasia**



MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX 2006/2007

The Development of Sustainable Independent Media in Europe and Eurasia
www.irex.org/msi

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If resolution of Kosovo's status succeeds in easing uncertainty and releasing some of its economic potential, MSI panelists said they saw no reason why the MSI would not continue to improve. Institutions were now in place to support and regulate independent media, making it harder for politicians and others to exert control.



KOSOVO

Two issues dominated Kosovo's media during 2006: negotiations on the United Nations (UN) protectorate's final status and the political upheaval that followed the death of President Ibrahim Rugova. As the final status negotiations continued in Vienna and preparations were made for the UN envoy's announcement of their outcome to the Security Council, Prime Minister Bajram Kosumi resigned, replaced by Agim Ceku, the former commander of the Kosovo Protection Force, and President Rugova was succeeded by Fatmir Sejdiu, a longtime political ally.

The status talks focused more attention on the position of the Serbian minority in Kosovo and the extent to which power would be devolved to their local communities, issues reflected in the 2006 Media Sustainability Index (MSI). The international community in Kosovo was particularly concerned about the potential for the media outlets that serve Serbs and their ability to provide independent news coverage.

The MSI panel assessment for 2006 reflects a broad range of institutional and other improvements in Kosovo's media sector. The radio and television regulator stopped being an internationally appointed Temporary Media Commissioner and became a fully functioning Independent Media Commission, staffed by Kosovars with a council meeting once a month. Print media became regulated by a Press Council with the power to hear complaints, to impose fines for newspapers breaching the code of conduct, and to force newspapers to print its adjudications. Industry self-regulation protects media from government control, and this result was reflected in the panelists' score for the free-speech objective—2.59, compared with 2.50 the previous year. Panelists' views on the professionalism of journalists continue to be dampened by the media's much-criticized performance during the ethnic riots in 2004, and there was also only a slight improvement in the score for the plurality of news sources.

The scores for the quality and strength of business management and supporting institutions rose sharply, perhaps surprisingly, considering the continued weakness of the overall economy and the uncertain political climate. The reason lay in the formation of a new industry body for the electronic media that planned, among other things, to commission audience and readership research of a higher standard than before. This is expected to boost advertising revenues and for the first time give accurate figures for newspaper circulation.

If resolution of Kosovo's status succeeds in easing uncertainty and releasing some of its economic potential, MSI panelists said they saw no reason why the MSI would not continue to improve. Institutions were now in place to support and regulate independent media, making it harder for politicians and others to exert control. However, the panelists said, much would depend on how Albanian- and Serbian-language media coped with the challenges of reporting on Kosovo's new position in the international community.

KOSOVO AT A GLANCE

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

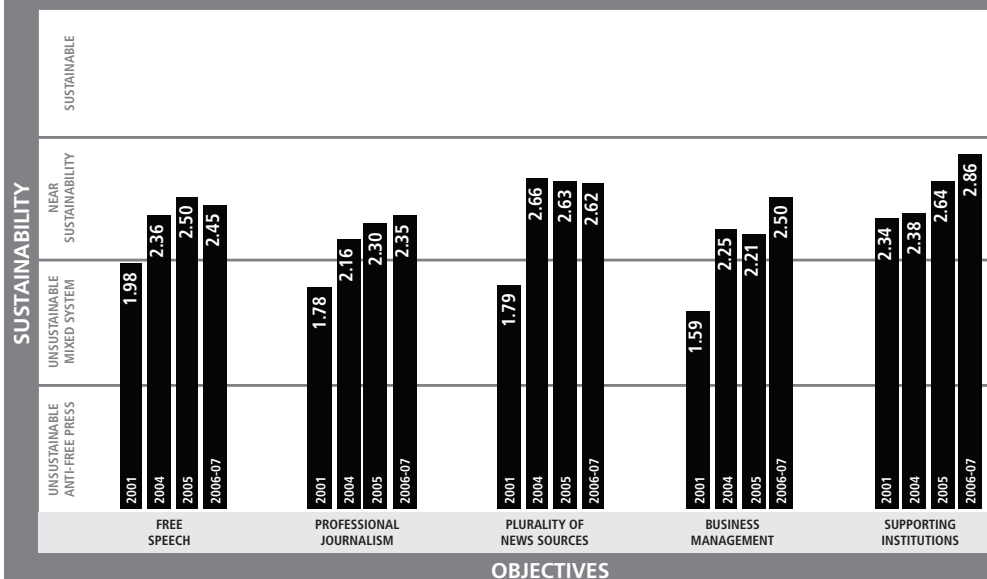
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 1.9 million (2006 UNMIK est.)
- > **Capital city:** Pristina
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Albanian 90%, Serbian 6%, Muslim Slavs (Bosniak, Gorani) 2%, Roma 1.5%, Turkish 1% (2006 UNMIK est.)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Islam, Catholicism, and Serbian Orthodox are the main religions, but no reliable statistics exist.
- > **Languages (% of population):** Albanian 90%, Serbian 6%, other 4% (derived from 2006 UNMIK population estimates).
- > **GDP (2006 est.; Atlas GNI not available):** \$3.08 billion (Provisional Institutions of Self-Governance Ministry of Economy and Finance)
- > **Income per capita (2006; PPP GNI per capita not available):** \$1,600 (World Bank Kosovo Country Brief 2006)
- > **Literacy rate:** 93%
- > **President or top authority:** Fatmir Sejdiu, president; Agim Ceku, prime minister

