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MONTENEGRO

Montenegro's ruling coalition, led by the Democratic Party of Socialists, won reelection in an early parliamentary vote on Oct. 14, 2012, making the country one of the rare constitutional democracies in which there has been no change of government for the past 22 years. Prime Minister Milo Đukanović also returned to his post for the seventh time, the sole original post-Yugoslav politician to still be in power. This resistance to democratic change is primarily the consequence of the long-lasting control that the ruling parties have had over public resources and the state apparatus, but also of the opposition's ideological and political weaknesses and the country's identity issues.

The proclaimed focus of the new government's policy is economic recovery and the continuation of Euro-Atlantic integration, including EU and NATO accession talks. As for internal issues, the greatest challenge for the government and the society in general will be improving rule of law, economic performance and social stability. The EU talks have moved on to these issues, as well as the difficult questions of organized crime and corruption.

Montenegro's economic struggles reflect both the global crisis and domestic structural weaknesses. GDP growth was insignificant last year (1%) and average monthly wages went unchanged (€485), while state debt exceeded 50% of GDP and the real unemployment rate is approaching 20%. The unfavorable economic environment has been a challenge for the media industry.

Media also took an active part in political divides and the electoral campaign. The most influential were divided between support of the government (RTCG, *Pobjeda*) and opposition (*Vijesti*, *Dan*, TV *Vijesti*). The remainder of media voices tried hard to stay outside political conflicts, but their public impact remained secondary. All this reflected on the work of the journalists' self-regulating body, in which the anti-government media did not take part.

The media market is saturated with outlets, about 70 for a population of 650,000, including four national dailies. The €9 million advertising market cannot hope to support this menagerie. Two national public stations and ten local public stations compete for the funds. Private organizations stay alive either with funding from their owners or by cutting back on programming. Only the above-mentioned opposition outlets manage to operate without losses. One major television broadcaster went bankrupt in 2012.

A positive recent development in media law was the decriminalization of libel and slander, making Montenegro one of the only Eastern European countries where this is the case. Professional and commercial responsibility and solidarity are lacking. There are frequent cases of public disputes among journalists, such as when private media criticize the work of public media and vice versa. In this context, the panelists noted a general erosion in media sustainability, particularly on issues of transparency, breadth of coverage, and support from civil society.

