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MEDIA IN SERBIA AND CROATIA AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH POLITICS

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Abstract

This paper is a survey on the media situation in Serbia and Croatia after 2000 and its relationship with politics. The first part of this paper illustrates the media situation in Serbia and Croatia separately during the 1990s, where Milosevic and Tudjman were in power. Then, the political situation in Serbia and Croatia after the Milosevic's and Tudjman's overthrow is described. This chapter is dedicated to some issues such as the attitude towards the EU, the corruption and the minority situation in both countries. In the next chapter, I, firstly, present the media situation in both countries and, then, I deal with some remarkable issues like the media legislation, media ownership, the ICTY media coverage and the journalism in both countries. Apart from these, I focus on the relationship between the media and politics in Serbia and Croatia. Finally, in my conclusions, these two countries are contrasted and the results of my research and studying are being presented.

Introduction

Undoubtedly, media, the main source of information, are a key factor in shaping consciousness and democracy. Therefore, it is absolutely right to name them, the “Fourth Estate”. However, there are at least six different approaches regarding the media and their role according to James Curran. In this paper, we will deal with the two of these theories. First of all, the liberal view, according to which the media control the state and ensure transparency, which contributes to democratization of the society. They behave as a bridge between the rulers and the society. Secondly, the radical narrative, which is consistent with the state media, for example in Serbia and Croatia after the breakup of Yugoslavia, where, under this circumstance, media are totally dependent on the political power.¹

Before we analyze in detail the case of Serbia and Croatia, we will examine the role of the media during Tito’s governance. The Yugoslav state, which was called the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and existed from 1945 until its dissolution in 1992 included six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. Tito differentiates his self from the other Eastern European leaders since he is not like the other rulers. The west portrays Tito as a moderate and mild socialist leader, who insisted on brotherhood and unity. Tito died in 1980. The Yugoslav media was divided into three phases: 1. 1945-50, the media operate as propaganda in soviet style, 2. 1951-74, when society failed to implement reforms (economic and political) controlling party, something that media tried to achieve, 3. 1974-80, the Republics controlled all parts of life, including the media, so expressing the government’s views.²

One of the differences of Yugoslavia from the other communist and capitalist countries was the status of media ownership. In Yugoslavia, the media were belonging neither to the state nor to individuals, but instead they constituted social property. This is an expression of Kardelj’s theory of self-management in order to avoid state capitalism. The “Social Alliance of Workers” was the institution founded and was controlling the majority of the daily newspapers. Certainly, however, we are not talking about control in the form occurred in the other Balkan countries. Since 1974, change in the media is observed. When the autonomy of every republic began to increase, then the TV channels became more parochial.³ As for journalists, it was essential for them to be loyal to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and to participate in the consolidation of Kardelj’s theory. Actually, they had to serve the Union of Yugoslav Communists.⁴ After Tito’s death, the party’s control over the media slightly loosened and journalists gained freedoms. But, after the 1980s, the process of liberalization ceased

¹Στέλιος Παπαθανασόπουλος [υπό James Curran] (2005) “Μέσα Επικοινωνίας και εξουσία”, Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, σ.75-78, 83-86

²Kemal Kurspahic (2003) “Prime Time Crime”, USA: Institute of Peace Press, p.6

³Βλάσης Βλάσης, “Εξουσία και MME στα Βαλκάνια Θεσσαλονίκη”, αδημοσίευτο, σ.63-65

⁴Βλασίδης (αδημοσίευτο), σ.69

to exist.⁵ The Serbian media and intellectuals started to describe Milošević as the new Tito and the Croatian media believed in Tuđman like being their hero. The socialists in Serbia kept the control over all parts of life, including media while in Croatia the media maintained their ideological line which was hatred for the neighbors.⁶

In the Republic of Serbia, there are three phases in the history of media under the rule of Milošević.⁷ The **first** phase is from 1987 until 1990, where the Radio and the TV were the mouthpieces of the Milošević regime, inciting hatred and hostility toward other ethnic groups.⁸ For Milošević's to survive as a leader, absolute control over the institutions was required. The key component was the control of RTS, since it was the basic source of information.⁹ It was regarded as a party-state resource, indeed. For the majority of Serbs there was only "Slobovision".¹⁰ Moreover, the state television was particularly important when electoral successes took place during the first half of the 1990s. Free expression was limited. Mark Thompson, in his book "Forging war" describes that the media both in Serbia and Croatia were promoters of the war since they were machines "designed to inspire, provoke and underwrite nationalist fears and hatreds".¹¹ However, foreign satellite TV was the only source of uncensored news. In Serbia under Milošević, it should be noted that journalists were also under political pressure.

The **second** phase lasted from 1990 to 1995. This period is described as one of limited access, for example, until 1995; the access of donors to Serbia was restricted too. Milošević refused to welcome Western governments' involvement.¹² However, the **third** phase from 1996 until 2001, i.e. the phase after the Dayton Peace Agreement, is slightly different regarding the media landscape. In 1996, independent newspapers, radio and TV stations closely related to opposition parties, came into vogue.¹³ The

⁵Gorazd Meško, Tom Cockcroft, Adam Crawford and André Lemaître (eds.) (2009) *Crime, Media and Fear of Crime*, University of Maribor, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, Slovenia, p.122
Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/1470327/Crime_media_and_fear_of_crime
in 2014, October 6

⁶Kurspahic (2003), p.25-26

⁷Christopher R. Tunnard (2003) *From State-Controlled Media to the 'Anarchy' of the Internet: The Changing Influence of Communications and Information in Serbia in the 1990s*, Southeast European and Black Sea Studies
Retrieved from: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/713999348>
in 2014, October 6

⁸Krishna Kumar (2006) "Promoting Independent Media, Strategies for Democracy Assistance", USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.72-75

⁹Sabrina P.Ramet, Vjeran Pavlakovic (2005) "Serbia since 1989: Politics and society under Milošević and after", USA: University of Washington Press, p.20

¹⁰Kurspahic (2003), p.59

¹¹Mark Thomson (1994) "Forging war: the media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia- Herzegovina", Great Britain: The Bath Press, Avon, preface (viii).

¹²Marko Davor (2013) *Media Reforms in Turbulent Times: The Role of Media Assistance in the Establishment of Independent Media Institutions in Serbia*, Analitika – Center for Social Research, Bosnia, p.22

Retrieved from: http://analitika.ba/sites/default/files/publikacije/marko_d_rrpp_serbija_wp06_3dec2013_final_for_publishing.pdf
in 2014, October 6

¹³Gorazd Meško, Tom Cockcroft, Adam Crawford and André Lemaître (2009, Slovenia) p.123

survival of these independent media depended mostly on international aid. Milošević could not tolerate the existence of these media anymore and, in 1998, a Law on Public Information was passed, claiming that the independent media were enemies of the state and agents of NATO. According to this law, news from BBC,CNN, Deutsche Welle and Radio Free Europe were denied access and transmission to Serbian states. Moreover, after the strikes of NATO air-raids, 50 independent media were closed after 24 March 1999. The October 5, 2000 revolution, though, ended the government control of the media by the regime and this gave hope to the development over new and free media which, in turn, probably led to Milošević's overthrow supported by the oppositional media.¹⁴

In Croatia, in May 1990, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) won in the first multiparty elections and Franjo Tuđman was elected president. Croatia declared its independence in 1991.¹⁵ The media system was slowly being developed in the 1990s. In 1992, the Balkan conflict began and it lasted until 1996. In this period, Tuđman's strong nationalism was the main characteristic since he tried to control the media in order to promote the war. The media scene in Croatia has determined by an undemocratic government. The manipulation of the freedom of speech was the basic characteristic; however, on the other hand, the media which were controlled by the state enjoyed many privileges like free material, free facilities, and free information access. By 1991, almost all independent journalists were removed from the screen.¹⁶ As a result of an ideological cleansing, in the early 1990s, new and obedient journalists appeared on the TV scene. This intensified prosecution of journalists and independent media took banned opposition voices from HTV (state TV). The privatization of the press also led to a hidden means of control.¹⁷ Until 1998, the popularity of the HDZ rocketed due to the manipulation of the media and the authoritarian nature of the party combined with the growing feeling of nationalism.

Generally, Milošević and Tuđman in Serbia and Croatia respectively, created a climate with absolute control over all media. The end of Milosevic's rule was hailed as the rebirth of a democratic Serbia. Tuđman died at the end of 1999 and then, the attitude of the West towards Croatia changed positively. At the beginning of the 2000s, some changes began to take place in the landscape of the media. First of all, they became more plural and this period regarded as a new beginning for the Balkans since a new period for Serbia and Croatia starts.¹⁸

¹⁴V. Radosavljevic (2004, November 11) *Media in Serbia for years after Milosevic: One step forward two steps back*, mediaonline.ba, Southeast European Media Journal. Retrieved from:
<http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/?ID=333>
in 2014, October 18

¹⁵William Bartlett (2003) "Croatia: Between Europe and the Balkans", USA and Canada: Routledge, p.36-38

¹⁶Thompson (1994), p.156

¹⁷Bartlett (2003), p.51-52

¹⁸Marko Davor (2012) Citizenship in Media Discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia, University of Edinburgh, School of Law, The Europeanization of Citizenship in the

Political situation after 2000

i. Serbia

The end of Milošević's period meant the beginning of a democratic Serbia and the improvement of Serbia's relations with the rest of the world. In October 7, 2000 – after the Bulldozer Revolution-, Vojislav Koštunica, a constitutional lawyer, replaced Milošević as Yugoslav president with his multi party coalition, the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS). From now on, Serbia started to have free and fair elections.¹⁹ Even in native Požarevac, Milošević lost his reputation. The DOS government comprised eighteen political parties with head Koštunica presented as pro-Western. In November 2000, Milošević was re-elected as a leader in the Socialist party when Koštunica tried to restore the relations between Belgrade and the USA, Germany, France.²⁰ Zoran Đindjić was the Prime Minister of Serbia from 2001 until 2003 and he attempted to reinstate Yugoslavia in the international community. In 2003, he was assassinated and it is true that those behind this act wanted to stop the process of Đindjić's reforms since his hope was the Serbia's entry to EU.²¹ Due to this assassination, the democratic transition accepted a big blow. In March, 2003, until December, Zoran Živković remained the Prime minister of Serbia, however, because of some accusations for corruption, the government lost the parliament's support.

