



Co-organized by: RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, Regional Cooperation Council, European Association of Public Service Media in South East Europe and Croatian Radio Television

## Investigative Journalism and Data Protection

29-31 May 2012

IRC-12-CF

### EXTERNAL REPORT

#### Abstract

The conference was a follow-up activity to the Conference on Public Media and Security in SEE, held at RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation in November 2011. This event was aimed at promoting and increasing cooperation by using dialogue and exchange of information, knowledge, views and ideas, as well as disseminating international standards related to investigative journalism and data protection, and building a more open, transparent and stable environment in the SEE region.

#### Background

RACVIAC and its partners - Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the Croatian Radio Television (HRT) are trying to continuously contribute to the EU enlargement process, which fosters stability and security in Europe. RACVIAC and its collaborators work to promote mutual cooperation and European and Euro-Atlantic integration of South East Europe in order to stimulate development in the region to the benefit of its citizens. The strategic goal of their media development activities is to bring about change, which would foster development of the media sector in the SEE towards free, professional and responsible media in the region. Investigative journalism is an important tool through which journalists and the media as such foster public interest and contribute to an overall development and democratization of a society, the field of security included.

#### Purpose

The purpose for organizing this conference arose out of the need to promote the European media and security related standards and to draw

attention to the importance of the interconnection between public media services and security issues.

The objectives were:

- To analyze the relationship between the public media and security;
- To promote observance of data protection principles;
- To foster media pluralism and to support cooperation between regional public media services and state institutions;
- To share information, views, and experiences from the past as well as the latest information concerning security issues;
- To enhance regional cooperation on the path towards European integration of all South East European countries.

#### Acknowledgements

For their organizational and logistical contributions, RACVIAC would like to thank the Regional Cooperation Council and the Croatian Radio Television. Special thanks goes to the Ministry of National Defense and Sports of the Republic of Austria for the continuous sponsorship, which made this event possible.

#### Venue and participation

The Conference was held at the Croatian Army Hall in the city of Pula from 29 to 31 May 2012. The event gathered a total of 41 participants from security institutions, public media services from the SEE countries and representatives of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).



Group photo

## The Programme

Event coordinator Mr Milan Janicijevic greeted all the participants and gave the floor to RACVIAC Deputy Director Col Željko Ceganec for his welcome address.

Deputy RACVIAC Director, Col Ceganec, expressed his satisfaction with the fact that the conference attracted such high-profile participants. In addition, he stressed that the representation of different security institutions and media organizations dealing with the event topic was an excellent example of successfully bringing together PR officers from the regional Ministries of Defence (MoDs) and public media representatives. In this regard, Col Ceganec, with the purpose to foster dialogue and cooperation on security matters in South East Europe, said that the event would support the promotion and cooperation among public media and security institutions and that it would build the information highway on issues of importance both to the MoDs and public media services.

What is News?  
 “Something someone somewhere doesn’t want you to know. Everything else is advertising.”



From left to right: Mr David Lewis (EBU), Col Željko Ceganec (RACVIAC) and Amb Stanislav Daskalov (RCC)

Ms Nela Gudelj welcomed the participants and said she was privileged to have the opportunity to address them on behalf of the Croatian Radio and Television (HRT). Ms Gudelj stressed the importance of the specific participation format,

which included public services and security institutions, as well as the representatives of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). She underlined the value of increased contribution of public service media to the development of modern democratic societies in South East Europe, as well as mutual support and trust with a view to promoting safety, stability and security in the region and overcoming the present and future challenges with full responsibility.



Ms Nela Gudelj (HRT)

The next speaker was Ambassador Stanislav Daskalov, Deputy Head of Liaison Office in Brussels, Regional Cooperation Council. On behalf of RCC, Ambassador Daskalov shared his contentment with co-organizing the event aimed

at promoting investigative journalism and fostering journalistic independence, while at the same time respecting

data protection principles. Like the previous two distinguished speakers, Amb Daskalov also stressed that one of the most important benefits of the conference was to energize public service media, the ministries of defence and other security-related institutions around the same table in an effort to improve dialogue and cooperation among them in the interest of their common stakeholder: the citizens of their countries.

During the welcome session, Mr David Lewis delivered a speech on behalf of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Mr Lewis, the EBU's Head of Special Assistance, emphasised that the Agenda objectives fit well with the event topic. Mr Lewis informed the audience that the European Commission accorded special importance to investigative journalism in the fight against corruption and as a watchdog of citizens in the countries seeking to join the European Union. He also noted that investigative journalism was the mother of journalism and that it was more than simple reporting which should at the same time observe all rules and legal obligations.

He said that in order to reach all necessary standards, there should be more specialist trainings and educational meetings. In this regard, one of the potential sources that could be used is the Special Assistance Project (SAP), which can support and assist national public services and member PR security departments.