MONTENEGRO at a glance

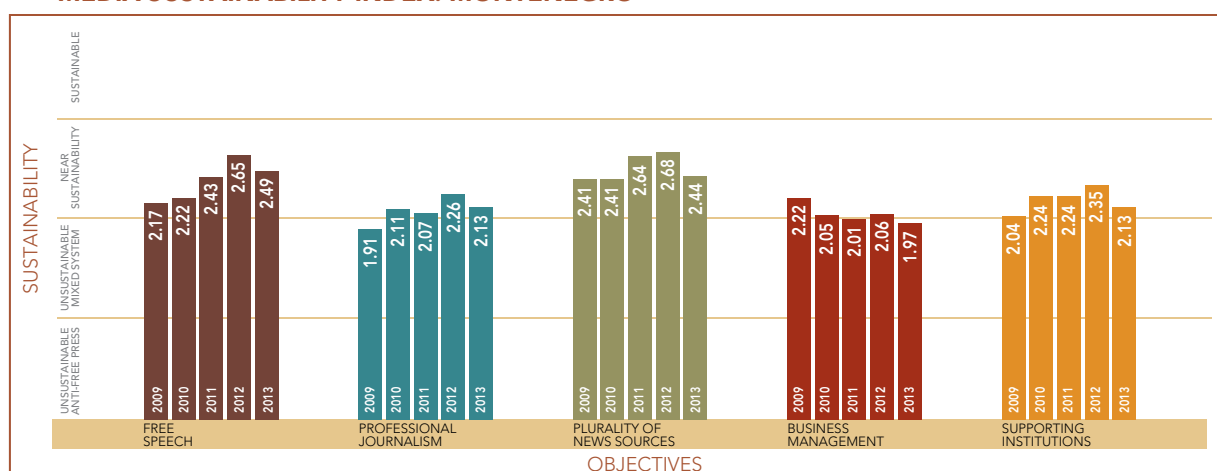
GENERAL

- > Population: 620.029 (MONSTAT 2011–census)
- > Capital city: Podgorica
- > Ethnic groups (% of population): Montenegrin: 45%, Serbian: 29%, Bosniak: 9%, Albanian: 5%, other (Muslims, Croats, Roma (Gypsy)): 12% (MONSTAT 2011–census)
- > Religions (% of population): Orthodox 72%, Muslim 19%, Catholic 3.5%, other 0.6%, unspecified 3%, atheist 1% (MONSTAT 2011–census)
- > Languages (% of population): Serbian 43%, Montenegrin (official) 37%, Bosnian 5%, Albanian 5%, unspecified 10% (MONSTAT 2011–census)
- > GNI (2011-Atlas): \$4.51 billion (World Bank Development Indicators)
- > GNI per capita (2011-PPP): \$13,700 (World Bank Development Indicators)
- > Literacy rate: 98% (MONSTAT, 2011–census)
- > President or top authority: President: Filip Vujanovic (since April 6, 2008)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations: Print: 4 dailies, 3 weeklies, 30 monthlies; Radio Stations: 53; Television Stations: 23 (2012, Agency for Electronic Media of Montenegro)
- > Newspaper circulation statistics: Top three by circulation *Vijesti* (circulation 15,000, private), *Dan*, (circulation 17,000, private), *Pobjeda*, (circulation 7,000, state-owned) (2011 est., MEDIA Ltd.)
- > Broadcast ratings: N/A
- > News agencies: Mina News Agency (private)
- > Annual advertising revenue in media sector: €8 - €9 million (2012 est., MEDIA Ltd.)
- > Internet usage: 328,000—penetration 50% (2012, Internet World Stats)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: MONTENEGRO



MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX 2013: OVERALL AVERAGE SCORES



CHANGE SINCE 2012

▲ (increase greater than .10) □ (little or no change) ▼ (decrease greater than .10)

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

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

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

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

Scores for all years may be found online at http://www.irex.org/system/files/EE_msiscorers.xls

OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Montenegro Objective Score: 2.49

Montenegrin media regulations have mostly been harmonized with EU law. The country has separate laws dealing with the broadcast media, digital broadcasting, public broadcasting, and the media in general. Media owners, journalists and editors almost all agreed that the legal framework is mostly good and that it does not constitute an obstacle to the development of freedom of the press and professional journalism. However, as in previous years, some panelists agreed that there are significant problems with enforcement.

Over the past year, the country did not have any controversies or problems with regard to acquiring licenses or the registration of printed and broadcast media. Registration procedures take place in accordance with regulations.

Media outlets have free access to the market and are on an even fiscal playing field with other sectors of the economy. There is only one exception: print media sales are subject to a lower tax rate of 7 percent.

The year saw one drastic case of violence against a journalist when Olivera Lakić of the *Vijesti* daily newspaper, was assaulted over her reporting on suspicious operations of

There was broad public support from the majority of journalists and the public for lawmakers' move to decriminalize slander, which took effect in 2011. Most felt that the change would help promote press freedom and the development of investigative journalism. But the panel conceded some possible negative consequences.

a Montenegrin company. The offender was apprehended, tried and sentenced to nine months in prison. Panelists noted similar unresolved incidents in the previous year (such as arson that targeted vehicles owned by *Vijesti*) as they agreed that the overall social environment is not at the necessary level of tolerance and that authorities do not do enough to protect journalists from threats of harm.