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 10 daily newspapers, five weekly magazines, 22 television stations, 93 radio stations (IMC)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Circulation data is not available. Estimates place total circulation at between 20,000 and 30,000. *Koha Ditore* is the leading paper.
- > **Broadcast ratings:** TV21 42%, RTK 29.8%, KTV 12.6% (Index Kosova, August 2006). Data for radio stations do not exist. Leading stations are Radio Dukagjini, Radio Kosova, Radio 21.
- > **News agencies:** KosovaLive (independent), Kosovapress (aligned with political party PDK), QIK (aligned with political party LDK)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** €5 million to €7 million (IREX and advertising agencies' estimates)
- > **Internet usage:** Households with internet access: 13%. People claiming daily use of Internet: 15% (IndexKosova)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: KOSOVO



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.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREE SPEECH

Kosovo Objective Score 2.45/4.00

Free speech is practiced vigorously by journalists in Kosovo. There are few visible restrictions, but barriers remain. For example, MSI panelists said that access to institutions is routinely denied by government and private security guards. Fatmire Tërdevci, a journalist from the daily newspaper *Koha Ditore*, said: "Mostly attacks are coming from police or security guards. We are not seeing that much of journalists being attacked or killed; it is more a question of putting obstacles in the way." Eugen Saraçini, Director of News and Marketing at the Kosovo-wide independent television station RTV21, said sometimes journalists had themselves to blame. "As journalists we forget there are procedures that exist to get information," he said. "When procedures are not respected, you give institutions an alibi not to respond."

The practical limits on free speech when reporting on ethnic issues remain and, if anything, were more acute during 2006 because of the importance of the Vienna negotiations and the attention paid by international institutions in Kosovo. Argjentina Grazhdani, Media and Civil Society Advisor at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), said the behavior of Albanian-language media had improved, suggesting that "maybe because of these regulations that have been restrictive there has been education among journalists not to use hate speech."

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.

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The potential for criminal prosecution for libel remained. The prime minister's office took an initiative to decriminalize the law, but it was not promulgated by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General, which must be done before the law could come into effect. Although the potential criminal penalty might have a psychological effect on journalists, in practice there are few prosecutions and those that occur end in suspended sentences, said Naser Miftari, Deputy Chief Editor of *Koha Ditore*.

The broadcast license system in Kosovo remains chaotic. The chairman of the Independent Media Council (IMC) has said that there are too many local stations for the Kosovo market and that an early priority would be to look at ways to reduce their number. The IMC is poor at monitoring the performance of licensees, putting those that obey the rules, particularly regarding copyright, at a disadvantage, panelists said. "The IMC does not monitor the conditions of the media market in general, and they are not monitoring if anybody is in breach of the rules of the license that they hold," said Saraçini. "We know for certain that there are breaches of the rules."

