

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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The Media Sustainability Index (MSI) panel cited the continued lack of unity among media regarding their common business interests as well as the weak state of journalists and trade-union protections for media-sector employees. Some problems also were noted regarding implementation of media laws, although most statutes are seen as in.



MONTENEGRO

After 88 years, Montenegro reinstated its sovereignty and became an independent nation in 2006. This historic turning point shifted media focus from the political debate leading up to the May statehood referendum to more everyday bread-and-butter issues after the vote.

Media covered all the aspects of the statehood referendum—political events, politicians' statements, and the activities of blocs for and against independence from Serbia—while being clearly in favor of one or the other outcome. The editorial position of the majority of media outlets, including the daily newspapers *Vijesti* and *Pobjeda* and TV IN, Montenegrin National TV, TV Pink, and TV Montena, was supportive of independence, while relatively less influential media, such as the daily *Dan* and TV Elmag, supported the continuation of the Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

Political emotions in Montenegro cooled after the independent state was constituted, and the media returned their focus to issues important for the democratic and economic development of Montenegro. Even the September 2006 parliamentary elections were covered as routine events. Meanwhile, the economy grew at about 5 percent, inflation was on a par with European Union standards at 3 percent, and privatization progressed to include 85 percent of formerly state companies. Unemployment fell as capital and real-estate markets expanded, and for the first time the state recorded a budget surplus. The media focused on economic issues, including scandals that marred business operations at some major public companies and privatization agreements.

Media outlets differed not only on the question of statehood, but also regarding the government. Some were critical (*Monitor*, *Vijesti*, *Dan*), while others tended toward more pro-government positions (*Pobjeda*, *Republika*, TV Pink). Most media took editorial stands supporting a Euro-Atlantic political orientation for Montenegro, but a rift remained between the media identified as “pro-Serbian,” such as *Dan* and TV Elmag, and the majority seen as advocating a more multicultural Montenegrin approach.

Whatever their editorial differences, the media shared economic difficulties, although several media companies, including *Vijesti*, TV Pink, and TV IN, demonstrated market vitality. The financial problems regarding the transformation of the national public broadcaster Montenegrin Radio and TV (RTVCG) continued while in other industry developments, privatization started at the oldest Montenegrin daily, *Pobjeda*. A Slovenian investment group took over TV IN. Overall, more private capital was seen in the media sector.

MONTENEGRO AT A GLANCE

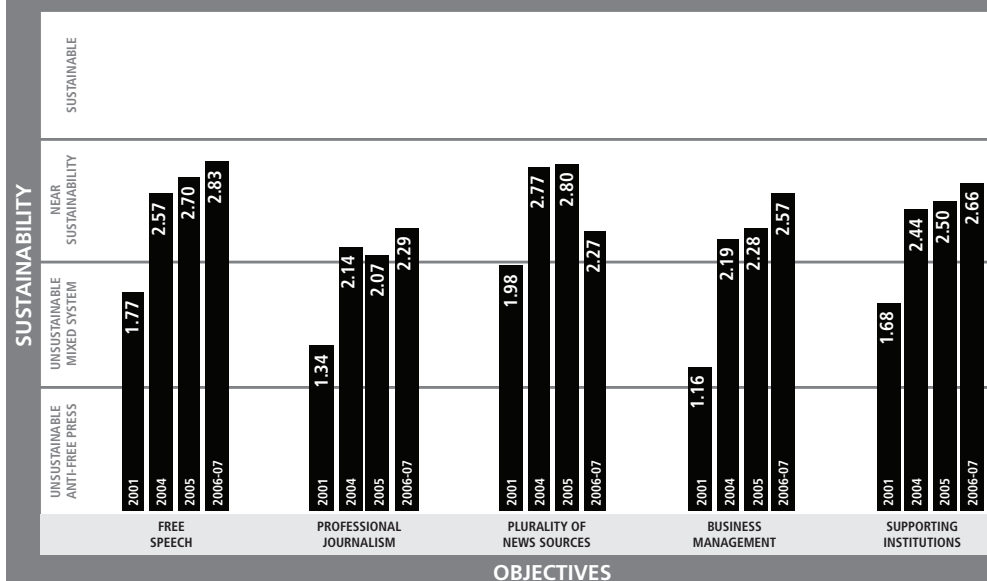
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 684,736 (July 2007 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Podgorica
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Montenegrin 43%, Serbian 32%, Bosniak 8%, Albanian 5%, other (Muslims, Croats, Roma) 12% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (no percent breakdown exists):** Orthodox, Muslim, Roman Catholic (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (no percent breakdown exists):** Serbian (Ijekavian dialect), Bosnian, Albanian, Croatian (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2006-Atlas):** \$2.317 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2007)
- > **GNI per capita (2006-PPP):** \$7,610 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2007)
- > **Literacy rate:** Numbers not available.
- > **President or top authority:** Prime Minister Zeljko Sturanovic (since November 13, 2006)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 45 print (including many periodical papers), 15 television stations, 43 radio stations, four online media, one news agency (*Montenegro Media Institute, 2004*)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Approximately 55,000 to 60,000.
- > **Broadcast ratings:** highest-rated television outlets: TV Pink, TV Crne Gore, TV In (*Strategic Marketing Survey, September 2004*)
- > **News agencies:** MINA
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** €7 million to €10 million
- > **Internet usage:** 50,000 (2004 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: MONTENEGRO