Montenegrin law calls for the editorial independence of national and local public broadcasters. Nevertheless, panelists mostly agreed that national and local politicians are able to influence media content and appointments of newsroom managers to benefit their interests. Public broadcasters' dependence on state funds reinforces this as well.

There was broad public support from the majority of journalists and the public for lawmakers' move to decriminalize slander, which took effect in 2011. Most felt that the change would help promote press freedom and the development of investigative journalism. But the panel conceded some possible negative consequences. Panelist Slavko Mandić noted: "I am one few who was fighting against the decriminalization of slander. I think that a professional journalist has no reason to be afraid of slander as a criminal offense." He warned that the change might lead to a deterioration of standards, giving as an example a full page in *Vijesti* that accused a local mayor of organized-crime involvement. "It is incredible that someone can lease advertising space in the media and consciously defame someone," Mandić said. Panelist Nedjeljko Rudović, a *Vijesti* staffer, conceded the point but added: "Public figures must be ready to withstand more than ordinary citizens. When assessing the conditions in the media, we must pay attention to the overall environment in the society in order to be able to see their sustainability. Equally so, when slander is at stake we must have in mind the social environment. I think that the decriminalization of slander is

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 or registration of media protects a public interest and is fair, competitive, and apolitical.
- > Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries.
- > Crimes against media professionals, citizen reporters, and media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare.
- > The law protects the editorial independence of state of public media.
- > 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 available; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media, journalists, and citizens.
- > Media outlets' access to and use of local and international news and news sources is not restricted by law.
- > Entry into the journalism profession is free and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

Drobac said: “There are two key issues. The first is the independence of the judiciary, since protection of the freedom of speech can be a long-term judicial process... The second is line between the freedom of speech and violation of the law. There are few lawyers who are familiar with media law on this.”

justified since the community of journalists is free from fear. The job of a journalist can be of considerable benefit to the society but it can also ruin somebody’s life.”

RTCG editor Marina Vuković said: “I think it is good that slander has been decriminalized and that it is within the domain of civil proceedings now,” and TV Vijesti staffer Radomir Kračković noted that the change would prevent future cases such as that of Petar Komnenić, a journalist sentenced to prison in a defamation case before the new law was in effect. Mirsad Rastoder, president of the managing board of the Montenegrin Media Institute, called the decriminalization an “absolutely correct decision” and said he hopes that civil enforcement of the law will eventually lead to improved professionalism.

Regarding freedom of speech more broadly, TV Atlas editor Sonja Drobac said: “There are two key issues. The first is the independence of the judiciary, since protection of the freedom of speech can be a long-term judicial process. We have now got the possibility to protect ourselves even at the international level” (meaning at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France). Drobac added: “The second is line between the freedom of speech and violation of the law. There are few lawyers who are familiar with media law on this.”

Montenegro’s Free Access to Information Act has been in effect for several years now, but its enforcement is plagued by frequent disputes before Administrative Court when nongovernmental organizations make requests. Media are active in making such requests, and in general it was agreed that officials try to respond in a timely manner.

There are no legal limitations on access to information and news at the local, national or international levels. Telecommunications companies and Internet access (now with more than 250,000 users) are increasingly widespread.

Media companies determine the conditions under which they employ journalists; there are no licensing requirements

or other limitations. The national broadcaster requires staff to have university degrees. Private media companies are more flexible, but sometimes as a result unqualified people are hired. Some on the panel felt a licensing requirement would improve this situation. Panelist Jadranka Rabrenović said: “The problem of the lack of professionalism must be resolved by the introduction of licenses issued by a special authorized body or ... association of journalists.”

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Montenegro Objective Score: 2.13

As in the past, panelists agreed that professional standards in Montenegrin journalism are lacking and that the majority of journalists’ work is not of sufficient quality. Reporting is superficial and often biased. Mandić underlined this: “Journalism is politicized not by the authorities, but by the interests of the journalists themselves.” Gordana Borović added: “Nothing can justify the lack of professionalism.”