“In essence we have two sides of the same coin – a **journalist**, with his or her responsibility to bring the truth to the public, and a **security institution** with its long lasting struggle to be as much open as possible, without harming the overall security.”

The conference continued with Session I entitled “Promotion and Commitment to Development and Strengthening of Investigative Journalism while Respecting and Obeying Data Protection Principles”. In this Session Mr Boris Bergant, the President of the South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO) Board addressed the participants. Mr Bergant said that there was now a greater need than ever for investigative journalism. He regretted that freelancers outside mainstream media organizations now practiced most of such journalism. He saluted the idea of organizing similar events in the future as well, where journalists and military officials from the South East European countries would be able to discuss various pressing issues. In his speech, Mr Bergant gave an open and interesting account of some situations and examples related to investigative journalism and data protection from the EU and SEE.



From left to right: Amb Stanislav Daskalov (RCC), Mr Boris Bergant (SEEMO) and Ms Nela Gudeli (HRT)

The following speaker was Mr Jonathan Stoneman from the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Mr Stoneman made a presentation entitled "What is Investigative Journalism: Why do We Need It in Modern Societies – are there Limits to Seeking truth? ".

Sessions II and III covered investigative journalism and data protection in practice from different points of view.

The second session was dedicated to investigative journalism and data protection in practice from the point of view of public media, while the third session focused on investigative journalism and data protection in practice from the point of view of security institutions.

In these sessions, each representative of the SEE public media services and security institutions delivered a 10 - 15 minute speech on the media-military cooperation.



Session II

During their presentations various questions and information were exchanged. Additionally, real-life examples (including movie clips) were shown describing real cases of investigative journalism and data protection. The created platform for dialogue and sharing best practices and lesson learned proved to be very useful and beneficial for all the participants.

The second working day started with a scenario of a train crash simulation. Given the presence of journalists and PR officers, it was agreed to develop a scenario that would simulate the conditions of a situation in which both sides needed each other, and in which a good flow of information was vital. The scenario encompassed some details and figures and information distributed to the persons playing the role of relevant PR officers. The journalists were expected to cover the event by writing headlines in order to reflect their knowledge at key moments.





Session III

Participants took up the roles with enthusiasm, and the working atmosphere seemed good. To add to the learning opportunities at the workshop, it was agreed that participants who normally worked as journalists would play the role of PR officers and vice versa. This seemed to work well - each side was able to see the problems from the point of view of the other, and some learning opportunities were generated. Each side was critical (in a friendly way) of the other side's work – thus it was heard that the "journalists" didn't ask the right questions, while the "PR officers" released some confusing information. Meanwhile, almost no "human interest" stories emerged which had been previously distributed to the people playing the roles of ordinary workers and citizens. Thus, it appeared that the "journalists" tended to consult only official sources, rather than ordinary people.



Working session

In the continuation, Session IV was conducted. The topic of integrated approach to military and media cooperation in field training was presented by Ms Nela Gudelj and Tomislav Špoljar from the Croatian Radio Television (HRT). The speakers presented a special project that the HRT EDU Team and CAPSOC of the Croatian Ministry of Defence have been jointly conducting for the TV and radio crews: "Reporting in Stressful and Hostile Conditions". The HRT EDU centre recognized the importance and necessity for the HRT TV and radio crews to gain necessary skills and knowledge of acting in extreme and crisis

situations. This unique training project between one public service and one security institution paves the way for future cooperation aimed at providing new competences and better understanding of the situations the crews might face in crisis operations, as well as in disaster-struck areas. This project also has the added value of experience sharing, team building and increased mutual understanding.

#### Closing remarks

The Conference on Investigative Journalism and Data Protection has definitely met all the objectives and expectations. The purpose of the conference was successfully achieved.

At the end of the conference, all the participants highly recommended for this initiative to be further promoted in the future.

The following closing remarks were made:

- The RACVIAC Director, Ambassador Todorčevski, announced that an event on strategic communication would be taken into consideration for 2013;
- All the participants and partners - RACVIAC, RCC, HRT, EBU and the European Association of Public Service Media in South East Europe contributed to the excellent two-day conference;
- The event provided a great opportunity for the journalists and the PR officers from security institutions to get to know and understand each other and their work better;
- The conference identified new ways of deepening the understanding and relationship between public service media and security institutions, reconciling the need for information with data protection principles, and promoting freedom of expression standards;
- The event successfully dealt with the challenging topics, while the presentations and fruitful debates demonstrated that when it comes to public service media and security institutions one definitely does not exclude the other because there is a common link between them: responsibility and professional standards. We tried to find the answers to whether there are limits in seeking truth or in protecting data and while seeking these answers, we successfully shared experiences and we all benefitted from our respective professional expertise;
- The conference was certainly worth attending and organizing.

Compiled by: Mr Milan Janicijevic, IRC Pillar