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.

The Media Sustainability Index (MSI) panel cited the continued lack of unity among media regarding their common business interests as well as the weak state of journalists and trade-union protections for media-sector employees. Some problems also were noted regarding implementation of media laws, although most statutes are seen as in compliance with European and international standards. Although the Journalists' Code of Ethics is not fully enforced, MSI panelists noted positive development of university-level educative institutions with the potential for long-term improvements in the skills of journalists in Montenegro. Also, the Internet market is increasing and producing new information sources.

The overall MSI ranking for the country was 2.53, not much changed from the 2.47 recorded for 2005.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREE SPEECH

Montenegro Objective Score 2.83/4.00

MSI panelists positively rated the current state of Montenegrin media regulations and pointed out progress in the legislative arena. However, they agreed that problems continue with implementation of the regulations and underlined the need for consistency in this regard. Some also called for elimination of regulations that do not reflect the spirit of the law, such as the way in which the Council of National Public Services is elected. "Montenegrin media laws

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.

"We don't have problems with laws; we have problems with reality," said Darko Šuković, editor-in-chief of Radio Antena M. "The current legal framework is even too liberal. It is very simple to establish any type of media. For example, in Montenegro, we have more than 70 radio stations ... Simply said, we have a huge number of unprofessional radio stations ... (and) through their bad production, they are simply devastating the media environment ... This is opening a dilemma whether to introduce more restrictive norms in the area of electronic journalism."

are very much in compliance with international standards," said Drásko Djuranović, chairman of the National Journalists' Self-regulatory Body. "The key problem is not in the legal area anymore, but in practice."

Panelists rated Montenegro's media sector at 2.83 for this objective, compared with 2.70 in 2005. "We don't have problems with laws; we have problems with reality," said Darko Šuković, editor-in-chief of Radio Antena M. "The current legal framework is even too liberal. It is very simple to establish any type of media. For example, in Montenegro, we have more than 70 radio stations ... Simply said, we have a huge number of unprofessional radio stations ... (and) through their bad production, they are simply devastating the media environment ... This is opening a dilemma whether to introduce more restrictive norms in the area of electronic journalism."

Djuro Vučinić, editor-in-chief of the private TV Montena, also warned that the industry must be alert to possible changes ahead. "The government is announcing the implementation of a law that regulates the operations of the Broadcasting Agency, and this might aggravate the position of electronic media," he said. "The media sector must take care and protect independent journalism from legal regulations that might aggravate its position."

Representatives of electronic media stressed weak implementation of the Broadcasting Law as it relates to subsidies to private electronic media. The law provides for 10 percent of public subscription fees to go to commercial broadcasters, especially for programming that serves the public interest but has less commercial potential. However,

territory rather than the importance of programming is used by the agency as the main criteria for distributing the funds, with the result that no differentiation is made between outlets focused on higher- and lower-quality programming. Panelists said the Broadcasting Agency should change this practice, which continues to be criticized. However, they also said the agency has a transparent and liberal approach to frequency distribution and should be praised for that.