Panelists agreed that the Code of Journalistic Ethics, adopted by the country’s media organizations a decade ago, has been insufficiently complied with. The industry still lacks a uniform self-regulatory body, a consequence of the conflict among journalists and owners. Some panelists used the term “media war” to describe the situation.

Panelist Dragan Klarić said: “If we are to talk about a media war it is necessary for both sides to be in favor of the war. Who is protecting journalists today? Nobody. Until the trade union shows its strength in private media, there will be no

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 and retain qualified personnel within the media profession.
- > 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 exist (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

chance for the social status of journalists.” He noted that local public media councils were set up to make decisions about programming and personnel, but that their members were not professionals. Sonja Drobac agreed but added: “The problem of Montenegrin journalism is in the absence of facts.” *Vijesti* editor Nedjeljko Rudović cautioned that staffs at competing media outlets battle each other while missing the bigger picture of “a campaign against the media and journalists who are recognized as those capable of endangering political and socially powerful figures ... I think that there is no media war, but only the flood of tactless and vicious words.”

Panelists agreed that self-censorship is practiced by editorial boards and newsroom staff, more so at public media organizations than private ones. The overall economic circumstances that media companies operate in: political control, a lackluster social environment, and fears of job losses, all drive this trend.

Despite this, it was agreed that media mostly do not avoid important social topics, though the extent and quality of reporting was up for debate. Also, there was concern that media owners and other large companies are exempt from criticism; as Borović noted, big advertisers are “in a privileged position ... because of that, I can say there is no impartial journalism.” Still, Internet forums, blogs and portals do not operate by the traditional rules and offer some alternative, and the crowded market makes a wide variety of coverage possible.

The general attitude was that the economic crisis has worsened the already difficult financial conditions journalists work under. Few earn more than €1,000/month, and the average media salary is below €500. Private-sector journalists are paid better than their public-sector counterparts. Low pay is pushing more and more journalists out of the profession, but there are still about 1,000 people working in the field, a high number for a small country where media outlets are struggling economically. Panelist Predrag Zečević noted that some young entry-level journalists earn only about €200 a month, not even enough to live on: “I believe that the majority of journalists are at the end of their endurance. Young journalists are disappointed and most of them are ready to leave the profession.”

Panelists and public opinion agree that entertainment dominates in broadcasting. While there is still space for informational programs, they are often pushed to the background, especially given the issues of cost and expertise needed to produce them.

Public broadcasting services mostly do not have the necessary technical facilities. For instance, Radio Crne Gore (RCG), which has a long history, works with equipment

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more than 30 years old. National broadcaster TVCG is still at the beginning of digitization, and it remains a big question when it will become sufficiently equipped. However, all significant national private broadcasters (TV *Vijesti*, TV *ATLAS*, TV *PINK*, *PRVATV*) are digitized and have contemporary technical equipment. Meanwhile, telecommunications have developed to the point where media have become considerably accessible online, which enables journalists to get hold of necessary information and news in a relatively short time. Still, a significant number of media organizations lack the funds they need for technological progress.

Panelists agreed that there are significant limitations (both in terms of a lack of financing and a lack of professionalism) on media specialization and investigative journalism.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Montenegro Objective Score: 2.44

By number of media outlets per capita, the small country of Montenegro likely ranks relatively high in the world, even as many of these outlets struggle financially. Of the 70 media organizations in the country, more than 60 are broadcast or Internet; the rest are print, including four daily papers (*Vijesti*, *Dan*, *Pobjeda* and *Dnevna Novina*).

Panelist Mandić observed: “I advocate the transformation of local broadcasting services into private media. Otherwise, I agree that the situation is bad.” He said most radio stations focus on music, not informational programming. Mandić added, “The question is how certain media got their licenses ... the Broadcasting Media Agency does not do its job the way it should.” Mirsad Rastoder, a longtime radio journalist, said there are too many competing media outlets, but called for more support for Radio Montenegro, which is working with outdated equipment: “Our only chance is for the state to protect the national radio station and to support it financially and technologically so that it survives and develops further.” Predrag Zečević added, “I think that such a number of media is not sustainable,” and noted that Montenegro has more media outlets than the US state of Colorado, which has eight times its population.

