

Working paper: Research on community media in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia with a focus on community media as spaces for local dialogue and cohesion

(Biljana Žikić, June 2019)

Serbia (and briefly Croatia)

1. Number and status of community media

Media owned and controlled by the community are also called “non-governmental”, “non-commercial”, “non-profit” or “civil society media” in Serbia. They entail a greater participation of the audience in the decision making and functioning of the media and they are “independent” of the government and of commercial control. It is hard to determine the exact number of community media in Serbia, because not all of them are registered with the Media Register at The Serbian Business Registers Agency. On the other hand, there are formally registered “civil sector media”, but the question is if they really are what they claim to be. Vladimir Radinović, an independent consultant, lecturer and producer from Belgrade argues that the situation in Serbia is very complex, but we can say that there are around ten radios which can fulfil the criteria for a community radio.¹ Two of the most famous examples of good practice of community radio are: Radio Aparat from Belgrade <https://www.radioaparat.com/> and Super Radio from Niš <http://www.uzivoradio.com/super-nis.html>. The only community TV station is Forum TV, registered by The Forum of Women from Prijepolje <http://foruminfo.rs/forum-zena-prijepolja/>.

It is interesting that a big part of the civil society media in Serbia, as well as in Croatia, are produced by media professionals who have gathered after they had left their previous jobs and started their own independent media, most often online portals because they are not expensive. “Whether they came from the mainstream media or a civil society organization, their journalistic interest is not necessarily connected to one specific identity community and its problems, which is understandable. More precisely, non-profit media cover everything that doesn’t exist and isn’t

¹ Radinović says in the interview that the only legal definition of community media is confusing and not clear enough because the research conducted by the SHARE Foundation, in which he participated, showed that the majority of legal entities who had registered media were not non-profit organizations, but companies. “I would say that there are no real grassroots community media in Serbia. There is only something that looks like that.” Radinović lists several media which are registered and backed by the civil society organizations: Bunjevački radio <http://www.boc.rs>, Srpski krajevi <http://www.srpskikrajevi.rs>, Puls Radio <http://www.radiopuls.rs/>, Multi radio <https://multiradio.rs> and others. He mentioned the following as yet unregistered initiatives: SunRadio <http://sunradio.co>, Valternativa <https://valternativa.org>, Jammonite <http://www.jammonite.com>, Radio Sevojno <https://sevojnoradio.wixsite.com/>, Kerefeke <http://www.kerefeke.org.rs/> and others. Other than that, there are individual TV and radio production companies which produce radio shows or podcasts in the non-profit mode but don’t broadcast linear programme 24 hours a day, such as: Peščanik <http://pescanik.net>, MladiCe, Udruženje roditelja i staratelja dece lečene od raka (Association of Parents and Guardians of Children Suffering from Cancer) <http://www.mladice.org>, Mjehur na mreži <https://insajder.net/sr/sajt/podkast/> etc.

talked about in the media mainstream: from human, civil and political, to social and labour rights. It seems to me that the list of topics, which were awarded modest grants for journalistic and investigative work in the non-profit media by the Ministry of Culture of Croatia from 2013 to 2015, is a good illustration of those coordinates,” explains Milan F. Živković, a theatre director and screenwriter from Zagreb, who was responsible for media policy in the Ministry of Culture of Croatia from 2013 to 2015.² That’s when the last media inventory was made according to which there were around a hundred “non-profit media”, which is much the same as today. Croatia used to award state grants to these media up until 2016 when the radical right came to power and abolished the entire scheme. There are 13 non-profit radio stations with FM frequencies in Croatia nowadays. There are around ten more internet radios and around fifteen radio productions (organizations producing radio programmes or podcasts but not broadcasting linear programme 24 hours a day). Out of 32 non-profit producers of TV programmes, registered with the state Agency for Electronic Media (AEM), only 3 are identified as (Internet) “televisions” and out of those three, Televizija student (*The Student TV*) is the closest to the conventional meaning of the word. One daily (*La voce del popolo*) and one weekly newspaper (*Novosti*) should also be mentioned, says Živković.