With regard to the transformation of the national public broadcaster Montenegrin Radio and TV (RTVCG), Branko Vojičić, program director at the national television station, said that “the law that defines the position of public broadcast services has legalized, in the economic sense, all the wrongdoings of the government policy that was implemented in former state TV.” He said that the national public broadcaster cannot support all the programs that were inherited and that these financial burdens, including the surplus of employees, are limiting the potential for recovery. He noted as problems the “complicated” management structure, including a council and a steering committee, and the way in which positions on these bodies are filled.

Dino Ramović, editor-in-chief of Albanian TV, TV Teuta – Ulcinj, said that the state is not providing adequate required financial support to programs intended for minorities. “Private media that promote the public interest in the area of minorities’ rights do not enjoy support for their media projects,” he said. “This is telling us about shortcomings in legal regulation when it comes to media treatment of minorities in Montenegro. Furthermore, commercial private media are brought to an unfavorable position, compared to politically favored local public services.”

Concern about local public broadcasters also was expressed by Vučinić, who said that “in practice they usually transform themselves into political stations of the ruling parties, so I think that this fact raises a dilemma regarding justification of their existence. At the same time, these services are very often the example of unfair competition to private media.”

Saša Brajović, information assistant at the US Embassy, noted that the unresolved cases of attacks on journalists, including the assassination of the editor-in-chief of the daily *Dan*, Duška Jovanovića, in May 2004 and the October 2006 attack on the 73-year-old writer and literary magazine editor Jevrem Brković that killed his bodyguard, are “casting a shadow on the media environment in Montenegro ... It is obvious that free speech is not protected sufficiently, and we are facing hard work ahead.”

MSI panelists noted that judicial bodies continue to react quite conservatively regarding the sanctioning of hate speech or irresponsible public speech, although greater involvement

by the prosecutor’s office was noted. Panelists also stated that media have a tendency toward unprofessional reporting or irresponsible commentary concerning certain events and personalities that should be sanctioned through adequate judicial processes.

Panelists were pleased that the Freedom of Information Act was finally adopted in late 2005 and said this represented a step forward toward greater accountability and transparency in the work of public institutions. However, they noted that implementation also is an issue in this arena, with public and state institutions responding to only about 40 percent of requests made for different types of information. This response rate has resulted in dozens of charges being brought before the Administrative Court.

“Government institutions are poorly dealing with the issue of spokespersons—the government still doesn’t have one—and the public is still slow in reacting to the deficiencies of government institutions,” said Djuranović.

The general progress toward a more mature media law was noted by MSI panelists in giving this objective a slightly higher rating of 2.83 over the prior year’s 2.70. Panelists concluded, however, that the quality implementation of constitutional and legal provisions is crucial for the future of free speech in Montenegro. The long-term task also includes moving in the direction of a more favorable social climate that would stimulate free speech and responsible public speech, they said.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Montenegro Objective Score 2.29/4.00

While it is clear that Montenegrin journalism has not reached the desired level of professionalism nor complies fully with the proclaimed Code of Ethics, MSI panelists said there were numerous examples of respect for the rules of the trade. They also noted a growing awareness regarding the necessity of investing in investigative journalism, as well as in appropriate solidarity in cases when the credibility of journalists’ profession must be defended. Overall, panelists scored Montenegro at 2.20 for this objective, up from 2.07 in 2005.

“To have free media we need time,” said Esad Kočan, editor-in-chief of the weekly *Monitor*. “After the lack of freedom in communism, we are often witnessing irresponsible journalism in today’s democratic Montenegro. On the other hand, the social and financial status of journalists is weak, resulting in the journalism profession becoming unattractive, and risky. Therefore, it is only logical that media companies

are faced with the problem of quality professionals and professional behavior.”

