

European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA)

Erik Nylén *

SUMMARY

EANA is registered at the Trade Register in Berne, Switzerland as a non-profit membership association. EANA was founded 49 years ago and at the 2006 General Assembly in connection with a seminar we will celebrate our 50th anniversary in late September in Montreux, Switzerland.

EANA has 30 European news agencies as its members. Together they represent 30 European countries with a total population of about 750 million people. This means that the EANA member agencies provide news and other information to newspapers, broadcasters etc with an impressive total circulation.

HINA is a member since 1993. EANA serves as a professional forum for exchange of experiences and know-how by organising seminars via a newsletter etc.

The EANA operations are financed via membership fees.

In our Mission Statement we stress that news agencies working in accordance with the principles of press freedom and unbiased news are of major importance to the democratic society.

We are convinced that such news agencies are of vital importance for the development of a media landscape that citizens can rely on for information about economy, politics, sports or whatever. Therefore our statutes also say that the EANA member agencies shall support the principles of press freedom and unbiased news.

We stress that news agencies need a healthy environment abounding in freedom of the press, fair competition and simple and basic rules to operate.

In a memo on how to develop EANA approved by a General Assembly it is stressed that it is in the interest of EANA to have agencies in transition as

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members and to assist these member agencies in their ambition to develop unbiased news services based on the principles of freedom of the press.

Copyright for news services are of paramount importance to secure a business climate that ensures that news agencies can fulfill their role. The importance of these rights is stressed by the technological transformation including that it creates a world without borders. It is essential that legislation on all levels concerning intellectual property rights recognises the intellectual and financial efforts invested by news agencies gathering all kinds of news. Unauthorised use of news agency services undermines news agency operations.

Key words: EANA, news agencies in transition, press freedom, Copyright, intellectual property

Short presentation of the European Alliance of News Agencies or EANA for short.

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EANA serves as a professional forum for exchange of experiences and know-how by organising seminars via a newsletter etc. In late September we had a seminar in Geneva discussing how to use metadata and new forms of distribution to be able to even further develop the news agencies into multi-media agencies. Before the summer we had a seminar in Belgrade discussing how to develop our services to the traditional news agency customers; newspapers and broadcasters.

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EANA statutes and mission statement

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Agencies in transition

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The 30 member agencies are a homogenous group in the respect that all of them have what can be described as a general news service mainly for the media (plus in many cases a number of other services).

But the EANA members have different ownership structures:

- some are publicly owned in one way or the other
- some are privately owned cooperatives owned by newspapers and broadcasters

Trends

If I should try to see some trends based on what is discussed at our seminars, the following could be a very short summary:

Copyright

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There is a lot of news for free on the Internet. In many cases the sources are news agencies. There is an ongoing discussion about how many news items per day from the agency's news service that you can allow clients to put on the Internet. If they are too many, less serious companies can re-use or steal them.

Most of the EANA news agencies are based on the business model B2B acting as wholesalers to newspapers, broadcaster etc and too many agency stories for free on the Internet is a problem for that business model: How can you persuade people to pay for the service if a huge percentage of it is available for free on the Internet?

There are some agencies now increasing the number of news items for free on the Internet as they also try the business model B2C hoping to benefit from sharing advertising revenues but the majority of our members stick to the B2B-model.

Multimedia: We have spent a number of seminars discussing new markets like the Internet, telecoms and mobile phones for news in SMS and MMS-formats etc.

Today several agencies have started producing and are planning to produce video for television via traditional broadcasting or via the Internet and for the new generation of smart mobile phones (3G). Surveys made by Nokia and others are

showing that about 40 percent of the users of 3G phones in Europe are interested in watching video on their phones. News is mentioned as one of the favoured features.

Newspapers and broadcasters: However, we have also at seminars noted that; OK, revenues from what can be called new media markets are growing BUT in most cases the revenues from traditional clients like newspapers (including booming free papers) and broadcaster in many cases still represent the by far dominating stream of revenues.

So you could say that a short conclusion from our seminars is that a split vision is needed as news agencies will continue as “partners” for the traditional customers; newspapers and broadcasters. At the same time they need to rapidly modify work-flows, teach staffers new skills etc so that the agencies can secure their role as important content providers also on the new markets created by the fast development of information technology.

Erik Nylén

Europska udruga novinskih agencija (EANA)

SAŽETAK

EANA je upisana u Trgovački registar u Bernu u Švicarskoj, kao neprofitna udruga svojih članova. Utemeljena je prije 49 godina. Članice EANA-e su novinska agencija iz 30 europskih zemalja. Hina je članica od 1993. Organizacijom seminara, člancima u svojem mjesečniku *Newsletteru* i na druge načine EANA služi kao profesionalni forum za razmjenu iskustava i znanja. Djelovanje EANA-e financira se članarinom.

U ciljevima EANA-e ističe se da su novinske agencije koje djeluju u skladu s načelima slobodnih medija i nepristranog izvještavanja, presudne za demokratsko društvo.

Uvjereni smo da su takve agencije životno važne i za razvoj medijskog prostora u kojem se građani mogu pouzdati u informacije o gospodarstvu, politici, sportu i svemu drugome. Zato se i u Statutu EANA-e ističe da će agencija podupirati načela slobode medija i nepristranog izvještavanja. Ističemo da novinska agencija trebaju zdravo okruženje koje se temelji na slobodi medija, poštenoj tržišnoj utakmici i jednostavnim i temeljnim pravilima djelovanja.

U dokumentu o razvoju EANA-e, koji je prihvatila Opća skupština, ističe se da je u interesu EANA-e prihvatiti u članstvo agencije zemlje u pretvorbi i pomoći im u njihovu nastojanju da razviju nepristrani servis vijesti temeljen na načelu slobode medija.

Za novinsku agenciju, neprocjenjivo je važno pitanje pravne zaštite servisa vijesti, čime se osigurava poslovno okruženje koje agencijama omogućuje obaviti zadaće. Važnost toga povećana je tehnološkim promjenama, uključujući one koje

su stvorile svijet bez granica. Bitno je da zakonska zaštita intelektualnog vlasništva na svim razinama prizna intelektualni i financijski ulog koji su novinske agencije učinile u prikupljanju svih vrsta vijesti. Neovlašteno korištenje servisa vijesti potkopava poslovanje agencija.

Ključne riječi: EANA, novinske agencije u tranziciji, sloboda medija, intelektualno vlasništvo