

Editorial

The beginning of the negotiation between Croatia and the EU on October 3rd this year gave a new swing and the intensity to the harmonisation of the Croatian Society to the European standards. Although it is believed that this process primarily means adopting of the *acquis*, EU with its numerous policies directly affects all areas of every day life of the community that has over 25 states and more than 450 million citizens. The beginning of the negotiations is the beginning of the procedure that will result in joining the EU, but the final saying will be left to the citizen of Croatia at the referendum. Therefore, the EU becomes more and more the “inner issue” of the Croatian citizens. In this process, the media plays important part and its mission is prompt, objective and interesting informing of the public about the advantages and disadvantages of joining the EU and about all consequences of this process to every days life of Croatia’s citizens.

Therefore this issue of Media Research examines in what ways is Croatian media legislation adopted to the European standards, what is the role of media in the construction of the European identity, how does the EU supports television pluralism, how does media function in the new EU member state Slovakia, what is practical functioning of the EC directives in regard to the audiovisual policy and how could European cinematography spread to the global market.

The prominent Polish and European media expert Karol Jakubovicz in an interview done by our Editor-in-Chief, Nada Zgrabljic Rotar, analyzes theoretical and practical issues which demonstrate media development in countries in transition discusses the media policy orientation in countries in transition during the EU enlargement and examines the democratic role of media, public, civil society and European Union.

What is the procedure that follows the beginning of the negotiations, the history of the relations between Croatia and the EU, what are the concrete positive and the negative sides of Croatia’s entering the EU, what are the effects of the negotiations and how is the ongoing harmonisation in the area of free electronic and written media with the EU *acquis* developing as well as the institutional frame of the HRT (Croatian Radio Television) as the most influential public media in Croatia, discusses Nataša Beširević in her article “Croatia and the EU – Opening of the Negotiations: Harmonisation of the Media Legislation with the European Standards”.

In the article “The European Legal Framework for Television Without Frontiers” Séverine Fautrell, leader for the project in the Administration for the Development of Media in Paris, talks about the directive of the EU on Television Without Frontiers and the Convention on the Cross-border Television that were adopted in the middle of 1980-ties of the last century with the aim to ensure free reception and further transmission.

The main idea of that directive is free reception of the television programmes that respect the minimum of the adopted rules regarding the transmission of the European TV programmes, independent production and respect of the ethic norms

of journalism with the monitoring of respecting those rules that are implemented in the EU member states.

In regard to Television Without Frontiers, member states are obliged to implement it, the Commission is strictly controlling it and, in case of disrespect, could issue a complaint to the European Court. This is what makes it the first effective instrument serving the audiovisual European sector and cultural differences.

But in the conditions of the digital technologies, it is justified to ask if the legislative frame of television in Europe, adapted to the television in classical sense, would be applicable in the future. Regarding this question, all participants (European institutions, national and professional authorities) admit that the technological development is not endangering specified goals: respect of pluralism, need to assure quality materials, respect of the cultural and lingual diversity and protection of minors..., but the legal frame is not following the harmonisation. Revising of the directive on Television Without Frontiers and the Convention on Cross-border Television confirms the living nature of the audiovisual rights.

In the article "Television Pluralism and Diversity and the European Commission's Competition Policy – The Western European Experience", David Ward questions the media concentration in the EU in the context of the regulatory attitude of the EU member states. He opposes the established opinion that the attitude of the EU towards the protection of the media pluralism is lead only by the market orientated attitude and states that it is also based on the public interest.

It is believed that the media concentration increases due to the weakening of the obligation and the importance that member states pay to the protection of the media pluralism.

National governments support national companies and remove regulatory obstacles for the growth of the companies in order to protect their market players. Those opposed policies will be discussed through inspection of the EC decisions on media in the EU, and this article will show that, although some members retain the right to straighten the regulative on the media concentration, in the situation of market spreading of the national media, majority of the EU members do not have the straight to support media pluralism.

Owen V. Johnson from School of Journalism, University of Indiana, and Andrej Školkay from the Faculty for Communication and Mass media in Trnava, Slovakia, in their article "Media Legislation and Media Policy in Slovakia: EU Accession and the Second Wave of Reform" question the changes in the Slovakian media legislative during the process of association of Slovakia to the EU in May 2004. Changes in the Slovakian media policy and administration connected to the EU are part of the wider process of media reorganisation in Europe. They include market orientation, dual system of broadcasting, redefining of the public broadcasting, cross-border ownership, globalisation and dramatic changes in technology and means of communication.

Séverine Dupuy Busson, expert for the film and audiovisual rights, head of education on Lille III University and University Evry-Val, writes about the European cinematography and the strategic options that could ensure its permanence in her article "The European Cinema: Strategic Options to Ensure its Continuation?".

Programme of the European assistance to cinematography and the audiovisual creativity, Media and Eurimages is trying for the last 20 years to insure the survival of this sector in Europe. This is implemented through the support to international cooperation that should follow the development of the cinematography and audiovisual projects, coproduction or broadcasting. The author stresses that there is still no mutual cinematography and audiovisual policy accepted in the discussions that would achieve the legal effect.

The trumps that would set European cinematography in motion to preserve the diversity and the quality of the world film offer lies primarily in the cultural diversity and specific quality of Europe that can offer interesting and “different” movie scripts. Therefore, it is important, according to this respected author, to assure the financial means that would push the creativity, partially from the Media Plus Programme of the EU, whose important part is spent on the distribution, but not on the production of the programmes. To assure breakthrough of the European cinematography and preservation of the cultural alternative that opposes unique Hollywood view to the world, it would be useful that strong cinema, like the one in France, assure financial support to the directors from those countries where the infrastructures are underdeveloped.

Coproduction could enable ambitious projects that would stand more chance to be presented to the world. This could be achieved through the Eurimages Programme. Nevertheless, success of some European cinema, for example in France or United Kingdom, show that the movie market is on the turning point that has to be supported by the state administration by making the values of the European cinematography permanent.

Parallel to the system of support, it is necessary to enable tax deductions for the assistance to the development of the European movie industry.

Melita Poler Kovačič in her article “The Role of the News Media in the Construction of the European Identity: Informing, Educating, Promoting?” researches the role of media in forming of the European identity, assuming that they have the key role in the perception and creation of the European identity and the development and preservation of the national identities.

The thesis is that the media plays important role in informing the citizens about the issues relevant for the EU. Nevertheless, there must be a critical distance from the information obtained from the Government and the ones obtained from the public relations’ services.

In order to fulfil their goal, journalists should have skills and knowledge about the policy of the EU, they must follow the standard classic paradigm of the journalism as the public service and respect professional ethical attitude during all phases of the communication process.

The issue also carries reviews of the largest European media projects, recent reports on television in Europe, notes from media assemblies and book reviews. We wish to thank to all who have contributed in the realisation of this issue and we invite you to keep sending us your papers and articles.

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