Vučinić, editor-in-chief of the private TV Montena, commented: “I believe that professionalism of journalists is not that bad. With the new School of Journalism in Podgorica (opened at the university in 2003), the situation is much better than before. Preconditions are now being met for the strengthening of journalists’ profession.” However, he added, “nothing bad that happened in journalism in the past 15 years was punished. Lustration was not carried out in this profession, although that had to be done, bearing in mind warmongering journalism and hate speech that were actively carried out during years of disintegration of the former Yugoslavia.”

Problems in creating responsible editorial policies and implementation of professional standards are obvious, especially in the absence of formal obstacles to media freedom, panelists said. Publication of false or half-true information is too frequent and directly affects public confidence in media companies and journalists, a finding borne out by public-opinion surveys showing low approval ratings for media when it comes to professionalism. “We still have the practice that media, which breach professional norms, are not eager to admit the mistakes, and this is bringing into question the objectivity of those media,” said Draško Djuranović, chairman of the National Journalists’ Self-Regulatory Body.

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“A special problem is the influence of new owners on the professional status of media, because we are seeing a dangerous trend of marginalization of the profession due to different business interests,” said Djuranović. “Newspapers are more and more in the service of business, in a way that is vulgarizing the very profession, so we are now faced with the issue of how to defend the independence of the profession from negative financial influences.”

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One particular concern is the Journalists’ Self-Regulatory Body’s lack of influence on the media community, especially as regards the Ethics Code, panelists said. Duško Vuković, media adviser of the Montenegro Media Institute, said violation of ethical standards is “reflected in paralysis of professional journalists’ organizations. No doubt about it, we are faced with a crisis of the journalistic profession, and this, in turn, reflects on the very purpose of journalism.”

“Free speech is threatened by journalists’ political self-censorship,” said Djuranović. “But it is realistic to expect that after restoration of the Montenegrin state, this will be reduced. Therefore, the key problem of the media sector remains the disparity between good regulations and still unsatisfactory journalists’ practice.”

A shortcoming of electronic media mentioned by panelists is the focus on commercial and entertainment programs to the detriment of educational, cultural, and news programs. It was underlined that professional standards must be protected by making journalists meet certain educational requirements and paying greater attention to issues of public interest. It also was noted that journalism must have a constant link with real life, meaning a probing spirit and an understanding of real-life social problems. Panelists said support to democratic processes, Euro-Atlantic integration, civil-society development, and promotion of the rule of law should be priorities in editorial policies.

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).

Vojičić, program director of National TV Montenegro, underlined “the importance of investigative journalism, which is asking for maximal efforts and which represents the biggest shortage of Montenegrin journalism. Bearing in mind the overall professional and financial status of our media, it is hard to expect them to develop investigative journalism.”

Šuković, editor-in-chief of the private Radio Antena M, said the “key place where the good professional journalist is being shaped is the strong editorial office, and that is often the one thing missing even in the best of Montenegrin media. Things are particularly bad when it comes to radio stations.”

Panelists emphasized the need for continuous training of journalists and technical modernization of editorial offices. The first generation of journalists will graduate from the School of Political Sciences in Podgorica during 2007. It also was stressed that the long work of the Montenegrin Media Institute has contributed to an overall increase in journalists’ practical skills. Another cause for optimism noted by Kočan was that resolution of the statehood issue “has relaxed journalists from their key political partisanship.”

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES

Montenegro Objective Score 2.27/4.00

The general view is that the Montenegrin media environment is saturated with electronic and print media. The some 150 media companies that clutter the small Montenegrin market do not produce a proportional degree of quality or successfully stimulate pluralism, MSI panelists concluded. They

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.

ranked the country’s media sector at 2.27 for this objective, largely due to panelists’ beliefs that much of the news is the same and much is from the same agencies or sources of information.

A plurality of news and information sources is not achieved despite the number of outlets because the news media are usually using the same agency sources and have poorly developed networks of correspondents, panelists said. “We have a lot of media companies in Montenegro, but the problem is with the quality information sources, because it often happens that almost all news media are publishing or broadcasting identical news items,” said Vojičić. “The lack of investigative journalism and of efforts on the side of correspondents in order for media to perform its public function with quality is evident.”

