[BA] Situation of Public Broadcasting

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On 29 March 2007, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media presented a report on the situation of public broadcasting in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

The report was an outcome of the representative's visit to Sarajevo and Banjaluka in early February this year. The visit occurred due to the decisions of the Government of the Republika Srpska (Serbian entity within the post-Dayton BiH) to forbid officials of the state public television network, BHT1, to give any statements to reporters and journalists, and also to deny them access to a governmental press conference.

The ban was attributed to allegedly disparaging news coverage of the Republika Srpska Entity Day on 9 January 2007, and an allegedly hostile treatment of high-ranking officials of the Republikla Srpska on BHT1. The Government of the Republikla Srpska publicly defined the editorial policy of BHT1 as “politicised, malicious and unprofessional”.

"Because of these specific incidents, and because of the role played by state-owned broadcasters in the 1990's in fuelling the rush to war in the region, I have made the public broadcasting system in BiH the focus of the report, together with the responsibilities of the authorities with regard to public broadcasting", said the OSCE Representative addressing the OSCE Permanent Council, the Organisation's decision-making body. He assessed that in this very specific case, the existing complaints mechanism had been ignored by the Government of the Republika Srpska.

In order to redress mistakes and inaccuracies in broadcasts, there is a complaints mechanism established within the frame of the Communications Regulatory Agency (RAK): The RAK ismandated to consider a complain in any case where a given programme appears to be biased, incorrect, unprofessional, offensive, harmful etc. All citizens, including officials, have the right to lodge a complaint.

The RAK has just issued a Case Analysis 2006 Report related to the Agency's rules and regulations, as well as terms and conditions of licences. Regarding programme standards, in total 143 cases were considered, out of which 86 were initiated by citizens, indicating that this mechanism has increased awareness, in particular among citizens. The Government of the Republika Srpska, so far, did not lodge any complaint with the RAK.

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OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, The State of Media Freedom in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Public Service Broadcasting - Observations and Recommendations, 29 March 2007

https://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2007/03/23751_en.pdf

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http://www.rak.ba/

Report of the RAK

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