1.1 History and legal status

At the start of media reforms, The Broadcasting Law from 2002 regulated the establishment of radio and TV stations by the non-profit civil organizations, the only condition being that the programme contents of these stations had to be related to the specific activity area of the founding non-governmental organization or civil association. The Electronic Media Act from 2014 stipulates in article 72 that the services of the civil sector are rendered with the goal of fulfilling specific interests of certain social groups (national minorities, young people, the elderly, the disabled, etc.) and civil organizations, and not for making profit.³ By this law the civil sector media can provide services within the local and regional zone of coverage. The publisher of such media can be an association, an endowment, a foundation, church or religious community. Unlike other media, they are granted privilege of getting the licence for providing media service without paying the fee and tax for programme content.⁴ However, media researchers in Serbia emphasize that those media are very poorly developed. “There is no doubt that information on possibilities of establishing and operating civil society media have been at “a dead end” and marginalized during a nearly fifteen-years long period of media reforms in Serbia. They have been mentioned rarely or not at all and the overall knowledge on this kind of media is very modest or nil even within the journalistic profession, or circles interested in the improvement of minority information and media landscape, especially on a local level.”⁵ It is not obligatory by law to register media with the Media Register but it is advisable because unregistered media cannot apply for public funding assigned to project co-funding.⁶ The Electronic Media Act makes no concessions to the civil sector media publishers in that respect, so the procedure would be the same as with any other publisher. The

² E-mail interview, June 2019

³ https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_elektronskim_medijima.html

⁴ Mediji civilnog društva – Uputstvo za upotrebu/ Civil Sector Media Guide, 136

⁵ Ibidem, 37

⁶ Ibidem, 26

same legal provisions apply for the civil sector media and other media, which is why their legal status is the same.

1.2 Funding and sustainability

In a situation where citizens' donations, business sponsorships or crowdfunding don't usually work, because there is a general lack of awareness of the need for that, project open competitions remain the basic source of funding. "It is automatically destined to fail, especially in Serbia where the civil sector media haven't been recognized as something important or something that should exist. Nobody dares to apply as individual media but they try to set up a project and then produce radio programme within the framework of that project", says Vladimir Radinović and adds that the government is not interested in any media other than the ones they can control, and is therefore not interested in civil media. "The applicable Law on Public Information and Media prescribed that the media, i.e. media contents - on all levels of government - are to be funded exclusively through open competitions for co-funding of public interest, i.e. as defined by law "prescribing only three exceptions in this respect: public broadcasting, media in the Serbian language in Kosovo and Metohija, as well as media whose founder's rights have been transferred to National Councils of National Minorities prior to coming into effect of this law."⁷ The researchers emphasize that numerous irregularities in implementation of these open competitions have been uncovered, as well as favouritism towards certain media, but open competitions organized on state, province or local level still remain a significant source of co-funding of media projects. Community media are treated as non-profit media and thus have no right to make a profit which is a severe blow to generating income.⁸

2. Case studies: Radio Aparat, Super radio and TV Forum

Radio Aparat was set up in Belgrade in 2016 as devised by its founder, Zoran Dmitrović, an architect, on the model of The East Village Radio in New York. The idea was for it to be a radio station in a public space, visible from the street and thus closer to the local community. "People can see us, we are in the show window and when they come in, it's easy for them to identify with us. We were guided by the idea of collecting sounds from the environment. The street is one of the busiest ones and you can imagine the multitude of sounds that enter the programme. We also have a dog who has become the star of our programme", says Svetlana Đolović, editor in chief who came from the city radio Studio B after its privatization.⁹ Radio Aparat first started their cooperation with the organization Liceulice which deals with inclusion of the marginalized groups. The programme was comprised of a musical collage with the host reporting and relaxed conversation. A community of different radio shows was created. This is not a news programme in a traditional sense, but an interpretation and analysis of the information. "We want to give voice to the marginalized groups, to enable minority voices to be heard and we feel comfortable in that minority world. We don't crave for the mainstream, we cultivate the minority way of thinking and want to make possible for it to be heard because that's what our society lacks most. Our goals are

⁷ „Bela knjiga konkursnog sufinansiranja javnog interesa u sferi javnog informisanja“, 2016.

⁸ In Croatia and Slovenia, the law permits the "non-profit" media to earn money from commercials, but the income has to be used for developing media content.

⁹ Radio interview, <https://radiostudent.si/dru%C5%BEba/kontrola-leta/radio-apat>, June 2019

aimed at people who think freely, use their own heads and want to improve the society they live in”, says Svetlana Ceca Đolović.