There is just one local news agency, MINA, which is competing on the market with several news agencies from Serbia. Along with a small number of better-organized electronic and print media, including the public broadcaster, TV Crna Gora (TV CG), TV IN, *Vijesti*, and *Dan*, MINA represents a crucial source of daily news for citizens. However, panel members said it is clear that Montenegro still lacks a news agency with sufficient financial and professional capacities to ensure it is the dominant source of checked and responsible information.

“Regarding the work of news agencies, the biggest problem is how to survive on the market,” said Vučinić, editor-in-chief of the private TV Montena. “The example of the only Montenegrin news agency, MINA, is confirming how difficult, from both the financial and professional aspects, it is to maintain a private agency service.”

Access to local and foreign media is not restricted, except from the financial limits of the potential audience and of the media outlets themselves. This relates in particular to the ability of readers to buy daily and periodical press and to use of the internet, which is put at 20 percent of the population, as well as the often expensive price of foreign news agency services for media outlets.

Panelists said that transparency of ownership relations within media companies is better than before, although there are still doubts and speculation about who the real owners are in some cases. “We have non-transparency regarding ownership as an issue within the media community,” said Vučinić. “However, for the majority of well-known media we know the owners.”

In addition, the overall sustainability of the crowded media market was stressed, especially with the lack of significant private investments in the Montenegrin media. That trend was reversed somewhat in 2006 with the sale of the strong

TV IN to a foreign investor from Slovenia. Panelists concluded that for the most part, private investors do not want to comply with professional journalist standards but only to support their business interests and achieve public influence through media. This, panelists said, represents a potential threat to free speech and the overall credibility of journalism in Montenegro.

The MSI panel predicted that the future likely will bring a reduction in the number of media companies because of their poor viability and the shift away from donor-funded models. But panel members said the shape of this “economic transition” remains an open question, as does its potential consequences to a true plurality of information sources.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Montenegro Objective Score 2.57/4.00

MSI panelists agreed that the media business is still not sufficiently profitable in Montenegro. With several exceptions, including *Vijesti*, *Dan*, TV IN, and TV Pink, the majority of local and national media outlets are experiencing problems in business operations to one degree or another. The MSI assessment for this objective was 2.57, up from 2.28 in 2005.

These market difficulties are influencing the profitability of the media companies as well as the status of the journalists and other staff working at them. For the companies, most are barely surviving and are experiencing problems with liquidity that directly influence their developmental plans. For journalists and other company employees, an estimated 3,500

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.

“The majority of media doesn’t have any realistic chances for long-term survival on the market,” said Šuković, editor-in-chief of the private Radio Antena M. His outlet, he said, “is an example of a leading radio station which still manages to survive thanks to foreign donors.”

people across the industry, the relatively poor financing means average journalists’ salaries range from \$400 to \$550 per month, and very often employees lack insurance coverage.

A certain number of private media are surviving thanks to foreign donors, but this income does not cover all costs and is decreasing in availability. “The majority of media doesn’t have any realistic chances for long-term survival on the market,” said Šuković, editor-in-chief of the private Radio Antena M. His outlet, he said, “is an example of a leading radio station which still manages to survive thanks to foreign donors.”

Most outlets are fiercely fighting on the competitive market. The advertising market is worth some \$13.5 million annually, according to estimates, but this sum is too small for the number of companies to cover operating costs and become profitable. Therefore, without an expansion of the advertising sector and with a decrease in donor support, it is likely that many media will fail.

“Media are getting some money from the public subscription fee, and this sum is very important for their survival, while money from advertising is insufficient for any serious business,” said Šuković. “Furthermore, electronic media are disadvantaged when it comes to advertising, compared to printed ones.”

Rajko Šebek, news editor of TV IN, said, “Competition on the advertising market is big and the market is small, so it is definitely difficult to make money in journalism. Still there are some changes, like the recent interest of a foreign investor in TV IN.”

The situation is particularly complicated for the electronic media due to the number of television and radio stations—close to 100—covering the Montenegrin market.

Some MSI panelists noted the unwillingness of media companies to agree on mergers, although such steps would significantly raise their survival chances and allow further development.

Media report no critical problems with the distribution companies—except that media are sometimes faced with being offered impractical distribution and printing is in varied private hands, with no monopolies. Most major newspapers have their own presses and distribution systems, and some also have their own kiosks.