MULTIPLE NEWS SOURCES PROVIDE CITIZENS WITH RELIABLE, OBJECTIVE NEWS.

PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS:

- > Plurality of public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet, mobile) exist and offer multiple viewpoints.
- > Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted by law, economics, or other means.
- > State or public media reflect the views of the political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
- > Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for media outlets.
- > Private media produce their own news.
- > Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge the 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 media provide news coverage and information about local, national, and international issues.

News websites are increasingly an alternative. Rudović said: "Internet portals indicate more and more that electronic journalism has the edge over the traditional one. I think that in the future, we will only see the best printed media survive with radical business reforms." He added that the *Vijesti* Internet portal is financially viable and helps guide his paper's readers to print content as well. Borović noted: "Portals live on advertising ... advertisements are a lot cheaper than in daily papers. The secret of their popularity is in the speed and interaction with the readers. Portals do not compete with each other, since Internet readers visit all well-known portals."

Montenegrins have liberal access to domestic and foreign media that is not limited by law, and Internet access is widely available.

The public view is that state media organizations are under the control of the ruling parties, despite regulations aimed at guaranteeing a wider public interest. Mandić said: "The majority of Montenegrin media most certainly do not serve the public interest. For example, the local public radio at Tivat received from the [state] budget as much as €185,000, although it has only 11 employees." Klarić noted that his Radio Budva receives support from the local government, but the deal "is not a guarantee that all planned funds will be allocated. This is why we are forced to try to earn additional funds in the market."

Regarding news agencies, organizations continue to use the services of foreign and domestic agencies, depending on

what they can afford. Leading organizations mostly use the national agency (MINA) or regional services.

With regard to production of their own news, there are considerable differences among private media. Local outlets largely lag behind national ones for financial, organizational and professional reasons, so they mostly use agencies, Internet sources or news already published by the national media. Leading national-level media, meanwhile, try hard to report their own news.

The country's company register is public and transparent, and it is possible to research the formal ownership structure of media enterprises via the Internet. However, the public is very often skeptical of official ownership; it is believed that the majority of actual owners remain hidden behind other registered names. Still, media organizations competing with each other will leak information about owners of other outlets. Panelist Borović noted: "Do we know what the ownership structure of the outlets we work in? The majority of journalists do not know."

Montenegrin media outlets strive to reflect a wide spectrum of social interests in their coverage. There are broadcasts in minority languages (for instance, RTV Teuta at Ulcinj) and national broadcast programs dedicated to minority communities, but panelists were concerned about insufficient support for such programs. Editorial policies do not discriminate against certain social groups or their access to media.

Panelists agreed that the large number of media outlets guarantees that Montenegrins get reports on important local, national and international events. Cable television offers daily access to regional, European and worldwide media. That said, domestic news outlets' coverage is often duplicated.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Montenegro Objective Score: 1.97

Panelists agreed that media outlets struggle, at best, to turn a profit. Those that do make money are mostly the largest private organizations, such as *Vijesti* or *Dan*. The past year saw the bankruptcy of television broadcaster TVIN, with 100 people losing their jobs.

Panelist Vuković commented: "When economic sustainability of the public service is concerned, we are on the edge of survival. The society does not understand the difficulties media are faced with. In recent years, everyone has had access to media. In that sense, the position of the RTCG as a public broadcasting service is a lot more difficult than

the one of the other media. We have our viewers, complex managerial and technological structure.” TV Vijesti’s Kračković noted that TVIN went bankrupt despite having the best viewing figures in the country only a few years ago. But panelist Rabrenović of *Dan* asserted that her paper, which has long been in opposition to the government, “is financed from market revenues. The circulation covers our cost of operations. We do not live on advertising, thus we do not depend on big companies. We do not have a list of companies that should be exempt from criticism.”