Both public and private broadcasters were concerned about the effect of the new law on public broadcasting, which was promulgated and came into force in 2006. The public broadcaster was concerned that the provision for its budget would be processed through the Ministry of Finance and Economy, giving too much opportunity for political control. Nebi Qena, Head of News and Current Affairs at RTK, said, "The legal structure is not favorable in the long run because it takes money through the budget and ties the public broadcaster to the government." He was also concerned that the IMC has been given power to decide every year the proportion of advertising revenue the public broadcaster

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would be allowed to take. He expressed uncertainty about the capacity of the IMC to take complex decisions of this sort. Other panel members agreed that the IMC was under pressure in the early months of its life. The quality of the members of the IMC's council was high, but there are signs that it would be under-funded and would find it hard to recruit quality full-time staff, the panelists said. It is also low on the government's list of priorities. Grazhdani says: "I think it is the last thing on everybody's minds, especially the internationals."

Though a law on access to official documents has been promulgated, its implementation is poor, according to the panel. A recent survey showed that approximately 33 percent of the gatekeepers at the various institutions were aware of nongovernmental organizations' (NGOs) and journalists' right to access information from their organizations. But there were few, if any, processes within these organizations that would allow them to follow through on the requests. In only 1 percent of the cases surveyed was the applicant granted the legally required access to a document. Miftari said: "The law is fairly well-written and well-elaborated, but the bylaws are not there or even if they are there is very little training or expertise among public officials as well as journalists."

Access to international news and news sources is not a problem for journalists in Kosovo. The same is true for access to the profession. There is no restriction on people who want to work as journalists.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Kosovo Objective Score 2.35/4.00

Professional standards of journalism in Kosovo, in the opinion of the panel, continue to recover. This category dropped significantly after reports by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others showed how poor reporting by some Kosovo-wide media contributed to the ethnic riots of March 2004. Panelists ranked this objective at 2.55 in 2006, compared with 2.16 in 2004. *Koha Ditore* editor Miftari said that by regional and some international standards, Kosovo journalism is largely fair, objective, and well-sourced. "Basically the efforts are made out there to find both sides of the story," he said. "I think we stand in a good position in comparison to the rest of the region."

Concerns remained about the low level of salaries for journalists, although there was disagreement about the impact of the poor pay. Miftari said: "The gate is open for manipulation and for the potential to be corrupted." Qena, Head of News and Current Affairs at public broadcaster RTK, said it is not so much a matter of a journalist receiving a sum of money to do a story in a particular way as a matter of conformity in a small society. "It has more to do with self-censorship, of not wanting to annoy a businessman or political figure," he said. USAID Media and Civil Society Advisor Grazhdani believed that the smallness of Kosovo society works the other way as well: "There are journalists doing this, but the public I believe have a nose for it, because the next day half the journalism community would speak out about it."

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.
- > Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

The Kosovo status talks in Vienna provided an important test of journalists' ability to cover a complex story professionally and objectively. *Koha Ditore* journalist Tërdevci said the main issues were the sources and getting stories beyond the public statements. He said "the problem was the transparency, not that the journalists didn't cover them." The panel agreed that Kosovars who followed the broadcast and print media constantly to look for information about the process would have been well-informed. But Miftari felt that some of the usual sorts of errors were made by journalists. "You had the Albanian delegation saying that we did good and the Serbian delegation saying that we did good, but in the end you never know what's really going on. I think the media failed there," he said. There was a difference of opinion about whether the Serbian voice had been given sufficient weight in the Albanian-language Kosovo media. Isak Vorgücić, manager of Serbian-language Radio KIM, said he felt they were excluded. Saraçini replied that the problem was that they were not integrated, not that they were excluded. Other panel members said that not many Albanian-language journalists went to Serb families to interview them. "We lack stories from the farmer in the Serbian village. What does he think?" said Graždani. However, Visar Hoti, director of RTV Tema in Ferizaj, said: "I think they were covered and their opinions got into RTK and the national and local channels. We also mustn't forget the work done by international funding of TV programs this year highlighting communication between communities. I think it's on a satisfactory level."