In 2004, the baton for the presidency of the Republic of Serbia came to Boris Tadić who advocated Serbia's European integration.²² Two years later, in 2006, the Constitution changed after Montenegro split off. The Koštunica's government fell and, in May 2007, we have the formation of the new government with DSS, DS, New Serbia and G17+, with Koštunica as president. However, this government dissolved when Serbia denied Kosovo's independence, basic key for the Eu-

Successor States of the Former Yugoslavia (CITSEE), Working Paper Series 2012/25, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, p.24

Retrieved from:

http://www.academia.edu/1946791/Citizenship_in_Media_Discourse_in_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina_Croatia_Montenegro_and_Serbia
in 2014, October 6

¹⁹Věra Stojarová, Peter Emerson, *Political parties in Serbia* [Chapter for “Party politics in the Western Balkans” (2009, October 30)] Bochsler, Center for Comparative and International Studies, University of Zurich, p.2-7

Retrieved from: http://www.bochsler.eu/publi/bochsler_serbiacountry.pdf
in 2014, December 12

²⁰Σωτήρης Ντάλλης (2002) “Η Γιουγκοσλαβία στη μετά- Μιλόσεβιτς εποχή: Τα νέα πολιτικά και οικονομικά δεδομένα”, Αθήνα: I. Σιδέρης, σ.51

²¹Stojan Obradovic (2003, March 21) *Serbia and Montenegro: Serbian politics also responsible for Dindjic's assassination: Interview with Miljenko Dereta Director*, Civic Initiatives, Network of Independent Journalists, Issue No. 313

Retrieved from: <http://www.idee.org/nij313.html>
in 2014, December 11

²²Γεώργιος Ε. Χρηστίδης (2008) “Από τον Μιλόσεβιτς στον Κοστούνιτσα” Θεσαλονίκη: Εκδόσεις Βάνιας, σ.95-97

ropean integration.²³ In February, 2008, Boris Tadić was re-elected president of Serbia for a second time and he, also, in May, 2008, won in the parliamentary elections with the coalition “for a European Serbia”, DS, SPO and G17+. The voters’ message was the Serbia’s placement on the path to membership of the EU. There was a wide leaf for those who did not seek eastern and nationalist option anymore.²⁴ Generally, from 2000 to 2012, Serbia was governed by coalitions. There are two leading parties, the DOS (Zoran Đindić, Boris Tadić) and the DSS (Vojislav Koštunica) which were both formed after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. However, they had diverging views on some issues like Kosovo, EU and NATO.²⁵

After 2008, this divergence between pro- European and traditional political parties continued to exist, only after this year, did the Serbian Radical Party start breaking up.²⁶ In May, 2012, the Serbian Progressive Party won in the parliamentary elections and after the resignation of Tomislav Nikolić, Aleksandar Vučić became the president of SNS. The new coalition was made up of the SNS, the SPS and the “United Regions of Serbia”. The government continued to promote the country’s entry to the EU and the “European Council, despite some reservations, decided to accept Serbia’s application for membership”.²⁷ Since Vučić’s victory in the parliamentary elections, in 2014, the political landscape is not the same. It is the first time that a single party can govern the country alone. Aleksandar Vučić is “an ardent pro- European and moderate right-of-centre leader.”²⁸ Here we must note the fact that Vučić, during Milošević era, in 1998, when he served minister of information; he fined and shuttered newspapers that criticized the government.²⁹ Also, he had forced several newspapers to close. At the start of his political career, he

²³Χρηστίδης (2008), σελ.103-107.

²⁴Gordy Eric (2008, May 12) *Serbia’s political carousel*, Opendemocracy.net

Retrieved from:

https://www.opendemocracy.net/article/reimagining_yugoslavia/serbias-political-carousel
in 2014, December 11

²⁵Predrag Simic (2013) *Serbia: continuity and change after 2012 elections*, International Relations Quarterly, Vol.4. No.1

Retrieved from: http://www.southeast-europe.org/pdf/13/dke_13_a_dk_Predrag-Simic_Serbia-2012.pdf
in 2014, December 12

²⁶Djordje Popović (2008) *Serbia – Stepping into Calmer or Rougher Waters? Internal Processes, Regional Implications*, [Policy Recommendations of the Joint Workshop of the PfP-Consortium Study Group “Regional Stability in South East Europe” and the Belgrade Centre for Civil-Military Relations] Retrieved from: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=94548>

in 2014, December 9

²⁷Simic (*International Relations Quarterly*, 2013)

²⁸T.J. (2014, March 17) *Serbia’s election: Vucic’s victory*, The Economist

Retrieved from: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2014/03/serbias-election>
in 2014, December 7

²⁹Gordana Filipovic, Michael Winfrey (2014, March 3) *Serbia’s Vucic Goes from Milosevic Aide to EU Cheerleader*, Bloomberg

Retrieved from <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-03-02-serbia-s-vucic-goes-from-milosevic-aide-to-eu-cheerleader.html>
in 2014, December 8

was “a Serbian ultra-nationalist of anti-western provenance”.³⁰ Vučić, as a creator of a new Law on Information through which the government took the power to decide to shut down the media that did not meet the law’s vague requirements, he also prohibited the foreign television networks in the country.³¹

Tomislav Nikolić still remains the President of Serbia. Discussions about Serbia’s accession to EU only began in January 2014, after Serbia had already submitted its application to join the Union in December 2009.³²

Attitude towards the EU

Serbian political parties are multifaceted and their attitude towards the Serbian integration into the EU varies greatly. In the Republic of Serbia, there are still some main political parties included in the parliament that oppose the EU. The SRS was the largest party that opposed Serbian EU membership, until 2008. After this date, political parties tried to change their views and have become more friendly to the EU integrity idea. Two periods are discerned: between 2000 and 2008, and after 2008. SRS and SPS constituted the anti- European group. For them, EU is characterized as “anti-Serbian police” of the Hague Tribunal, which indicted the presidents of both parties with war crimes. The DOS belongs to the “pro- European group” which strongly advocated the Serbian EU membership.

The recognition by a large number of EU member states of Kosovo’s independence, in 2008, helped many parties to change their attitudes towards Serbian EU membership.³³ One interesting fact, we have to mention is that Nikolić and Vučić are former members of the SRS. However, in 2008, they left this party and they created the SNS, where they now support the EU policy.³⁴ Although Nikolić stat-

³⁰Globalpost (2014, March 3) *Aleksandar Vucic: from nationalist hawk to devout Europeanist* Retrieved from: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140313/aleksandar-vucic-nationalist-hawk-devout-europeanist> in 2014, December 8

³¹GlobalVoices (2014, July 3) *Are Serbia's Dark Days of Media Censorship and Intimidation Making a Comeback?* Retrieved from: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/07/03/history-serbia-prime-minister-vucic-media-censorship/> in 2014, December 8

³²BBC News (2014, November 11) *Serbia profile* Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17907947> in 2014, December 1

³³Marko Stojic (2011) *The changing nature of Serbian political parties' attitudes towards Serbian EU membership*, Sussex European Institute, University of Sussex, p.16-31 Retrieved from: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=epern-working-paper-24.pdf&site=266> in 2014, December 12

³⁴Radka Gačevičová (2014, July) *The Political Shift of Tomislav Nikolić and Aleksandar Vučić and the Logics of Action: Motives for the Adoption of a pro-European Foreign Policy Orientation*, Master of International Relations: International Studies, Master Thesis, Universitet Leiden Retrieved from: <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/28599/MA%20thesis%20s1446371.pdf?sequen ce=1> in 2014, October 12

ed: “Together with Russia, we should stand up against the hegemony of America and the European Union.”³⁵ Today the EU is seen as a tool for the country’s economic prosperity.³⁶

Corruption

The fight against corruption has been the main goal on the political agenda in Serbia since 2001. The Anti-Corruption Council in 2001 is the first of the new-formed institutions.³⁷ Combating corruption is also important for the accession to the European Union. The financing of political parties is an issue linked with corruption; therefore, in order to restrain the possibility of dubious financing, the LFPP was adopted in 2003.³⁸ According to LFPP, parties have to declare who the benefactors are and how much they spend on their campaigns. Another law is the LPCI, which is passed in 2004.³⁹ Moreover, in 2005, an official anti-corruption strategy was adopted, the NSCC, which was drafted with EU standards. In recent years, Serbia has strengthened the legislative and institutional framework for fighting corruption and, in the last two years, has launched an anti-corruption campaign.

Corruption in Serbia, as in many countries, remains a serious problem affecting the public and the economic life, being an obstacle in the economic development. Actually, Serbia scores 42 points on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean) in the Corruption Perception Index published by Transparency International (TI 2013). In February 2013, Transparency Serbia President Vladimir Goati spoke for B92, describing that political parties are the one of the main actors through which political corruption takes place. He added that now a law about political parties’ legal financing is in effect, but he believed that it was not implemented.⁴⁰ Since, in 2013, a new Anti-Corruption Strategy has been adopted for the period 2013-2018 which concerns with good governance, independent institutions, the judiciary, police, education and health (Anti-Corruption 2013).⁴¹ Recently, “the

³⁵ Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty (2007, May 9) *Serbian Parliament Speaker Calls for Closer Russia Ties*.