TV Atlas editor Drobac’s view was that “the financial sustainability of Montenegrin media is not possible. I claim that a smaller television station cannot survive if it cannot raise €160,000 per month.” Reminding of the former state subsidies to information media, Kračković noted that the state used to provide subsidies for informational programming and that media outlets that produce such programming are now struggling.

Private media are mainly financed with owners’ funds, as well as from advertising. Public media survive solely on the support they get from local and national budgets. They also compete in the advertising market, but the greatest share of revenues from advertising goes to private media. Still, because the Montenegrin market is small and the economy is relatively weak, it is not possible to get significant funds from advertisements. Newspapers such as *Dan* and *Pobjeda* earn significant incomes from the daily publishing of obituaries.

Large advertising agencies based elsewhere in the region (most often in Serbia) mostly cover the commercial interests of larger companies. These agencies are capable of dictating

MEDIA ARE WELL-MANAGED ENTERPRISES, ALLOWING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:

- > Media outlets operate as efficient and self-sustaining enterprises.
- > 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.
- > Government subsidies and advertising are distributed fairly, governed by law, and neither subvert editorial independence nor distort the market.
- > Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor the product to the needs and interests of the audience.
- > Broadcast ratings, circulation figures, and Internet statistics are reliably and independently produced.

Public media and private media sympathetic to the ruling parties are favored over government critics. The panel called for a fairer manner of the distribution of public funds.

prices that media outlets are forced to accept. Agencies based outside Montenegro control more than 70% of the domestic market. There are no significant advertising agencies in Montenegro, but a large number of smaller and medium-sized companies do direct advertising.

The size of the advertising market in 2012 was assessed at about €9 million, of which €5.5 million went to advertising in broadcast media. The general assessment of media analysts and the panelists was that the market is financially weak and that revenues from advertising are not enough to secure economic stability for many media. Kračković noted: “Broadcast media depend on advertisers. The budget of our house (TV Vijesti) is about €2 million/year. National TV stations must set aside as much as €300,000 [to pay a] fee to the Broadcasting Centre,” a cost he assessed as far too high. Panelist Rastoder, noting the market saturation, said: “Media in Montenegro are in big trouble with regards to the advertising market. I think that in Montenegro there is room for as few as three national television stations, and that everything else would constitute a market surplus.”

The panelists felt that public media had an unfair advantage in that they can profit from advertising while also drawing budgetary support from the state or local authorities. There are also concerns that officials and public agencies choose which outlets to advertise in depending on how supportive those organizations’ coverage is of the government. Public media and private media sympathetic to the ruling parties are favored over government critics. The panel called for a fairer manner of the distribution of public funds. In recent years the state’s support to the media has been symbolic, as subsidies for informational programming and the like were abolished.

Few media outlets have sufficient funds for regular market research to support the development of strategic programs and plans. Only a few (for instance, TV Vijesti) occasionally undertake market research activities; more than 90% of organizations do not have the capacity. Media do use publicly accessible research published by domestic NGOs.

NGOs that specialize in surveying public opinion (such as CEDEM, the oldest and best-known nonprofit that publishes public-interest opinion polls), periodically publish survey

results on public trust in the media. Circulation data is not clear since it is based solely on arbitrary statements given by the organizations themselves. Independent sources suggest there has been a drop in circulation across all print media, which is again a consequence of economic circumstances and the ever-stronger impact of the Internet. As far as it is widely known, only rare national-level broadcasters (for example, TV Vijesti, RTCG) research viewing figures, which they will release only if they are in the organizations' favor.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Montenegro Objective Score: 2.13

As in previous years, panelists emphasized that there are media business associations, but that their activity is weak and insufficient and often does not reflect the interests of the wider media community. The activities of these associations have mostly depended on international and donor support. The business associations, mostly in broadcasting, include UNEM, AKEM and ULES.