The panel recognized that equipment restrictions for the electronic media are becoming more of a problem because the life of equipment bought through international donors in 1999 and 2000 is now coming to an end. Donors are helping to re-equip the Kosovo-wide stations, but the situation is reported to be worse at local radio and television stations. "In the last six years we have been using the equipment we got in 2000," said Vorgücić. "It has become old, and it is difficult to replace. I have visited most of the Serbian radio stations broadcasting in Kosovo, and the situation with equipment is quite bad." Panelists from local radio and television agreed that international donors are willing to fund programming, particularly on minority issues, but are no longer willing to fund the equipment needed to produce those programs.

Niche reporting remains poorly developed. Tërdevci said there is an improvement in quantity and quality of investigative reporting but that coverage of social issues, like health and education, could be developed further. Mimoza Kusari, director of the American Chambers of Commerce in Kosovo, is not convinced that specialist reporting has much to offer, saying that "in most cases when I read, watch, or listen to these reports I don't hear anything new that I didn't know already."

The panel agreed that the ownership of independent media outlets in Kosovo is transparent. Shareholders must be named in broadcast license applications and in company registrations. However, concern was expressed that newspaper publishers named in the business registration might not be the final owner and that there was no proper check by the IMC of the shareholder details in electronic media license applications.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES

Kosovo Objective Score 2.62/4.00

If "plurality" was the issue, Kosovo would be hard to beat. Albanian speakers have 10 daily newspapers (up from seven in 2005), with three Kosovo-wide television stations, four Kosovo-wide radio stations, 12 local television stations, and 52 local radio stations. Serbian speakers have three locally produced news periodicals, six local television stations, and 29 radio stations. The Kosovo Terrestrial Transmission Network (KTTN) now covers 83 percent of the population (an improvement on the prior year), and local radio and television licensees have their own transmitters.

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.

“Over the last year there is now a better relationship between the media and the advertising agencies than there was in the past with the distributors,” Saraçini said. “This is an indication that there is now a better way of doing business which is similar to how it is done in developed countries.” Independent electronic media depend on advertising for between 80 percent and 90 percent of their revenues, so a better-regulated market is important for them.

The problems lie with affordability and power supply. Most local stations face daily power cuts during which they cannot transmit and their audiences cannot receive. The panel observed that cuts in some areas regularly break into prime news time. As Grahdani of USAID said, “viewers may have the signal, but they won’t be able to see it.”

For print media, distribution remains a problem. Most is controlled by one distributor that has limited capacity and is not reliable, panelists said. Estimates for daily newspaper sales vary, perhaps around 30,000 in total, though readership is higher. For many families, the price of a paper is an expense they can do without. The panel agreed that it is the economy and electric power that deprive people of the information they need.

Television is widely watched. Research shows that approximately 80 percent of the population gets its information from television and, as Saraçini of the independent television station RTV21 pointed out, “audiences get radio and television which is funded by advertising for free.”

The panel agreed that the public broadcaster reflected differing perspectives of the political spectrum, but there was division as to whether it served the public interest in other ways. Qena of RTK said he believed his channel did reflect a wide range of views, “maybe even too much because you have a government official saying something and you’ve got to run off and get the opposition and vice versa.” But Grahdani said that if you looked at the public interest more broadly, RTK performed less well. “Politically it is completely correct, but in terms of how much it serves the public interest in issues like youth, gender, educational programs, less so.” Saraçini supported the view that RTK is “one of the best broadcasters in the region” but questioned whether

the public broadcaster was spending too much money on sports. “In a survey last year 17 percent of people said they were interested in sports. I ask myself whether hundreds of thousands of euros should be spent on something not many people want to watch,” he said.

The news agency KosovaLive was established with donor assistance at the end of the war and continues to provide news coverage to subscribing media. But subscription prices are high. In the past, donors funded local radio stations for buying subscriptions, but that support is ending. “It is expensive for us,” said Radio KIM’s Vorgüćić. “Before it was free; now you have to subscribe.” Members of the panel felt that the agency provides credible and professional news coverage, but it remains on precarious financial footing.

Independent broadcasters do, for the most part, produce their own news programs, though concern was expressed by the panel at the close relationships between some broadcasters and their local municipalities. This, in some cases, they said, has affected the independence of local news. Twenty-seven Serbian-language radio stations have a network of news providers, KOSMA, that allows them to exchange program material.