Retrieved from: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1076353.html> in 2014, December 12

³⁶ Gačevičová (2014, Universitet Leiden)

³⁷ Marijana Trivunovic, Vera Devine, Harald Mathisen (CMI2007: 4) *Corruption in Serbia 2007, Overviews of problems and status of reforms*, p.3

Retrieved from: <http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/2693-corruption-in-serbia-2007.pdf> in 2014, December 6

³⁸ CMI 2007 p.65

³⁹ CMI 2007 p.64

⁴⁰ B92 (2013, February 12) *Serbian political parties "hornet's nest of corruption"*

Retrieved from:
http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2013&mm=02&dd=12&nav_id=84655 in 2014, December 10

⁴¹ Transparency Serbia (2014) *Serbia: Overview of political corruption*

Retrieved from:
http://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/Serbia_overview_of_political_corruption_2014_1.pdf

Serbian new Government has decided to form the Coordination body for the implementation of the national strategy for battle against corruption by 2018, and it will be headed by Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić".⁴²

The issue of minorities in Serbia

In SFRY, although there was a non-democratic political system, the minorities were represented in the political life. All national groups and minorities were proportionally represented at all level of the government. However, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, in Serbia ethnic tensions were high although the 1990's constitution protected minorities; there was no respect to minorities' rights. After 2000 and the overthrow of Milosevic from the power, Koštunica's government took measures so that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (today's Serbia) had access to UN, Council of Europe and other international organizations.⁴³ In 2002, a federal law passed, but Serbia's contemporary status towards minorities is still unclear.⁴⁴ After 2006 and according to the new Constitution, Serbia has bilateral contacts on minority protection with Croatia, FYROM, Hungary and Romania.⁴⁵ Many minorities in Serbia have their own political parties but, at a national level, only Hungarian and Bosniak minorities have been represented in the parliament.⁴⁶

ii. Croatia

After Tuđman's death, in Croatia, a coalition of pro-European democratic parties won the elections, removing the HDZ from power. Stjepan "Stipe" Mesić, who until 1997 was a member of HDZ and, after his departure created his own party, Croatian Independent Democrats (HND), was elected in January 2000 as President. President Mesić was active in foreign policy, promoting Croatia's ambition to become a member of the European Union and NATO. His will was to extradite all indicted war criminals.⁴⁷ He remained in power until 2010. Since 2000, Croatia has had a parliamentary election. Ivica Račan was the Prime Minister of Croatia from 2000 to 2003 with the Social Democratic Party, heading two centre-left coa-

in 2014, December 10

⁴²International Radio Serbia (2014, July 8) *Vucic presiding Coordination body for battle against corruption*

Retrieved from:

<http://voiceofserbia.org/content/vucic-presiding-coordination-body-battle-against-corruption>
in 2014, December 12

⁴³Nevena Gojkovic, *System of minorities' protection in Serbia*

Retrieved from: http://www.kas.de/upload/auslandshomepages/serbien/Gojkovic_en.pdf
in 2014, October 14

⁴⁴Minority Rights Group International (2008, July) *Serbia Overview*

Retrieved from: <http://www.minorityrights.org/4028-serbia-serbia-overview.html>
in 2014, October 14

⁴⁵Gojkovic, *System of minorities' protection in Serbia*

⁴⁶Minority Rights Group International (2008)

⁴⁷U.S. Online training for OSCE, including react, Module.5, *Southeastern Europe*, p.25-26

Retrieved from: <http://react.usip.org/downloads/module5.pdf>
in 2014, December 12

lition governments. On the other hand, the HDZ returned to power in 2003.⁴⁸ Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister of Croatia from 2003 to 2009, claimed that his party was far less nationalistic than Tuđman's era.⁴⁹

Since 2003, HDZ was maintained to power by joining different coalitions. From 2003 to 2007, it has created a coalition with the Croatian Social Liberal Party and the Croatian Party of Pensioners and, since 2007 it belonged to coalition with the Croatian Peasants' Party (HSS) and HSLS. SDP was in opposition, supporting the EU. In January 2005, Mesić was a candidate supported by eight political parties and won nearly half of the vote. He faced off Jadranka Kosor (HDZ) in the run-off election and won. In 2009, the surprising resignation from the political scene took place. Ivo Sanader resigned from politics with rare explanations and Jadranka Kosor undertook the power and became the new Prime Minister.⁵⁰ Sanader had since been the centre of a major economic scandal of disappearing of government funds, when he was in office.

2009 was a very critical moment in Croatia's history since negotiations for the accession to the EU started. In the same year, Croatia became a member of the NATO. One year later, in the presidential elections, Ivo Josipović, from the SDP, won the elections and became President. His first priority: the country's entry to the European Union. In the same year, Sanader tried to be presented again in the political scene within the HDZ, but he was rejected from the party membership. In 2011, Zoran Milanović became the Prime Minister of Croatia after the defeat of the HDZ. EU Parliament elections were held on 14 April, 2013 and, surprisingly enough, the centre right HDZ-led coalition won.⁵¹ Here it should be noted the fact that in 2005, EU foreign ministers postponed the negotiations on Croatia's EU entry due to the Zagreb's failure to arrest a war crime suspect. Gen Gotovina had been accused "of murdering Serb civilians during an operation to expel Serb forces from the Krajina region of Croatia in 1995". Therefore, Croatia was essential to co-operate fully with the Hague Tribunal and to give over Gen Ante Gotovina.

⁴⁸Yana Mechkova (2010) *The Economic and Political Situation in Croatia*, Directorate-General for internal policies, Policy Department, Budgetary Affairs, p.2-4
Retrieved from:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/cont/dv/1_poldep_croatia/_1_poldep_croatia_en.pdf
in 2014, October 13

⁴⁹Petar Doric, *Croatia*, 2014

Retrieved from: http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT14_Croatia_final.pdf
in 2014, December 12

⁵⁰Corina Stratulat (2014) *EU integration and party politics in the Balkans*, EPC Issue paper No.77, September, p.25
Retrieved from:

http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_4716_eu_integration_and_party_politics_in_the_balkans.pdf
in 2014, December 12

⁵¹Corinne Deloy, *Right-wing opposition victorious in the first European elections organised in Croatia*, Foundation Robert Schuman, European elections – Croatia, 14th April 2013, Political issues
Retrieved from: <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/doc/oee/oee-1427c-en.pdf>
in 2014, December 12

However, Olli Ren underlined: “Croatia’s future is in the EU and nothing has changed”.⁵² Croatia joined the EU on 1st July, 2013.

Attitude towards the EU

In October, 2001, Croatia and the EU signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement. In 2003, Croatia submitted its application for full membership in the EU. In 2005, negotiations over Croatia’s access to the EU opened.⁵³ In 2009, new legislation and organizational reforms were introduced to fight corruption and organized crime. However, the prosecution of war crimes required similar continued attention. Negotiations over Croatia’s accession to the EU were completed in mid-2011.⁵⁴ Since 2003, the support for joining the EU has decreased. Croatians, after the UK, had become the greatest Eurosceptics in EU. In 2005 until 2007, the majority was against the EU accession, however, this changed in the late 2011, when Croatia signed the accession treaty with the EU and its number states on December 9, 2011. Since 2011, all political parties have been in favor of the entry to the EU.⁵⁵ Croatia entered the European Union in the 1st July 2013. One year after, this significant fact in Croatia’s political history, Croatian citizens are not grateful due to the economic crisis in the Eurozone and the economic problems plaguing the country. The EU accession was a big step for this war-torn country but it did not solve the economic problems of high unemployment and debt.⁵⁶

Corruption

One of the biggest obstacles to Croatia’s EU accession was corruption. On 4 December 2011, the HDZ lost the parliamentary elections since the ruling elite were involved in scandals. One year later, Ivo Sanader was convicted on corruption charges and he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Reforms in the anti-

⁵²BBC News (2005, March 16) *EU postpones Croatia entry talks*

Retrieved from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4351357.stm>
in 2014, December 10

⁵³Hrvoje Butković (2007, June) Antun Dujmović Krševan, Ivona Ondelj, *Croatia in the European Union: What can the Citizens Expect?*, Institute for International Relations, Zagreb, p.7
Retrieved from: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_12107-1522-2-30.pdf?071018120107
in 2014, October 13

⁵⁴BTI 2014, Croatia Country Report, p.2
Retrieved from: http://www.bti-project.de/uploads/tx_itao_download/BTI_2014_Croatia.pdf
in 2014, October 13

⁵⁵Renata Franc, Vanja Medjugorac (2013, April 2) *Support for EU membership in Croatia has fallen dramatically since accession negotiations began in 2003*, LSA/EURROP.
Retrieved from: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europblog/2013/04/02/croatia-euroscepticism/>
in 2014, October 13

⁵⁶Αθηναϊκό-Μακεδονικό Πρακτορείο ειδήσεων (1 Ιουλίου, 2014) *Ένας χρόνος από την ένταξη της Κροατίας στην ΕΕ*
Retrieved from:
http://www.amna.gr/article_menu/59076/Enas-chronos-apo-tin--entaxi-tis-Kroatias-stin-EE
in 2014, October 15

corruption policy were essential so that Croatia could have access to the EU.⁵⁷ Croatia, this year, received some recommendations from the European Commission in order to create an effective mechanism to prevent corruption in state institutions. According to the report of the European Commission for the fight against corruption, it is clearly stressed that Croatia has made considerable efforts for the fight of corruption but not its prevention.⁵⁸

The issue of minorities in Croatia

Serbian minority is the most sizeable ethnic minority group in Croatia. Together with the Roma group, they face discrimination most. One of the basic problems for the Serbs and Roma in Croatia is that they lack access to employment. In 2002, a Constitutional Law on National Minorities was adopted. Since 2003, Croatia, has also adopted the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (CLNM). Moreover, in 2003, a National Programmed for Roma was also adopted. With these laws, the participation of national minorities in Croatian public life has improved.⁵⁹ Besides, the CLMN guarantees representation of minorities at all levels of elected governments, as well as in the judiciary and state- local administration. In any case, effective participation of national minorities in public life is an essential characteristic of a democratic society.⁶⁰ As a result of the war 1991-1995, between 300,000 and 350,000 Serbs were displaced. The majority has not returned.