Others called for more government contributions to the media. “The state must provide financial support for production of news and cultural programs, which are of public interest. In this way, quality media projects would be supported, and the media would stand better chances to survive in an unstable and limited market,” said Djuranović, chairman of the National Journalists’ Self-Regulatory Body.

“The situation in media covering minority communities is even worse,” said Ramovic, editor-in-chief of Albanian-language TV Teuta in Ulcinj. “Without donor help it would be impossible to survive, and therefore the state must intervene financially in this part of media sector.”

A different view was offered by panelist Brajović, information assistant at the US Embassy, who said: “Demands for the government to finance private media are questionable. Media must rely more on the market because foreign donors will be less present in the future.”

Overall, the congestion that faces the media sector is, to a great extent, shared by other business groups in Montenegro. For the media, this instability is reflected in the quality of editorial policies and professional standards. Additionally, media do not regularly or reliably use market or audience research to enhance their business prospects. Donors, who had financed market and audience research and training in business management, are withdrawing or scaling back programs, and the gap has not yet been filled.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Montenegro Objective Score 2.66/4.00

In the view of the MSI assessment, professional journalists’ organizations are largely paralyzed, and the Montenegrin media community is suffering due to their inefficiency. Panelists said that associations formed in recent years either do not function or are reduced to advocating the interests

of their core management. However, according to panel members, organizations established to advocate for the business interests of media companies offer positive models. As an example, they pointed to the Association of Electronic Media as able to promote the needs of its members during the past several years. As a result, the rating for this objective was 2.66, up from 2.50 in 2005.

For those panelists who ranked the credibility of professional associations within the media community as very low, the view was that bad practices were carried over from year to year. They said the causes of this poor performance merit careful examination because Montenegro needs stable and quality professional organizations for the media sector. The same was said about the establishment of strong trade unions.

Vojičić, program director of National TV Montenegro, said, “Journalists are inactive regarding protection of their rights. Professional associations are not functioning, and that is a huge problem.” Djuranović, chairman of the National Journalists’ Self-Regulatory Body, acknowledged that “the biggest institutional problem for journalists is the paralysis of professional associations. Unlike some experiences in the past, professional associations are poorly engaged, especially the ones advocating the interests of printed media. Other types of institutional support are better.”

The panelists underlined the importance of the Montenegro Media Institute, which they said contributes greatly through its educational and professional programs to the development of the media community and the strengthening of individual journalists’ skills. In addition, the establishment of the Journalism Department at the School of Political Sciences was praised, and large expectations are placed on the first crop of graduated journalists expected in 2007.

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.

The controversial role of the Broadcasting Agency in respect to electronic media also was emphasized. This institution, in the view of electronic media representatives, still had not managed to produce financial support to quality programming among the private media. However, the role of the Agency was recognized regarding the implementation of the plan for distribution of frequencies and the identification of national interests when distributing the frequencies.

As far as relations between nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the media sector are concerned, the general view of the panelists was that there is quality communication between the two, with the media ready to cover NGO activities that are of importance for the wider public.

Media report no critical problems with the distribution companies—except that media are sometimes faced with being offered impractical distribution and printing is in varied private hands, with no monopolies. Most major newspapers have their own presses and distribution systems, and some also have their own kiosks.

Progress is evident in the online arena, with some outlets, including Vijesti and MINA, charging for access to their websites.

Panel Participants

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Duško Vuković, Media Adviser, Montenegro Media Institute, Podgorica

Branko Vojičić, Program Director, Montenegrin TV, Podgorica

Darko Šuković, Editor-in-Chief, Radio Antena M, Podgorica

Rajko Šebek, News Editor, TV IN, Podgorica

Djuro Vučinić, Editor-in-Chief, TV Montena, Podgorica

Miloš Pavićević, Editor-in-Chief, *Republika*, Podgorica

Dino Ramović, Editor in-Chief, TV Teuta, Ulcinj

Draško Djuranović, President, Self-Regulatory Body, Podgorica

Saša Brajović, PDA Information Assistant, US Embassy

Moderator

Rade Bojović, Media Ltd., Podgorica