

Public Media and Security in SEE 22 - 24 November 2011

IRC-02-CF

EXTERNAL REPORT

Abstract

The idea for the realization of a conference on this subject matter arose out of a necessity to promote the media and security related standards and to draw attention to the interconnection between the security sector and public media services and the implications of their relationship for the society in general.

Background

The relationship between the media and security is a very specific issue, often described in terms of interdependence. In a modern society, electronic media (such as television) and print media (such as newspapers) are important for distributing information on a number of different topics, including security issues. When disseminating information on security matters, the main concern of the public media should be the general safety of citizens and the prompt transfer of relevant and trustworthy information to the public.

During the conference, this specific relationship between security institutions and public media services was explored through dialogue and exchanges of information, views and ideas, with the aim of enhancing the standards and transparency of such a relationship and building a more open, transparent and stable environment in the Region.

Acknowledgements

RACVIAC would like to thank the Ministry of National Defense and Sports of the Republic of Austria for the generous sponsorship, which made this event possible. The Centre extends its deep appreciation to the Croatian Radio and Television for their contribution and co-organizational assistance, and to all the speakers and participants who took an active part in this event.

Purpose

The purpose of this conference was to serve as a platform for open dialogue and constructive discussion between the representatives of the public media and security institutions on the implications of their scopes of activities for the overall security of citizens.

The objectives were:

- To analyze the transparency of the relationship between the public media and security institutions;
- To examine the role of the public media in crisis management operations;
- To promote the necessity of improving the standards and capacity building in the field of public media services;
- To foster media pluralism and to support cooperation between regional public media services and national security institutions;
- To share information, views, and experience from the past as well as the latest information concerning the dissemination of security issues;
- To increase regional and international cooperation;
- To propose the way ahead for future cooperation.

Venue and participation

The conference was held at RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation, from 22 to 24 November 2011. It was organized as a three-day event, two of which were working days. The event gathered a total of 52 participants from South East Europe (SEE) countries.



Family photo

The Programme

Mr Milan Janicijevic, the conference coordinator, welcomed all the participants, after which he gave the floor to RACVIAC Deputy Director Col Željko Cepanec for his opening remarks.

Having greeted the participants on behalf of the host organization, Col Cepanec pointed out that the media, considered one of the key elements in democracies, perform a vital role as a bridge between the society and the governing structures. In the future, he continued, due to the ongoing and intensifying globalization and technological innovation, the world is likely to be far more complex and subject to rapid and unpredictable changes. Hence, it will be harder to project and predict where the next challenge will arise and what kind of consequences it will entail. This is the nature of our globalised security environment where the spread of technology and the growth of mass communications will require more cooperation and commitment to the development and strengthening of the relations between security institutions and the public media, Col Cepanec concluded.

On behalf of the Croatian Radio and Television, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr Josip Popovac, also welcomed the participants and wished them fruitful work and a pleasant stay. Mr Popovac used the opportunity to say that it was a matter of exceptional honor for himself and his organization to be one of the co-organizers of this important event, which once again underlined the importance of active cooperation between the public media and the defence sector, confirming the readiness of regional key players to enhance the level of such cooperation.

"Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets"
Napoleon



From left to right: Col Željko Cepanec, Mr Roman Bric, Mr Zlatko Garelić, Mr Josip Popovac and Ms Nela Gudeli

Mr Zlatko Garelić, the Defence Affairs Adviser to the Croatian President, provided the formal opening address. He pointed out that public relations are today an integral part of any security and defence system and that events like this conference facilitate cooperation and communication between the defence and the public media sector by increasing transparency through exchange of experience, know-how and skills. Focused gatherings like this one, he continued, ensure constant progress in this field, serving the welfare of citizens, states and societies, South-Eastern Europe at large and a broader environment.



Mr Zlatko Garelić, Adviser to the Croatian President on Defence Affairs

The event proceeded with Session I, entitled "Cooperation and commitment to the development and strengthening of relations between the security sector and the public media". The moderator of this session was Mr Drazen Korda, Foreign Editor for the Croatian Radio and Television.

The first to give a speech in this session was the President of the Board of the South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO), Mr Boris Bergant. His presentation introduced the audience to the functionality and goals of the South East Europe Media Organization, and provided them with an explanation of the mission and objectives of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which are: to enhance the existing news and program exchanges and to expand to new areas; to exploit new technologies; to improve the existing services and develop new ones; to reduce the costs by efficient and streamlined processes and to strengthen the public affairs and communications.



From left to right: Mr Boris Bergant, Mr Roman Bric, Mr Zlatko Garelić

The session continued with a joint presentation by Mr Roman Bric and Ms Vesna Pintaric from the European Military Press Association (EMPA). They outlined the main aims of the EMPA such as: offering opportunities for an exchange of information; assistance in gaining access to foreign military information; promotion of the understanding of the security policy and general policies of other countries; promotion of the knowledge on armed forces and organizing common, on-site events in order to enhance the freedom of the media and enable military journalists to report objectively and truthfully while shouldering their own share of responsibility.

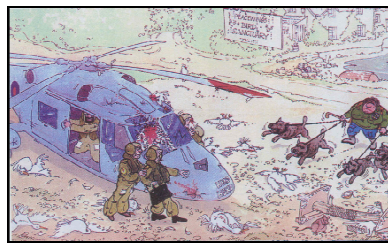
The next speaker was Ms Dinka Zivalj, Spokesperson/Head of Media Unit, Regional Cooperation Council. She presented the current situation and possible further steps to be taken towards better relations between the public media and the security sector. Ms Zivalj was keen to emphasize that intensified cooperation through experience sharing as well as training in the field of crisis communications were needed more than ever.