Super Radio was founded in Niš in 2012 by a group of enthusiasts who wanted to demonstrate that “things could sound different”, says Aleksandra Đorđević, programme editor.¹⁰ Super Radio is a part of “Super građanin” - Centar za unapređenje društvene svesti (“Super Citizen” - Centre for the Advancement of Social Consciousness), a non-profit organization which works on raising awareness on social issues, mostly among young people. “We are trying to enrich our programme with contents which are under-represented on commercial radio stations and also to promote alternative, but quality music. Instead of the news on famous people, politics and crime, our programme is comprised of shows on culture, music, literature, film, civic activism and healthy living. Our goal is to entertain people (young, in the first place) and to show that something is happening in our city as well, actually that a lot of interesting things and are taking place and they can become a part of them - whether those are civic initiatives working on pressing community issues or exhibitions, concerts and parties,” says Aleksandra.

Forum TV station was founded by the organization “Forum žena” (The Forum of Women) in Prijepolje in 2008. Project topics usually cover women’s issues- human rights, participation in politics, health, entrepreneurship, but issues concerning other marginalized groups as well. They follow all other current events in the local community, broadcast news at six broadcast time slots during the day and evening and they produce other shows as well as live shows featuring guests in the studio. They enjoy great support of the local community and their fellow citizens who see Forum TV as their television. “It is not the case with the local government. But I guess that’s how it should be, if we are really there to control them and correct them and not to obey them”, says Mileva Malešić, the director and one of the founders of TV Forum.¹¹

2.1 Business model / funding

Radio Aparat uses the business model in which a successful individual gives back part of his profit to the society by financing a non-profit project. The founder is the main financier. The radio station participates in project open competitions where it cooperates with NGOs and advocates profit for purpose, i.e. that the broadcaster is allowed to make some kind of profit which will be used for covering its own expenses. In the subsequent period, primary focus will be on crowdfunding, as well as on cooperation with corporations where they appeal on corporate responsibility and try to achieve cooperation between big companies and the radio, not in the sense of classic funding, but in exchange of equipment needed for making the programme, and the like. Radio Aparat was conceived as “self-op”, it hasn’t got a technical sound engineer, because the idea was that everyone could broadcast programme on their own, and the aim is for the radio programme to function in the simplest way possible.

Super Radio is based on volunteer work. All the journalists, sound engineers, editors, designers and technical support staff are volunteers who devote as much time as they can to working there and most of them have another steady job. They cooperate with publishing houses, cinemas and a

¹⁰ E-mail interview, June 2019

¹¹ E-mail interview, June 2019

theatre in the form of compensation. The radio partly raises money through projects within the NGO it is a part of. Problems they face in their work are: - funding and - decreased activist awareness among the young people. One is connected to the other. As social sector media, they are forbidden to charge for advertisements by law and that is a big problem, says Aleksandra Dorđević. “We see a part of the solution in networking with similar media, as well as in developing the strategy we’re working on. Networked media would have a greater visibility and by extension they would be in a better situation to influence raising awareness among the young people.”

Forum TV, as an electronic media of the civil society, exercises its rights based on item 72 of The Law on Electronic Media. Civil sector TV stations don’t pay the programme content fee and “there are no other concessions”, says Mileva Malešić. The Forum is funded through projects in a larger percentage and from marketing in a lower percentage. “When we talk about the launching of a TV station, the experience of this organization shows that the greatest effort needs to be made for allocating funds for technical equipment, because TV equipment is more expensive and complicated than the equipment for other media platforms”, says Mirela Veljović, editor of the portal foruminfo.rs.¹² The greatest challenge “Forum žena” (The Forum of Women) faced when launching their TV station was the lack of funds for the procurement of such equipment, for equipping/furnishing the studio and obtaining broadcasting technology.

2.2 Community media in urban/local areas

Radio Aparat is an urban radio, mainly focused on Belgrade, because that’s where both the associates and the listeners from the other radio stations (primarily Studio B and B92) which had been shut down, have gathered. A lot of people from the diaspora also listen to the radio - the intellectuals and others who left the country for financial or political reasons. The greatest number of listeners of **Super Radio** are from Niš. **Forum TV** is distinctly connected to the local community, Prijepolje and its surroundings.