Similarly, associations of professional journalists tend to be dysfunctional and mostly ignored by the majority of people working in the field. There are three journalists' associations in Montenegro, which, given the size of the country, suggests a lack of integration among the profession, and their overall work is of minor impact. The panelists agreed that journalists lack professional solidarity and often fight among themselves. Kračković and fellow panelist Danka Novović noted that other media organizations did not

support their TVIN colleagues who lost their jobs when the station went bankrupt. Rudović, however, noted that *Vijesti* did publish two articles on TVIN's situation.

As in the past, panelists agreed that there is good cooperation between media and NGOs that deal with the protection of the freedom of speech, support for independent media and improvement of professional standards. Among the more than 1,000 active NGOs in Montenegro, the most influential include MANS, CEDEM, CEMI, CHK, Institute Alternative, Građanska alijansa (Civic Alliance), CDT, and Akcija za ljudska prava (Human Rights Action). They maintain good cooperation with the leading printed and broadcasting media houses.

Most journalists continue to be educated at the University of Montenegro's Department for Journalism. Practical training is limited, though, and most learn on the job after finishing their education, which is a difficult situation especially for young journalists seeking specialist knowledge. For the past decade, the Media Institute has offered training programs.

It was agreed that media organizations do not face obstacles, other than financial ones, in acquiring the necessary material and equipment. The leading newspapers have their own printing presses, so they are not dependent on external factors.

Registered media distribution channels (newsagents, broadcasting transmitters, cable operators, and telecommunication companies) were deemed accessible, free, apolitical and motivated solely by commercial interests.

One key issue is the delay in the digitization process for broadcast media. Panelist Rastoder said: "Digitization is a serious problem. The plan to complete this process until the end of 2014 is not realistic if there is no international assistance." Rabrenović added that there was a risk of corruption in equipment tenders issued through the EU. Zečević agreed and noted the controversial contract awarded to Italian provider Eurotel. Vuković commented "The RTCG has got its development strategy, but there is the issue of the reach of its implementation. The digitization is at the very beginning ... and the biggest problem is how to extend it to all our programs. The assessment is that the digitization cost will be between €11–15 million. At the same time, the RTCG has only got 13 cameras, of which only five are in permanent working order."

On the other hand, telecommunication operators manage to keep up with modern services, and the growth of the Internet is making online journalism stronger as the media culture shifts toward electronic journalism.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS FUNCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:

- > Trade associations represent the interests of media owners and managers and provide member services.
- > Professional associations work to protect journalists' rights and promote quality journalism.
- > NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- > Quality journalism degree programs exist providing substantial practical experience.
- > Short-term training and in-service training institutions and programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- > Sources of media equipment, newsprint, and printing facilities are apolitical, not monopolized, and not restricted.
- > Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, cable, Internet, mobile) are apolitical, not monopolized, and not restricted.
- > Information and communication technology infrastructure sufficiently meets the needs of media and citizens.

List of Panel Participants

Sonja Drobac, journalist, Atlas TV, Podgorica

Ivana Jeremic, editor in chief, PRVA TV, Podgorica

Dragan Klarić, editor-in-chief, Radio Budva, Budva

Radomir Krackovic, journalist, TV Vijesti, Podgorica

Slavko Mandić, editor-in-chief, Radio Skala, Kotor

Danka Novović, journalist, Radio Antena M, Podgorica

Jadranka Rabrenović, journalist, *Dan*, Podgorica

Mirsad Rastoder, CEO, Media Institute of Montenegro, Podgorica

Neđeljko Rudović, journalist, *Vijesti*, Podgorica

Marina Vuković, editor-in-chief, RTCG, Podgorica

Predrag Zečević, journalist, Portal Analitika, Podgorica

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