“In 2005, the Republic of Croatia ratified a bilateral agreement with Serbia and Montenegro on the protection of the Serbian/Montenegrin national minority in the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian national minority in Serbia and Montenegro.”⁶¹ According to the census in 2001, main minority groups are Albanians (15,082), Bosniaks (20,755), Czechs (10,510), Hungarians (16,595), Italians (19,636), Roma (9,463), Serbs (201,631) and Slovenes (13,171).⁶² Nowadays, the

⁵⁷BTI 2014, Croatia Country Report, p.2

⁵⁸Αθηναϊκό-Μακεδονικό Πρακτορείο ειδήσεων (4 Φεβρουαρίου,2014) Συστάσεις από την Κομισιόν για τη διαφθορά

Retrieved from:

http://www.amna.gr/article_menu/48869/Sustaseis-apo-tin-Komision-gia-ti-diafthora
in 2014, December 12

⁵⁹Minority Rights Group International (2008, July) Croatia Overview

Retrieved from:

<http://www.minorityrights.org/2647/croatia/croatia-overview.html>
in 2014, October 14

⁶⁰Florian Bieber, *Introduction: Minority Participation and political parties in Political Parties and Minority Participation*, Skopje 2008

Retrieved from:

<http://www.fes.org.mk/pdf/Political%20Parties%20and%20Minority%20Participation.pdf>
in 2014, October 14

⁶¹Minority Rights Group International (2014, March 12) *Serbs*

Retrieved from

<http://www.minorityrights.org/2651/croatia/srbs.html>
in 2014, October 14

⁶²Minority Rights Group International (2008, July) *Croatia*

above minority groups still exist. “However, despite a good legal framework, in practice, the actual state of human rights protections in Croatia is not high. In 2012, the European Commission noted that Croatia does not sufficiently protect minorities, in particular Croatian Serbs, against threats or acts of discrimination or violence. National minorities are guaranteed civil and political rights that are commonplace in liberal democracies, but in practice, some groups, especially Roma and Serbs, still face discrimination.”⁶³

Media landscape after 2000

Having analyzed the contemporary political situation of the two countries we examine, the main issue concerns, is the current situation of the media. First of all, in both Serbia and Croatia, in the early 2000s, the media still remain in the trenches of nationalism. One big issue is the denial or acknowledgement of the atrocities of the war in the 1990s.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the beginning of the 2000s; brought about significant changes on how the media work. Media, through privatization and commercialization, made a shift from direct political control; to more plural institutions. In both countries, after 2000, successive governments tried to create a new media legal framework in accordance with European standards; however the political influence on media still remains. As we will see below, now the media is facing financial pressures. Moreover, media outlets have increased and media have become more critical towards government. In fact, nobody should deny that access to information is essential to the maintenance of democracy.

i. Serbia

Generally speaking, in Serbia, a decade later, the consequences of the former regime’s policies still existed in Serbia. The media system is undergoing transformation. After 2000, tabloid newspapers spread rapidly, however nobody knows the tabloids’ owners. These papers mostly have small circulations and low prices and their main topics are dealing with politics and politicians. After Milošević, the main characteristic was that there were sensational news and information, without mentioning sources.⁶⁵

The rise of the commercial and entertainment press took place and also, the process of privatization and the arrival of foreign capital were beginning. One remarkable fact is the WAZ arrival in the Republic of Serbia in 2001, a year after the fall of the regime of Slobodan Milošević. The WAZ Medien Gruppe is the

⁶³BTI 2014, Croatia Country Report

⁶⁴Kurspahic (2003), Introduction xii

⁶⁵Draga Bozinovic (2005, May 18) *Economic Pressure on Media Independence: Searching for the right measure*, mediaonline.ba, Southeast European Media Journal

Retrieved from:

<http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/pdf.asp?ID=367&n=SEARCHING%20FOR%20THE%20RIGHT%20MEASURE>
in 2014, October 18

third strongest media corporation in Germany, with a business network in Austria, Russia, and Hungary and, until recently, other countries of the Balkans and South-Eastern Europe. In 2001, they found a country devastated financially and dominated by the state media that most often worked on the regime's war propaganda. In Serbia, the company had 50% ownership in the company Politika, which is the oldest newspaper in the Balkans; 55% ownership of Vojvodina's Dnevnik Vojvodina Press, which publishes *Dnevnik*, the oldest daily paper in Vojvodina; and it also purchased certain shares of the company Vecernje Novosti. Nowadays, the biggest problem the media are facing is financial pressures.⁶⁶

Speaking more analytically, according to IREX, the regime-controlled media, previously supporting Milošević, after 2000 became supporters of the DOS coalition (*Politika*, even state run television station RTS). Media were still dependent on the government. On the other hand, the independent media gained influence and foreign donors started to support them financially. For example, B92 had been developed into the most prominent alternative media which promoted liberal-humanistic spirit and anti-war feelings. Additionally, another example of independent media is the private agency BETA and newspapers like *Nasa Borba*, *Danas* and *Vreme*.⁶⁷ State media, after Milošević, had remained backward technologically with inexperienced journalists. Editorial independence was still under pressure. Most of the newspapers and broadcasters were controlled by the party, for example *Politika*, *Borba*, *Vecernje Novosti*.⁶⁸

Public information was still not easily accepted; however, the state media had priority in entering sources of information. Radio stations, affiliated with ANEM, were in good shape. ANEM (Network of independent electronic broadcasters) was founded in 1997 by the Radio B92. It had a rapid expansion. In 1998, it already had 32 radio and 18 TV stations as members. The aim was the creation of an independent national broadcasting network from the ground.⁶⁹ One great problem was the fact that the newspapers were expensive and, therefore, the print press suffered greatly. There was no clear licensing and this made it difficult for media to operate as businesses.⁷⁰ In 2003, things were bad due to the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić. The ruling coalition collapsed and the ICTY increased its pressure on Serb authorities. The information, however, continued to

⁶⁶Ilko Ćimić, Žarka Radoja, *Privatisation of media in Serbia and Croatia: the WAZ case*
Retrieved from: <http://i-scoop.org/scoop/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/PRIVATISATION-OF-MEDIA-IN-SERBIA-AND-CROATIA.docx>
in 2014, December 9

⁶⁷JovankaMatic, Larisa Rankovic, *Media Landscapes: Serbia*, European Journalism Centre
Retrieved from: http://ejc.net/media_landscapes/serbia
in 2014, December 12

⁶⁸Ulf Brunnbauer (2001, July 26), *Country reports on media: Yugoslavia*, Education and Media in Southeast Europe

⁶⁹Brunnbauer (2001)

⁷⁰IREX, Serbia Media Sustainability Index (MSI 2001)
Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/21-Serbia.pdf>
in 2014, October 18

improve and became more objective and reliable. During 2003, Serbian media had improved its coverage on political issues.⁷¹ After the assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister, frequent arrests, ban on certain political parties and control of media work were the main characteristics.⁷²

The tabloidization of the media worsened next year. Access to foreign sources was absolutely free but, licensing had still no progress. The RTS was said to improve.⁷³ In Serbia, there were two private new agencies (Beta and Fonet) and one state-controlled (Tanjug). The state agency Tanjug played an important role in the development of Tito's communist regime. With the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, Tanjug lost its significance and its credibility. A number of journalists in the Republic of Serbia established new private agencies, Fonet (February 1994) and Beta (May 1994), which managed to gain highly professional reputations in a short period of time. Beta and Fonet fed independent media during the 1990s, while Tanjug remained the main news source for the regime-controlled media. Now, Tanjug continues to sell its services to government agencies.⁷⁴ The strong influence of conservative political forces led the media sector into stability. The technical capacity of the media was improving year by year and new sources continued to multiply. RTS, as it made significant improvements, was trying, also, to include opposition parties and other opinions. The donors' activity had decreased.⁷⁵ Media market, in 2010, was characterized by two groups: private media and government-owned media the latter being helped financially by the government and the advertising policy.⁷⁶ The media were poor, taking into account the fact that they were neglecting some complex and serious problems, such as Serbia's economic stagnation and the approach to EU membership.⁷⁷

⁷¹Serbia MSI 2003

Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSI03-Serbia.pdf>
in 2014, October 18

⁷²Vladan Radosavljevic (2003) *Media in state of emergence*, mediaonline.ba, Southeast European Media Journal

Retrieved from:
<http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/pdf.asp?ID=269&n=MEDIA%20IN%20STATE%20OF%20EMERGENCY>
in 2014, October 18

⁷³Serbia MSI 2005

Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSI05-Serbia.pdf>
in 2014, October 18

⁷⁴Matic, Rankovic, *Media Landscapes: Serbia*

⁷⁵Serbia MSI 2008

Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSIEE08-Serbia.pdf>
in 2014, October 18

⁷⁶Serbia MSI 2010

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/system/files/EE_MSI_2010_Serbia.pdf
in 2014, October 18

⁷⁷Serbia MSI 2011

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/EE_MSI_2011_Serbia.pdf
in 2014, October 18

In 2012, the media situation became even worse, due to the deterioration of situation in North Kosovo and the unclear EU perspective on Serbia's candidacy.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the European Council granted Serbia the status of EU candidate country in March 2012. However, in 2013, "the gap between the law's provisions on media freedom and its daily practice was dramatically expanding".⁷⁹ Finally, arriving today, media tabloidization has remained and political pressure on the media keeps influencing editorial lines. Unfortunately, there is still stagnation and deterioration of media independence. The freedom of speech, also, is far from being strong yet. Besides, there is still a balance between news and entertainment. High-definition TV has been introduced. Nowadays, there is also a new trend, according to which, politicians are paying more attention to social networks like Facebook, Twitter and they are trying to have as many followers they can.