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In the context of the final status negotiations for Kosovo, the representation of minority-language information sources is an important issue for the province. Grahdani said that as a viewer, “it is my impression that the three Kosovo-wide TV stations have increased their coverage of minority issues in 2006, and, particularly on RTK, the number of people from minority communities invited to take part in debates has increased as well.” Vorgüćić pointed to the lack of a daily newspaper published in Kosovo for the Serbian community. “All the newspapers we get are from Belgrade, apart from one or two weekly or fortnightly magazines,” he said.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Kosovo Objective Score 2.50/4.00

The panel marked the objective score for business management higher for 2006 because of the improvement in the organization of the advertising market in Kosovo and the increased prominence of reputable advertising agencies. Until 2006, the waters were muddied by the use by international and regional consumer products companies of local distributors, which controlled the marketing budgets. This money was not used professionally for advertising campaigns and was often held back by the distributors for their own purposes. Saraçini, Director of News and Marketing at the independent television company RTV21, said that this situation has improved. "Over the last year there is now a better relationship between the media and the advertising agencies than there was in the past with the distributors," he said. "This is an indication that there is now a better way of doing business which is similar to how it is done in developed countries." Independent electronic media depend on advertising for between 80 percent and 90 percent of their revenues, so a better-regulated market is important for them.

However, agencies seldom reach down into the local market, where the pool of advertising revenue is very shallow and localized and the number of television and radio stations competing for it unsustainably high. Ardita Zejnullahu, executive director of the electronic media owners' association, AMPEK, used the example of Prizren, with its population of approximately 192,000. "There are four functioning TV stations, but it is a pretty small market for each of them to be

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.

"We believe we have started a new phase by establishing the GIMEK that will advance the survey quality of the audience research and improve the quality of data we have available to us," said panel member Saraçini, who is also the chairman of the board of GIMEK.

able to function if they want actually to rely on advertising," the director said. The same applies to the Serbian communities. "Advertising is connected with production and competition, so there are problems here," said Vorgučić. "There is little production, and competition is very weak or does not exist. There are certainly no agencies that connect marketing for Serb radio and TV stations." However, the Serb stations are attempting to improve the market by using the KOSMA network as a means to approach advertisers and agencies jointly, particularly in Belgrade, enabling them to offer a larger available audience.

Intense competition among daily newspapers is showing signs of descending into a price war. One of the new additions on the newsstands, *Info Press*, launched with a €0.10 cover price in 2006. It was followed by *Lajm*, which halved its price from €0.20 to €0.10. Its official explanation is that it has cut costs by reducing its size from broadsheet to tabloid, but panel members estimated it was making substantial losses, sustainable only through the wealth of its owner. The two market leaders, *Koha Ditore* and *Bota Sot*, have held their cover prices at €0.30. *Koha Ditore* editor Miftari said: "It is obvious that a 10-cent newspaper is not realistic and sustainable. Most of these media are suffering huge losses on a monthly basis just to ensure that the competition is kicked out." Miftari also was concerned about the dependence of newspapers on government advertising, influencing editorial policy by linking favorable coverage to advertising campaigns. However, there was general agreement in the panel that there is no direct subsidy from the government to independent media in Kosovo.

Because there are no reliable distribution figures for the print media in Kosovo, it is hard to make any assessment of the business effects of this price war. However, decisions were taken by the electronic media in 2006 that will make distribution and readership, as well as television and radio audience data, more transparent. The Kosovo-wide television stations and the advertising agencies set up an industry committee known as GIMEK, which has commissioned diary-based audience research from affiliates of the

Panel members pointed out that the success or failure of the Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication would be judged only when it had had more time to prove itself and graduates had found their way into suitable jobs. Miftari, of Koha Ditore, said that students had good conditions in which to operate. "I think in the long term it has been the most serious attempt so far to provide quality training for journalists."

worldwide market leader AGB Nielsen Media Research. It is their intention to include questions about newspaper purchase and readership, so for the first time reliable data about daily print media will be available in Kosovo, as well as for Kosovo-wide television and radio. "We believe we have started a new phase by establishing the GIMEK that will advance the survey quality of the audience research and improve the quality of data we have available to us," said panel member Saraçini, who is also the chairman of the board of GIMEK.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Kosovo Objective Score 2.86/4.00

This objective received the highest overall score, as it did in 2005. Panel members remain positive about the associations that represent private media owners and protect the rights of journalists in Kosovo. They took the view that independent media, print and broadcast, can operate freely without restrictions from political and other interests, supported by advocacy from the associations.