Working session

The last speaker to address the audience during the first session was Mr Denis Avdagic, Director of the Organization for Promotion of Euro-Atlantic Integration. He addressed the topic: "Partnerships: a cooperative approach to security in the media - OPSA/NAPO experience".

The second session was dedicated to the topic "Importance of building the public media standards and capabilities in security issues". The moderator of this session was Ms Emina Lisic, Head of Information and Public Relations Unit; MoD (HR). During this session the following lecturers addressed the audience:



**"Well go on, PR Officer!
Make with the smooth chat!"**

- Maj Sasho Gelevski from the Regional Training Communication Centre (RTCC), (MK). He informed the participants on the mission and goals of the RTCC - to train regional public information officers (PIOs) from armed forces and the state administration personnel working in the field of PR and to approach and meet the standards of modern societies in the fields of defence and public relations. This is to be achieved by means of classes and workshops taught by media experts, trainers, serving PIOs and academic specialists from our region.

- LTC Drazen Jonjic, Deputy Head of Department for Public Relations/Information in MoD (HR) delivered a presentation on «The integrated model of education for PAOs». The purpose of this educational model is to provide the participants with the basic knowledge of public affairs, thus enabling them to conduct particular tasks and to deal successfully with the media by timely informing the public on all the activities of the Armed Forces and the defence system in general.

- 1st LT Marko Skovrlj from CAPSOC and Ms Nela Gudelj and Mr Darko Flajpan from the Croatian Radio and Television delivered a joint presentation. They underlined that all employers, including public institutions and public media services, must be responsible employers and should have a prominent and positive role in creating new and innovative training modules, keeping in mind that human life is the most precious treasure. Thus, members of TV and radio crews should be trained on how to report in hostile environments and at the same time on how to save their own lives and the lives of the members of their teams. Ms Gudelj stressed that the Educational Centre of the Croatian Radio and Television (HRT) initiated a training project „Reporting in hostile environment“ in cooperation with CAPSOC, Croatian Ministry of Defense, in 2010. Since then, they have successfully carried out three demanding training courses, which

have been recognized by the entire region as the first, highly practical, leading and inspiring examples of cooperation in security issues.

Following the lecturers' presentations, the participants were given an opportunity to engage in fruitful discussions.

At the end of the first working day, the Croatian Radio and Television organized a visit/guided tour of its headquarters. During the tour, the participants had a chance to see a typical working day in this institution, its studios and facilities, as well as the equipment used.



Visit/guided tour of the Croatian Radio and Television

The second working day started with Session III, entitled: "The role of the public media in crisis management operations in SEE and abroad". The moderator of this session was Dr.sc. Marta Zorko, Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb. This session, divided in two sub-sessions, comprised the presentations (fifteen to twenty minutes long) delivered by representatives of the public media from our Region on the topic of media-military cooperation. The public media representatives presented their respective organizations and their cooperation with the security sector in their respective countries. In general, the common points were:

- Transparency is one of the crucial moments in the relationship between the public media and national institutions/departments dealing with crisis management;
- A constant cooperation is necessary not only to timely inform the public, but for prompt prevention and warning of various types of risks, hazards and disasters;
- Impact of the media on the viewers is high, therefore better coordination leads towards better cooperation and understanding;
- It is necessary to further develop and improve cooperation between the public media and the security sector.



Working session

The conference proceeded with presentations concerning the public media and defence/military cooperation given by the Spokespersons from respective Ministries of Defence. Their common points were:

- There is an urgent need to upgrade and develop cooperation with the public media;
- Exchanges of experience and opinions give way to finding best solutions;
- Joint work by security institutions' PR departments and the public media contributes to the development of dialogue and confidence building in the region;
- Education/training of the staff and personnel is indispensable;
- The transparency of defence activities boosts confidence and stimulates citizens to participate in defence activities;
- Security institutions' PR departments should provide quick, complete, objective and precise information on events, happenings and processes

and their relationship with the media should be characterized by active communication and transparency.



Ms Selvet Baruti, the Spokesperson of the MoD (MK)

Following the Spokespersons' presentations, the floor was open for participants' questions and discussion.

Conference closing remarks

The conference entitled "Public Media and Security in SEE" was an event co-organized by RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation and the Croatian Radio and Television. The purpose of the conference, to encourage further development of regional cooperation and to prepare the ground for additional improvements in the field of cooperation among the public media and security institutions within the SEE region, was successfully achieved and the Agenda objectives were fully accomplished. The conference successfully provided a comprehensive platform for exchanging experience, dialogue, views and ideas, which helped to disseminate international standards related to the media and security and to build a more open, transparent and stable environment in the Region.

At the end of the event, all participants highly recommended that this initiative should be further promoted in the future. Furthermore, the following conclusions were made:

- The conference itself was an excellent example of successfully bringing together PR officers from regional MoDs and public media representatives;
- The conference promoted the idea of developing a guidance strategy as one of the basic things necessary to improve cooperation between the security sector and the media;
- The conference participants agreed on the need to organize events on the following topics: strategic regional communication, crisis communication, specific training (adverse situations reporting etc.);
- The conference participants also suggested organizing trainings on communication events for senior and middle management in the future.

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