In Serbia today, the main reason might be the economic situation led to the media's disability to continue to produce original reports. As a result, they just reproduce from other sources. There are some media, though, that present serious news.⁸⁰ Serbia is still a non-EU country and it seems that it burdened by the past, present issues are not fully resolved.⁸¹

Media legislation

Serbian media legislation reforms started in 2000. The drafts of laws were established in accordance with EU standards but in practice, the strong ties between the media and political actors remained.⁸² Koštunica's government started to pass new media legislation, the Telecommunications Act, the Broadcast Act and the Public Information Act. The creation of these media regulations was found in the majority of EU countries. Besides, the DOS coalition announced a new tender for broadcast frequencies. From the above, only one new law was passed, the Broadcast Act. According to this law, the state or state-owned companies cannot own TV channels.⁸³ It must be said that the government interfered in the drafting of this law in order to reduce the influence. On May, 2003, the Broadcast Advisory was presented as violation of the Broadcast Act. Through this, the government tried to gain control over the Broadcast media.⁸⁴

⁷⁸Serbia MSI 2011

⁷⁹Serbia MSI 2013

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/u105/EE_MSI_2013_Serbia.pdf in 2014, October 18

⁸⁰Serbia MSI 2014

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/u105/EE_MSI_2014_Serbia.pdf in 2014, October 18

⁸¹Marijana Matović, Snežana Milin Perković (May, 2014) *Media and Information Literacy Policies in Serbia in 2013*, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Science

Retrieved from: http://ppemi.ens-cachan.fr/data/media/colloque140528/rapports/SERBIA_2014.pdf in 2014, October 13

⁸²Serbia MSI 2001

⁸³Matic, Rankovic, *Media Landscapes: Serbia*

⁸⁴Serbia MSI 2003

In 2006, the first Constitution was adopted. In this year, the licensing of broadcast media started, however, the number of state media dropped.⁸⁵ In August, 2009, “the People’s Assembly of the Republic of Serbia passed the amended Law on public Information (LoPi) whose provisions provoked much turmoil in the public even before its adoption. The amended LoPI stipulates that media can be founded only by a domestic legal entity (physical persons are thereby excluded), which is then entered into a Registry run by an authority in charge of registering businesses”.⁸⁶ Finally, in July, 2014, the Vučić’s government adopted drafts on Public Information and Media, Electronic Media and Public Media Services.⁸⁷

Media ownership in Serbia

After 2000, confusion dominates the media scene. The media ownership in Serbia is suffering from a lack of transparency. In 2008, a bill was drafted regarding the transparency of media ownership; however the document has never reached the National Assembly. People in the media are not interested in revealing who the owners are.⁸⁸ However, it is widely believed that ownership data are hidden to avoid taxes and to prevent political problems. Also, out of economic and political reasons, media ownership is changing year by year. Privatization is still underway. The state is the owner of some of the most significant media (news agency Tanjug, dailies *Večernje novosti*, *Politika* and *Dnevnik*, TV and radio stations in major urban centres). However, the most important media are owned by local businessmen. These are in the majority entrepreneurs who generated their basic capital, when they supported the Milošević’s regime. Three of the largest businessmen were revealed as real media owners behind companies registered in Cyprus, Austria and Russia. Despite the chaotic situation persisting in Serbia, the Serbian market attracts many investors. These foreign investors tend to be media groups and there include the WAZ, the Gruner+Jahr and the Ringier.

Besides, it has been observed that journalists obtain their ownership shares of their media through foreign donations. Moreover, the phenomenon that the buyers-owners are taking over journalists as labor force is prevalent, so business interests

⁸⁵Serbia MSI 2006/2007

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSIE06_serbia.pdf
in 2014, October 18

⁸⁶Peščanik.net (2009, September 11) *Does the new Information Law abolish media freedom in Serbia?* YUCOM, Human Rights and Democracy Violation, Weekly Newsletter No.43
Retrieved from: <http://pescanik.net/does-the-new-infomation-law-abolish-media-freedom-in-serbia/>
in 2014, December 10

⁸⁷B92 (2014, July 28) *Government adopts set of new media laws*
Retrieved from:
http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2014&mm=07&dd=28&nav_id=91109
in 2014, December 10

⁸⁸Helsinki bulletin, Helsinki Committee for human rights in Serbia (2010, August)
Media in Serbia: Lost and Lobbying for the Status Quo, No.67
Retrieved from:
<http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/getdocument.aspx?logid=5&id=d021f4c6c7b247f3815fd3d0b8b09d43>
in 2014, October 18

are what set the freedom of media at risk. Furthermore, the Broadcast Law refers to the media ownership twice. Firstly, it points out that any concentration of media ownership is forbidden and, secondly, a license to broadcast a program or publish a newspaper cannot be assured by political parties, organizations or coalitions, though today many Serbian municipalities are still owners of TV and radio stations and they influence the editors politically. This absence of provisions incommodes to solve the issue of who owns what in the media scene. It is a business secret.⁸⁹

The media market in the Republic of Serbia, in 2004, was still insufficiently used since media freedoms were jeopardized by businesses and capital interests and not by current policies anymore.⁹⁰ It is true that, privatization and media ownership transformation are being carried out slowly and sometimes, not according to regulations but, generally, there are mainly three owners who had built their business empires during the Milošević's regime and these are foreign entrepreneurs and some journalists themselves, helped by foreign donations.⁹¹ As Ms. Gordana Predić, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Culture and Information in Serbia in March 2014, alleged that Brussels is calling for transparency in the ownership and, also, transparency in the way of financing the operation of the media⁹², it was not until July 2014 that a discussion took place over the Laws for the media in the parliament. Besides, there was a proposal for the state to retreat the media ownership in July 2015. If this occurs, journalists will have good working conditions and with these laws Serbia will be far closer to the standards in force in the EU.

The ICTY media coverage

In Milošević's era, the media had to follow the same line indicated by the regime. After the overthrow, the media were divided into two different opinion-groups, namely whether to send the indicted war criminals to the Hague Tribunal or not. One group opposed the tribunal but the other supported the cooperation with the international court.⁹³ In 2002, in Serbia's media there is no longer any hate speech so common under Milošević, though the media still remained reluctant to express

⁸⁹Dragan Dokovic, *Media ownership and its impact on media independence and pluralism (Serbia)* Retrieved from: http://www2.mirovni-institut.si/media_ownership/pdf/serbia.pdf in 2014, October 6

⁹⁰Dusan Babic (2004, November 11) *Relationship between ownership of media and its independent position*, mediaonline.ba, Southeast European Media Journal Retrieved from: <http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/?ID=334> in 2014, October 18

⁹¹Draga Bozinovic (2005, May 18) Southeast European Media Journal

⁹²International Radio Serbia (2014, March 14) *Predić: Media laws in the hands of new MPs* Retrieved from: <http://voiceofserbia.org/content/predic%20media-laws-hands-new-mps> in 2014, December 13

⁹³Joran Orlovic (2002, January 12) *Analysis: Serb Media Split Over The Hague, The Serbian media are divided over government cooperation with the International Justice – ICTY*, Institute for War and Peace reporting

Retrieved from: <http://iwpr.net/report-news/analysis-serb-media-split-over-hague> in 2014, October 18

their complete disapproval of the war crimes committed in his name. This reluctance was replaced by a strong skepticism towards international charges of previous atrocities.⁹⁴ The print media (*Glas javnosti* and *Vecernje* and, to a lesser extent, *Blic* and *Politika*) supporting the nationalism preferred a more anti- Hague policy while the more liberal newspapers (the daily *Danas*, the weekly *Vreme* as well as radio B92) found that the tribunal international was an obligation.

Some reports cover the trials however; most newspapers and broadcasters do not send their own reporters on the spot. This happens because the media don't have enough money to pay for keeping foreign correspondents and because of psychological reasons to keep distance from the tribunal. There is usually no analysis in the reports. Most people in Serbia, nowadays, are still distrustful towards the international court of justice, until the Serbian media started being more analytical when they covered the tribunal.⁹⁵ In the first years, the tribunal was presented as a negative institution, more specifically, as a mechanism of the big powers to enslave small nations. With the passage of the time, however; there was a change in the media coverage of tribunal since the standards of reporting improved.⁹⁶ In addition, young readers see the arrests of the international court of justice as a vehicle for joining the EU.⁹⁷

Journalism

The landscape of journalism in Serbia has not met great changes. However, there are some characteristics which differentiate the contemporary situation from the Milošević's era situation. From 2001, fortunately, journalists' persecutions no longer take place. On the other hand, though, authorities are still pressing the reporting. Besides, there are no specific criteria for someone to be a journalist. In February, 2001, a code of ethics for journalists has been adopted by the Union of Independent Journalists of Serbia (NUNS). Another important issue is the fact that journalists are under paid and apart from politics there is a lack of coverage of other issues. Training is missing too, whereas there are two institutions for this purpose, the Department of Journalists of the Faculty of Political Sciences in the

⁹⁴Vera Rankovic (2002, February 9) *Regional Report: RTS Silent over War Crimes, Radio and Television Serbia has been reluctant to confront the crimes of the Milosevic era*, Institute for War and Peace reporting

Retrieved from: <http://iwpr.net/report-news/regional-report-rts-silent-over-war-crimes> in 2014, October 25

⁹⁵Orlovic (2002, January 12, Institute for War and Peace reporting)

⁹⁶Refik Hodzic (2005, September 6) *Comment: Balkan Media Undermine Hague, One-sided and misleading reporting by media in former Yugoslavia is not helping the tribunal achieve its goals*, Institute for War and Peace reporting

Retrieved from: <http://iwpr.net/report-news/comment-balkan-media-undermine-hague> in 2014, October 25

⁹⁷Iva Martinović (2011, August 11) *International Justice/ICTY: Jun/Jul '11, Youngsters in Belgrade say they preferred IWPR's reporting on his arrest to that of the Serbian media*, Institute for War and Peace reporting

Retrieved from: <http://iwpr.net/report-news/international-justiceicty-junjul-11> in 2014, October 25

University of Belgrade and the independent school of journalism in Novi Sad.⁹⁸ The journalists' poor payment still remains a significant problem which encourages many journalists to accept money from politicians and businessmen to broadcast or write favorable news.⁹⁹

From 2003, the media situation still left a lot to be desired; nevertheless, fair-objective reporting was improving and training for journalists, too.¹⁰⁰ From 2004 onward, the education of journalists seems to be progressing.¹⁰¹ The low pay and the attacks towards journalists are still a sad fact during the coming years. 2008 is considered a significant year due to the declaration of Kosovo independence and that's why the criminal acts against journalists are not rare.¹⁰² The year 2009 saw the Google journalism emerge.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, all the above characteristics are still true nowadays in Serbian journalism. As mentioned before, there is a high level of corruption in this sector; journalists are not well-paid and, as a result you cannot survive only thanks to journalism. The basic problem is the lack of regulation. It is said that after the 5th of October, the media became extremely liberal. Nobody controls the validity of information. Finally, one important fact we have to mention is that the international donors are very interested in training journalists and media staff in Serbia more than anything else.

ii. Croatia

Croatia is a transition country which is more developed in the media sector in contrast to the other transitional countries. Besides, an overproduction of laws and regulations is observed.¹⁰⁴ In Croatia, the media, from state-controlled in the 1990's, became more pluralistic through the 2000's; they were no servants to politics anymore. The media, after the fall of the regime, had been influenced by big media corporations.¹⁰⁵ After Tuđman's death, the foregoing years 2000 and 2001; were seen as an opportunity for changes in the media landscape. Foreign owner-

⁹⁸Serbia MSI 2001

⁹⁹Serbia MSI 2002

Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/Serbia.pdf> in 2014, October 18