The independent media owners' association, AMPEK, is still donor-dependent and collects no subscriptions from members, though its board has agreed they should be charged. Membership increased during 2006, up from 35 to around 60, reflecting the importance of its advocacy as media law was debated by the Assembly and the IMC began its work. The IMC agenda included deciding on a series of operating regulations at its monthly meetings. Most affect the independent media owners directly, in particular the scale of fees to be charged for their broadcasting licenses. All of this was being done in great haste. "One of the board members in the last meeting said that it is better to

have bad law than to have no law at all," said Zejnullahu, executive director of AMPEK. "It is all very risky," she said. The panel agreed that AMPEK had been doing a good job of representing independent electronic media under these difficult circumstances. For the first time, there also was the prospect of membership applications from Serbian-owned radio and television stations.

The leading journalists' association in Kosovo is the Association of Professional Journalists in Kosovo (APJK), claiming some 400 nonpaying members. As with AMPEK, it is donor-dependent. Its board has agreed to levy subscriptions, but it has yet to do so. There was criticism from the panel that the APJK is too reactive and doesn't do enough to develop the professional standing of journalists. "They have been quite loud, if I might say so," said Qena, Head of News and Current Affairs at RTK. "Sometimes, before you come out with a statement, you need to check the facts. But it is encouraging with these associations that journalists stick together. That's a good thing."

The panel was more positive than in 2005 about the work of NGOs to support free speech and the independent media. In particular, the panel mentioned the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, which, as Grazhdani said, "has brought some new spirit to the civil-society sector here." Part of this NGO's role is to educate the public on the importance of freedom of expression and to make it known that public information is not the property of any public institution. Hoti, of RTV Tema, mentioned the increasing role of NGOs' monitoring local government performance within the municipalities, saying, "They have been monitoring nonstop local government and the assembly in Ferizaj (where RTV Tema is based) and have been reporting constantly to the media on breaches and problems."

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.

A master's degree program at the Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication (KIJAC) entered its second year in 2005. The year's intake included three Serb journalists. Panel members pointed out that the success or failure of KIJAC would be judged only when it had had more time to prove itself and graduates had found their way into suitable jobs. Miftari, of *Koha Ditore*, said that students had good conditions in which to operate. "I think in the long term it has been the most serious attempt so far to provide quality training for journalists." In-service training is available through donors and through independent television and radio stations themselves. Saraçini said that in some ways he preferred to do it this way so that training could be coordinated with the work that editors already do. Vorgücić said there had been a number of onsite training programs for Serbian journalists but that there was high turnover of staff; once they were trained, people tended to move on elsewhere.

The panel agreed that sources of newsprint and printing facilities are privately owned and not politically controlled. They were more concerned about control of distribution at the municipal level through the licensing of kiosks. Miftari said this certainly had an effect on the sale of newspapers, especially since the Pristina municipality removed unlicensed kiosks. Television and radio transmission, Kosovo-wide and local, is in private hands. During 2006, the transmission operator KTTN was commercialized and now operates as a limited liability company (LLC). Internet access is unrestricted, with multiple service providers.

Panel Participants

Mimoza Kusari, Director, American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo

Argentina Grazhdani, Media and Civil Society Advisor, USAID

Fatmire Tërdevci, News Editor, *Koha Ditore*

Naser Miftari, Deputy Chief Editor, *Koha Ditore*

Ardita Zejnullahu, Executive Director, AMPEK

Isak Vorgücić, Manager, Radio KIM

Eugen Saraçini, Director of News and Marketing, RTV21

Nebi Qena, Head of News and Current Affairs, RTK

Visar Hoti, Manager, RTV Tema

Moderator

Andrew Clayton, IREX