¹⁰⁰Serbia MSI 2003

¹⁰¹Serbia MSI 2004

Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSI-2004-Serbia.pdf> in 2014, October 18

¹⁰²Serbia MSI 2008

¹⁰³Serbia MSI 2009

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/system/files/EE_MSI_09_se_Serbia.pdf in 2014, October 18

¹⁰⁴Stjepan Malovic (2005, April 13) *Economic pressure on media, The Real game has only started*, mediaonline.ba, Southeast European Media Journal

Retrieved from:

<http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/pdf.asp?ID=362&n=THE%20REAL%20GAME%20HAS%20ONLY%20STARTED>

in 2014, October 18

¹⁰⁵Marko (2012) p.18

ship in private media increased and a new law started to be designed.¹⁰⁶ Another fact we have to mention is that the trend of tabloidization was noticeable in the print media, after 2000.¹⁰⁷ Generally speaking, since 2000, the policy of HDZ and the centre-left coalition was almost the same and in accordance with the EU. Two forces influenced the media landscape in Croatia: the policies of the EU which led to a more liberal market and the previous regime which oppressed all the institutions, including the media.¹⁰⁸

According to the IREX results, after 2000, the basic source of information for the majority of the population was still the state broadcaster. Besides, the economic pressures on media still continued.¹⁰⁹ Since 2002, the pressures, harassment and prosecution of the former HDZ government almost disappeared. Moreover, the marketplace became more competitive since the NOVA TV made its appearance.¹¹⁰ “Public” TV was still a utopia.¹¹¹ In 2003, something new was the fact that the privatization of the third channel of Croatian TV, HTV 3, took place. The use of the Internet increased, as well. One serious problem also was the libel.

Since 2003, the concept “public” became ordinary and characterized the state media. Croatian media no longer received “preferential legal or financial treatment”. Regarding the material, it was quite difficult to use the government data; however, access to international news and foreign news sources was free. Data could be used from press conferences, as well.¹¹² Since 2006, a new trend which was also negative; appeared on the Croatian media scene. This was called “trivialization”. One important fact is the distribution. In the 1990’s, this was viewed as a tool for

¹⁰⁶Stjepan Malović, Gordana Vilović, *Media Landscape of Croatia: Structure and Economy of Media System*, Medienhilfe Ex-Jugoslawien, Professional solidarity against nationalism and chauvinism
Retrieved from: <http://archiv.medienhilfe.ch/Reports/CRO2000.htm>
in 2014, December 13

¹⁰⁷Zrinka Peruško (2011)*Assessment of media development in Croatia, based on Unesco’s Media Development Indicators*, The international programme for the development of communication, Unesco, France, p.4
Retrieved from:

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/IPDC/croatia_report_final.pdf
in 2014, November 27

¹⁰⁸Helena Popović (2014)*Media Integrity matters, Reclaiming public service values in media and journalism: Croatia*, South East European Media Observatory, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia, p.203
Retrieved from:

http://mediaobservatory.net/sites/default/files/media%20integrity%20matters_za%20web_1.pdf
in 2014, November 6

¹⁰⁹Croatia MSI 2001

Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/11-Croatia.pdf>
in 2014, October 18

¹¹⁰Croatia MSI 2002

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSI_2002_EE_Full.pdf
in 2014, October 18

¹¹¹Stojan Obradovic (2002) *Delaying Public Television*

Retrieved from: <http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/?ID=195>
in 2014, October 18

¹¹²Croatia MSI 2003

Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSI03-Croatia.pdf>
in 2014, October 18

political control and pressure, however, since 2006, one company, Tisak, controlled the distribution and it was being presented as a profit- oriented company.¹¹³ In 2009, the Commercial Court obliged all media outlets to register their ownership structure. However, “some media outlets made the registry under cover names”. Croatia’s media scene seemed to be profitable. The editorial incompetence was the largest hindrance so far and because of it, media cannot be developed as a business. Another problem was a drop in circulation for almost all print media, since there was a lack of trust in the media content.¹¹⁴ In Croatia, one negative fact is the editorial policy. More precisely, editors, most of the time, do not allow journalists to search in depth and they use only one source to present the news, leading hence to considerable controversy.

Since 2010, we have also the development of new social media like Twitter, Facebook and other new media platforms.¹¹⁵ In 2010, the arrest of Ivo Sanader, the former Croatian Prime Minister led to the deterioration of the media scene. Journalists faced threats. The main freedoms still remained but the progress was so trivial. In 2011, new media outlets were continuously growing and this year, the satellite IPTV made its appearance, too. From now on, the rural areas could have access to the information and entertainment. One problem which was identified was also the “lack of quality information on the Croatia- European Union negotiations and on the foreign policy as well”.¹¹⁶ 2012 was an important year for Croatia’s accession to the EU. Croatia was trying to meet the EU standards. The public TV was no more under political control but was still chaotic.¹¹⁷ The 1st of July 2013, Croatia entered the EU. However, there were still many important problems, such as the lack of specialized and niche reporting, the part-time contracts of young journalists and the issue of media ownership. One positive fact, though, was that all political spectrums were covered.¹¹⁸

¹¹³Croatia MSI 2006

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSIE06_cro.pdf
in 2014, October, 18

¹¹⁴Croatia MSI 2009

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/system/files/EE_MSI_09_se_Croatia.pdf
in 2014, October 18

¹¹⁵Croatia MSI 2010

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/system/files/EE_MSI_2010_Croatia.pdf
in 2014, October 18

¹¹⁶Croatia MSI 2011

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/EE_MSI_2011_Croatia.pdf
in 2014, October 18

¹¹⁷Croatia MSI 2012

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/system/files/u105/EE_MSI_2012_Full_Croatia.pdf
in 2014, October 18

¹¹⁸Croatia MSI 2013

Retrieved from: http://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/u105/EE_MSI_2013_Croatia.pdf
in 2014, October 18

Media legislation

Since Croatia was an EU candidate member, it was necessary to adopt some EU laws.¹¹⁹ There were many attempts aiming at media legislation tallying with EU standards. Between 2000 and 2004, new media regulations were adopted. In February 2001, the law on Croatian Radio and TV (HRT) was adopted since the International community exercised pressure.¹²⁰ However, this law still left space for politicians' control. The state was still the owner.¹²¹ The Media Act, which was adopted in 2004, ensures transparency of ownership. In December 2009, the Electronic Media Act was adopted and in 2010, the Croatian Radio Television Act that regulates the Public Service Broadcaster. Finally, in July 2013, the Value Added Tax Act (VAT) was passed in order to support privately owned press media in a period of the financial recession.¹²²

Media ownership in Croatia

When we talk about media ownership it is like talking about media monopoly. The transitional countries in South-east Europe lack transparency on media ownership and this is believed to be motivated by the intention of politicians to exert political influence. Speaking about Croatia, media ownership structure is well hidden, although there were many regulations that clearly set the commitment of revealing all the elements of the above.¹²³ More precisely, the life for media owners in Croatia was precarious. Many attacks and assassinations on media owners took place in the past. This is why ownership data remained secret. The public had no access to it. In 2004, although, the Law on Media and the Law on Electronic Media stipulated that media companies publish clear data of the ownership structure, this never happened.¹²⁴ According to official data, in 2003, the Croatian Government was the largest media owner.

The government still owns 82 media companies, among these- two daily newspapers, dozens of local and regional publications, a press agency HINA, a printing company Vjesnik, the public broadcaster Hrvatska Radio Televizija and the public company, Transmitters.¹²⁵ The Media Act ensures transparency of ownership. All media outlets must to submit ownership data to the Croatian Chamber of Economy, and this data also has to be published in the Official Gazette. Moreover, the Electronic Media Council has also warned media organizations to upload to its new website their profile information, including ownership structure. The Croa-

¹¹⁹ Malovic, Vilovic, *Media Landscape of Croatia: Structure and Economy of Media solidarity against nationalism and chauvinism*

¹²⁰ Croatia MSI 2001

¹²¹ Croatia MSI 2002

¹²² Popović (2014, Slovenia) p.199-200

¹²³ Dusan (mediaonline.ba, 2004)

¹²⁴ Stjepan Malović, *Media Ownership and its Impact on Media Independence and Pluralism (Croatia)* http://www2.mirovni-institut.si/media_ownership/pdf/croatia.pdf

¹²⁵ Popović, Slovenia 2014, p.216-217

tian Chamber of Economy provides online access to the list of registered press outlets with the name of the company owns a press outlet is listed. The names of the persons behind the company are still not disclosed. In contemporary Croatia, media ownership seems to be in the hands of some commercial agencies, everything is dependent on them and, as a result; they remain intact.¹²⁶

The ICTY media coverage

The coverage of the trials of the crimes previously committed is thought to be a means to announce that there is no longer any link to the previous authoritarian regime.¹²⁷ Croatia's insufficient co-operation with the ICTY and with the issues of transitional justice generally, was responsible for the delay to Croatia's membership of the EU.¹²⁸ From 2001, the issues related to the Hague Tribunal were on the margin and there was no complete media coverage.¹²⁹ The situation seemed to remain unchanged. In 2012, a journalist from Osijek focused on the media ignorance of the work of the Hague Tribunal. He claimed that media in Croatia yield to what politicians say and they never shown any interest in the Hague news. The state seems to deny war crimes.¹³⁰

Moreover, the ICTY prosecutor Serge Brammertz, in May 2012, emphasized on the very good cooperation between Croatia and the ICTY. However, in 2011, he expressed his concerns about the Croatian officials' behavior towards the ICTY verdicts. Jandranka Kosor had exalted Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac, while Ivo Josipovic considered that wrong people were in Hague. "The lack of cooperation with the ICTY had blocked Croatian accession to the EU for almost twenty years."¹³¹

¹²⁶Popović, Slovenia 2014, p.204-205

¹²⁷Mediacentar Sarajevo, (*Un)covering Karadžić: a case study on media (re)production of national ideologies through war crimes coverage in the former Yugoslavia*

Retrieved from:

http://www.rpp-westernbalkans.net/dms/downloads/Research/Completed-projects/BiH/BH_Mediacentar_uncovering-Karadzic/BH_Mediacentar_uncovering%20Karadzic.pdf
in 2014, November 7

¹²⁸BBC News (2005, March 16)

¹²⁹Stojan Obradovic, STINA (2001) *ICTY Coverage on Croatian Television and in Vecernji List: Covering Up The Hague*, mediaonline.ba, South East European Journal

Retrieved from:

<http://www.mediaonline.ba/en/pdf.asp?ID=175&n=ICTY%20COVERAGE%20ON%20CROATIAN%20TELEVISION%20AND%20IN%20VECERNJI%20LIST:%20COVERING%20UP%20THE%20HAGUE?>

in 2014, October 18

¹³⁰Dragana Erjavec (2012, November 8) *Croatia Discusses Hague Tribunal Legacy*, Balkan Insight, Balkan Transitional Justice

Retrieved from: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatia-discusses-hague-tribunal-legacy>
in 2014, December 13

¹³¹Boris Pavelic (2012, May 4) *Croatia and the ICTY: "No More Open Questions*, Balkan Insight, Balkan Transitional Justice

Retrieved from: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatia-and-icty-no-more-open-questions>
in 2014, December 12

Journalism

As for journalism, this sector has always had close ties with the domain of politics and, until a decade, as a profession enjoyed a high social status. Today, this status has eroded significantly. One of the possible reasons is the commercialization and the privatization of media.¹³² After 2000, there were no restrictions if someone wanted to become a journalist. Everyone had this right. There was an association for journalists, the Croatian Journalists Association which represent all the journalists and since 2008, it is the biggest media association, includes almost the whole professional journalists in the country.¹³³ The level of the Croatian School of Journalism was quite low and there was no practical training.¹³⁴ Nowadays, the quality of journalism is still low and remains more theoretically-oriented. The question is if the well-educated journalists would be able to face later the hard conditions in their work as theory is far from practice.

One negative fact is that journalists in Croatia do not have the right to publish everything they have found. They cover the main issues substantially but there is a controversy for the quality. Investigative journalism did not exist due to the poor economic situation. 2008 was the worst year regarding crimes against journalists, but, next year, their salaries were high and journalism degrees had become well-known in Croatia.¹³⁵ There is no reliable and transparent data on wages of journalists and editors in Croatia.¹³⁶ Finally, in contemporary Croatia, journalists are in the hands of the owners and editors so they are playing the role of the promoters of a media owner's interests.¹³⁷ Nowadays, sensationalist reporting, tabloidization, scandals, crimes, celebrities and advertising to a large extent are the new trend. Mainstream media seem to be predominant in the media scene, keeping professional standards still very low.¹³⁸

The relationship between media and politics

As Krishna Kumar points out in her book “Promoting independent media”, the media are considered to be the “Fourth Estate”, conclusively; the press counter-balances the three branches of power, legislative-executive-judicial. The media is essential to provide information about the government’s actions and nourish the democratic exchange of ideas and opinions.¹³⁹ Moreover, on the one hand the me-

¹³²Popović (2014, Slovenia) p.229

¹³³Croatia MSI 2008

Retrieved from: <http://www.irex.org/system/files/MSIEE08-Croatia.pdf>
in 2014, October 18

¹³⁴Croatia MSI 2001

¹³⁵ Croatia MSI 2009

¹³⁶Popović (2014, Slovenia), p.232

¹³⁷Croatia MSI 2012

¹³⁸Popović, (2014, Slovenia), p.240

¹³⁹Kumar (2006), p.1

dia are political institutions and also economic businesses, on the other hand the state can operate as owner, regulator and funder of the media.¹⁴⁰

In the majority of the transitional countries, after 2000, the monopolies of the state-owned media ended everywhere, but the government still holds control of the TV and radio-transmitting as well as the provision of frequencies. Apart from these, the main goal of politicians is to limit the freedom of journalists, introducing anti-defamation laws so that journalists are imposed a fine when they write openly about public officials and institutions.¹⁴¹ One common fact encountered in these countries is the self-censorship initiated by the journalists' tactic to accuse journalists on no grounds.¹⁴²

i. Serbia

One of the facts that show the political influence on the media is the “tabloidization”, namely “the new generation of papers which cover serious issues in somehow informal and entertaining way. They mostly focus on the political scandals.” In Serbia, most of the politicians are opposed to the creation of the democratic operation of the media, because, if this happens, they couldn’t control them. Since 2000, there were many attempts to influence the media through editors with specific economic or party interests. The governments resisted regulating the media, despite the constant pressures by the international community. “Political influence is achieved mostly through the insufficient financing of media, the role of the state in advertising and the non-transparency of ownership. The impact on editorial policy from the state is enormous.”¹⁴³

It is true that the use of the media is the promotion of ideologies, policies and figures of political parties. Another example showing the political intervention in the media is the use of state funds by parties in power in order to advance their partisan interests through the media outlets.¹⁴⁴ In 2014, the pressures by the government over media still exists and, therefore, Aleksandar Vučić has been called to

¹⁴⁰ Daniel C.Hallin, Paolo Mancini (2004) “Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics”, UK: Cambridge University Press, p.47-50

¹⁴¹ Thomas N. Pradip, Nain Zaharom (2004) “Who owns the media”, London and New York: Zed Books, p.53

¹⁴² Oliver Vujovic (2012, July 25) *Blog Entry: SEEMO Calls on Politicians to Abstain from Accusing and Insulting Journalist*, International Press Institute

Retrieved from: <http://www.freemedia.at/newsview/article/blog-entry-seemo-calls-on-politicians-to-abstain-from-accusing-and-insulting-journalists.html>

in 2014, December 13

¹⁴³ Slavko Arsović , Nedim Sejdinović (2014, July 8) *Serbia: The privatization of the media as a stumbling block – inconsistent legal framework and a lack of political will*, Fairpress.eu

Retrieved from: <http://www.fairpress.eu/blog/2014/07/08-serbia-the-privatization-of-the-media-as-a-stumbling-block-inconsistent-legal-framework-and-a-lack-of-political-will/>

in 2014, November 8

¹⁴⁴ Thomas R. Lansner (2013) *Soft Censorship: Strangling Serbia’s Media*, World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, p.9

Retrieved from: www.wan-ifra.org

in 2014, November 8

respect the freedom of speech and the independence of the media also, to seize editorial control over state media and, to stop funding the media through the advertising and finally, to limit the censorship of the Internet. For Serbia, it is more than essential to be harmonized with these EU conditions.¹⁴⁵ In order to call for transparency, ANEM, UNS, NUNS, NDNV and the Local Press business association formed a coalition. This coalition, dealing with the fact that the state in a non-transparent way, guided by political interests; has exercised influence on the media market.¹⁴⁶

In 2012, Tomislav Nikolić made an announcement that it is essential to be president in order to tell the journalists what to report on. After this, the general secretary of the South East Europe Media Organisation said that he hopes whoever the president in Serbia will be to guarantee the freedom of the press since it is the source of democracy.¹⁴⁷ One recent fact at the London School of Economics on 29 Oct. 2014, stresses that in Serbia, there has been a row of censorship incidents during Vucic's time in power. The Prime Minister was asked by a representative of the opposition "What can you say about the total censorship of all opposition media?" So significant was that fact that a reference was made to Vucic's unknown role as minister of information under Milosevic.¹⁴⁸

After Aleksandar Vucic came to power, there were many signs that media freedom worsened. The government's decision to cancel one talk show about politics led to the opening of discussion about the phenomenon of blackmail and pressure, like the 1990's.¹⁴⁹ The biggest question is "Should Serbia's press be worried?" since the current Prime Minister also Minister of Information under Milosevic had

¹⁴⁵PES Presidency Resolution (2014, October 9) *Media Freedom in Serbia*

Retrieved from:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/partyofeuropeansocialists/pages/90/attachments/original/1412930446/PES_Presidency_Resolution_-_Media_Freedom_in_Serbia.pdf?1412930446
in 2014, November 11

¹⁴⁶Association of Independent Electronic Media (2012, November 16) *Coalition calls for transparency in government funding of Serbian media*, IFEX-the global network defending and promoting free expression

Retrieved from: https://www.ifex.org-serbia/2012/11/16/government_funds_coalition/
in 2014, November 15

¹⁴⁷South East Europe Media Organisation (2012, May 16) *Serbia Presidential Candidate Threatens Media Freedom*

Retrieved from: <http://www.seemo.org/activities/pressfreedom/12/press1239.html>
in 2014, December 14

¹⁴⁸Milana Knezevic (2014, October 29) *Serbian prime minister grilled on press freedom at London event*

Retrieved from: <http://www.indexoncensorship.org/2014/10-serbia-vucic-lse-media-press/>
in 2014, December 14

¹⁴⁹Milana Knezevic (2014, September 29) *Is press censorship in Serbia "worse than the 1990s"?* Retrieved from: <http://www.indexoncensorship.org/2014/09-serbia-vucic-press-media-freedom-soft-censorship/>

in 2014, November 17

introduced a media law in order to impose fines to punish journalists and ban foreign media.¹⁵⁰

According to the Anti-Corruption Council, media in Serbia are exposed to strong political pressure and full control by their government. Since the media do not deal with significant events, the public lacks the ability to get complete and objective information under such political pressure. It seems that media are fully connected with political and economic elites. Another fact we have to mention is that the workers in the media are low paid and because of this, they are exposed to pressures from power. RTS is mostly considered to be a servant of political parties rather than a public service, which is used for the public interest. Owners and politicians, nowadays, in Serbia, create, through media, the public opinion and make individuals' personal profits. The politicians give money to the media, while the media deals with the politicians who finance them. The majority of newspaper articles and contributions refers to the politicians who give the greatest amount of money to the media.¹⁵¹

Generally speaking, after Milosevic, the relationship between media and politics did not cease to exist. After 2000, the media became the supporters of the DOS coalition. In 2003, after the Djindjic's assassination new laws were voted in a government's attempt to keep control over the media. The tabloids are also controlled by political forces. Summarizing, the financing system is non-transparent, since it is linked with the interests of politicians to keep control over the media. Serbia is ranking 54th of 180 countries for media freedom. The government of Serbia has the direct or indirect control over media, sometimes through the advertising. After Vucic's victory, most media are the new political figure. They intend to do whatever he says.¹⁵²

ii. Croatia

The media in Croatia are a controlled institution by the state, apart from some independent media organizations. Constitution in Croatia guarantees freedom of expression, although sometimes this does not exist. Since the 1990's, Croatia tried

¹⁵⁰Milana Knezevic (2014, March 21) *Could Serbia's new Prime Minister spell disaster for press freedom?*

Retrieved from: <http://www.indexoncensorship.org/2014/03/serbias-new-prime-minister-spell-disaster-press-freedom/>

in 2014, December 13

¹⁵¹Verica Barać (2011, September 19) *Report on pressures on & control of media in Serbia*, Anti-corruption Council , Belgrade, p.2-4

Retrieved from: <http://www.antikorupcija-savet.gov.rs/Storage/Global/Documents/mediji/IZVESTAJ%20O%20MEDIJIMA%20PRECISCEN%20ENG..pdf>

in 2014, November 17

¹⁵² The Economist (2014, April 12) *The media feel under rising political and business pressure*

Retrieved from: <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21600719-media-feel-under-rising-political-and-business-pressure-troublesome-times>

in 2014, December 14

to become accepted to the EU as a democracy.¹⁵³ However, the political influence over media continued. Journalists have the right to inform the public about immaterial news but political issues are still under government domination. In 2004, thanks to the Law for protection of independent media, the level of press freedom increased, but libel is still a negative fact.¹⁵⁴

Nowadays, in Croatia, the majority of the print media is in private hands and, because of this, governmental and political parties influence has been reduced. *Vjesnik* is still the state ownership, such as HINA, the Croatian News Agency.¹⁵⁵ The delay, though, in the process of Croatia's integration in the EU was due to this "atmosphere of arbitrariness in dealing with the media".¹⁵⁶ In the case of Croatia, the media and the government tend to be corrupted institutions. The most discussed case of corruption in the government is that of Ivo Sanader, a former Prime Minister of Croatia (2004-2009) and a former president of the Croatian Democratic Union. He was charged with political corruption three times. The mainstream media, though, while Sanader was in office, did not criticize him; although there were clues for Sanader's wrongdoings.

Ivo Sanader was in a close relationship with several Croatian media owners. The only duty of the majority of the Croatian media was never to criticize Mr Ivo Sanader, when he was in power. Therefore, the Sanader's government was forced "to please owners of private media outlets by giving them lucrative deals with public companies". The high levels of corruption stalled the negotiations with the EU for ten months in 2007-09 during Sanader's term. When Sanader withdrew from politics, after 2010, the media reported his involvement in many high-profile corruption cases. In July 2011, he was transferred to prison in Zagreb. The media coverage of his arrest was considerable. Firstly, in the *Jutarnji List*, there was nothing else for a month apart from articles referring to Sanader, photos and headlines. The same applied to the *Vecernji List*, but to a smaller extent. Finally, the *Novi List* was willing to speak openly, although there were party officials. Here were fewer articles for Sanader. Last but not least, during his power, Sanader was in favor of those media outlets whose owners had no interests in the media and whose ownership structure was not transparent.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³Stephanie Moore (2013, April 30) *Croatia*, Free Speech and Free Press around the world
Retrieved from: <https://freespeechfreepress.wordpress.com/croatia/>
in 2014, November 8

¹⁵⁴Jelena Đuraš (2006) *Press freedom and democracy in Croatia, The Future of Press Freedom and Democracy in Croatia*, American College of Management and Technology, Division of Rochester Institute of Technology, New York, Dubrovnik, p.11
Retrieved from: <http://www.cpi.hr/download/links/hr/8277.pdf>
in 2014, November 14

¹⁵⁵Duca Zdenko (2007, November) *Croatia: Report for the AEJ Media Freedom Survey*
Retrieved from: <http://www.aej-uk.org/AEJ-mediasurvey-cro.doc>
in 2014, November 8

¹⁵⁶Peruško (2011) *Assessment of Media Development in Croatia*, p.1

¹⁵⁷Hrvoje Krešić (2012) *Croatia: The price of corruption*, Reuters Institute, University of Oxford,
p.19-24

After Sanader's departure, many scandals were disclosed; the Croatian media had the courage to reveal several political and financial corruption cases. The help of the media to bring light on the scandals was significant.¹⁵⁸ Croatia is ranking 65th out of 180 countries in media freedom sector. According to a Croatian journalist, "You can report on anything related to politics, but you cannot touch anything which has to do with a big firm". In 2013, the government decided to cut the VAT on newspapers.¹⁵⁹

Concluding remarks

Following my studying on the issue of media and its relationship with politics, I will present the concluding remarks on the two countries.

Retrieved from: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Croatia%20-%20The%20Price%20of%20Corruption,%20Hrvoje%20Kresic.pdf>
in 2014, November 27

¹⁵⁸ Michael Emerson, Maja Sostaric (2010) *The situation of the media sector in Croatia*, European Parliament, p.7-8

Retrieved from: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2010/433673/EXPO-AFET_NT%282010%29433673_EN.pdf

in 2014, December 14

¹⁵⁹ The Economist (2014, April 12)

i. Serbia

Although Milošević was overthrown in 2000 from power, his political perception, which had been passed in the country, still remains alive and determines many times the political developments, such as the assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đindjić which was associated with higher corruption involvements. The Milošević sovereignty over Serbia also appears in the fact that most opposition leaders, apart from Koštunica, had collaborated with Milošević. For many years until today, the dilemma of Serbia was whether to assert its sovereignty in Kosovo; or if it could be developed into a European democracy.

On the issue of media, since most leaders proved to be opportunists, they used the media for their own purposes. Serbian media system is still in a transitional process. De-monopolization, de-politicization, introduction of media market and new media economy are some of the changes that dominate the landscape. Moreover, the tabloidization has been created since there is no formal legal framework. This leads media to be transformed into promoters of influential political lobbies and of interests of their proprietors. In addition, the economic status of journalists is very low. Finally, economic and political reasons, results in continuously changing of media ownership. It is difficult, though, to figure out who owns what in the media scene. Local business men own the biggest media. The information of ownership structure remains a business secret.

Serbia always had coalition governments, except for the recent last elections when Vučić took the power. Of a great importance is the fact that the most powerful politician in Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, who is now the Prime Minister and dominates the political scene, was once a devotee of Vojislav Seselj's ultra-nationalist party (SRS) and The Hague war crimes inductee. He also served Minister of Information under Milošević in 1998 and he passed the most restrictive media law in EU in this period, intimidating the independent media into silence and forbidding the broadcast of any foreign new channels (f.e. the BBC).¹⁶⁰ Now Vučić is pro-European Prime Minister and his objective is for Serbia to join the European Union. The quiz arising is clear: are we talking about real freedom in Serbia?

ii. Croatia

In Croatia, remarkable is the fact that, since 2003, HDZ has been kept in power by joining different coalitions. The SDP –Social Democratic Party-, the biggest opposition party, supports the government's EU agenda. EU accession, economic re-

¹⁶⁰Balkanist (2013, December 22) *Inside Serbia's anti-corruption war*
Retrieved from: <http://balkanist.net/inside-serbias-anti-corruption-war/>
in 2014, December 8

form and fight against corruption were always the main priorities. In the case of media, in contemporary Croatia, there is no division between pro-government and opposition media. Apart from that, the media became more plural, more critical towards government, more politically independent and rather more business-oriented. In Croatia's media landscape, there is a large number of different information sources. Commercial media have been introduced and foreign owned commercial TV has entered the market. All these strongly support pluralism.

The legal framework ensures freedom of expression, but political pressures still remain. Unfortunately, the contemporary economic crisis induces some media to create links with the state and political powers. Media ownership is one of the most hidden types of data in Croatia. Public access is impossible since media owners live dangerously. The largest media owners are the government and the church. Therefore, the main problem of Croatian media is the lack of independent and impartial reporting. Journalists must promote the owners' ideas. Croatia is the most developed State in the media sector in relation to the other post-communist countries.

However, the corruption problem is still at very high levels. It is noteworthy that the former Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader was indicted and sentenced to several corruption cases. Also relevant is the fact this was not concealed despite having been a Prime Minister. This, as the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Gordan Jandroković noted, shows that the country is trying to help reducing corruption, the institutions are working and the EU principles are being embodied in the state. The HDZ is the first political party in the EU found guilty of corruption.¹⁶¹

Serbia vs Croatia

The political system in both countries is the same but the media seem to have different growth rates. Croatia is in a better position since it is already in the European Union. The Serbian media scene is far behind the EU average. Nevertheless, significant progress has been made. A stronger regulatory environment has been created by the Broadcast Act (2002), the Public Information Act (2003) and the Telecommunications Act (2005).

Regarding the media ownership issue, in Serbia, although transparency rules are in place, there are many indications of hidden ownership. In addition, there are no mechanisms to check data provided. The Law on Unlawful Media Concentration, which was voted in 2008, has never been adopted. In Croatia, on the other hand,

¹⁶¹Ντράζεν Ρεμίκοβιτς (19 Μαρτίου, 2014) *Απόφαση για το HDZ αποτελεί σημείο καμπής για την πολιτική διαφάνεια, SETimes.com*

Retrieved from:

<http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/el/features/setimes/features/2014/03/19/feature-02>
in 2014, December 4

despite the fact that public register on media exists, the data are hard to get. Moreover, provided information is not complete.

Another big issue that Serbs and Croats experienced differently is the cooperation with the ICTY. Unlike the Croats, the Serbs neglected the basic requirement for the EU membership, namely the cooperation with the transitional justice. Croatia, in 2005, surrendered Ante Gotovina for extradition to the Hague. However, Serbia could find neither Ratko Mladic nor Radovan Karadzic. Therefore, Serbia was waiting until 2013 for EU membership negotiations to open, while Croatia, in the same year entered the EU.

In both countries, the biggest obstacles for the media development are the political-economic crisis and the corruption. In Serbia, the government pressure on media still exists through the advertising agencies which are close to the ruling parties. The privatization process is not complete and the state, most of the times, directly influences the editorial policy. In Croatia, the pressure on the media is quite different. The freedom of journalists in the private media is limited by the interests of owners and advertisers. It is believed that today the position of journalists is in some ways worse than it was in Tuđman's era.

To conclude, transition not being fully completed, we still expect new changes on the way!

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