2.3 Involvement of volunteers

Radio Aparat currently has two part-time associates and around 90 volunteer associates, taking into account teams consisting of numerous members and programmes not directly produced by them, but obtained from other sources. **Super Radio** currently employs 15 volunteers in production of their programme. Students of journalism come to the radio for practical training and stay there to work. Attracting volunteers is not a problem, but keeping them is. Many of them leave in search of a paid job. **Forum TV** has ten employees. The same team is employed in project activities and in TV station programme contents creation, they are in charge of the portal and social networks. Dozens of volunteers, mostly secondary school pupils and young university students have passed through the TV station. “Most of the people who are now employed here were volunteers at first. We’ve been learning and building up together and we are continuing our education and attending seminars. We still organize seminars and training for ourselves and others at the same time”, says Malešić.

¹² E-mail interview, June 2019

2.4. Exchange and dialogue across generations

Radio Aparat By choosing the former B92, Studio B and Radio Beograd staff for its first employees, Radio Aparat attracted the disappointed listeners of FM Radio. In addition to those first/earliest listeners, they always try to attract younger listeners. Svetlana Đolović said that they are trying to do that especially with younger generations who have lost the idea of what radio is. “We have several students (on staff) and we are trying to attract their peers to start loving the radio both as associates and listeners. At the moment, younger listeners aged 22-36 are predominant, with our esteemed listeners who are in their 40s and who used to listen to the aforementioned terrestrial radio stations.” Intergenerational cooperation and programme as a result (of that cooperation) are some of our primary goals. “Refreshing the programme is very important to me as an editor because the younger generations have to be actively involved in creating the programme and thus inform us about their standpoints, what they believe in, what they would like to change, what we, as an older generation, are wrong about and how we could all prosper. The voice of the youth is very important to me as well as finding future meeting points.” **Super radio** The disabled, national minorities and all other people who work on creating content recognized as important for their community are included into the operation of this radio station, says the editor Aleksandra. “A good story is the most important to our listeners (whether through programmes or music).” Their listeners are in the 18-40 age group, both from urban and rural milieu, as part of the mainstream or alternative population. **TV Forum** connects different generation from local areas, predominantly through (women’s) activism.

2.5 Use of social / digital media platforms

Radio Aparat is an on-line radio, <https://www.radioaparat.com/>. The editors have chosen the Internet because they understand that people spend most of their time online but the awareness of the importance of this global network in Serbia is still undeveloped. “Our challenge is to popularize listening to the radio on the Internet. You need all sorts of documents in order to open a terrestrial frequency, the maintenance is very expensive and then you also enter the race for ratings dictated by the commercial media. This is why entering the ring with FM frequencies is not in our interest at all”, says Đolović. They monitor their ratings through their server. They have over 8000-9000 individual listeners who turn on the radio at different times, and the average listening period is between 130-150 minutes a day, which is a success in terms of listening to the radio nowadays. They actively use social networks Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/radioAPARAT/> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/radioaparat> for advertising their programmes and establishing a radio community. Starting from this season, they have been much more active on Instagram since the youngest listeners most often use it for communication.

Super Radio is an on-line radio and you can listen to it directly on their website (<http://www.superradio.rs>) or on one of the platforms (RadioUživo, TuneIn and the like). They regularly promote their programme on social networks and they use Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SuperRadioNis/>), Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/superradionis/>), and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/superradionis>). They use social networks for promoting their contents, entertaining their listeners and getting feedback, organizing prize contests and the like.

Forum TV broadcasts their programme through another multiplex from the Tornik and Ovčar transmitters and can be watched in the South West Serbia and part of Central Serbia. But their programme contents are available on social networks, as well as on the following websites <http://www.forumtv.rs> and <http://www.foruminfo.rs>. They use social networks <https://www.facebook.com/televizijaforum/> for promoting their programme and communicating with their listeners.

3. The role of community media in the larger media landscape

3.1. The challenges community media are facing

In their research *Mediji civilnog sektora – Uputstvo za upotrebu* (The Civil Sector Media Guide), the researchers have identified multiple challenges, such as: “distrust and hostility towards the civil sector and especially towards the civil sector media - their marginalization in the public discourse, sometimes even intentional neglect by the power holders”, “distrust of the part of the public towards the civil sector organizations”, problem with advertising, “a small number of permanently employed, and administrative responsibilities (bureaucratization) are practically the same as for a big organization”, “no opportunity for continuous professional development of the employees in the organization”, as well as “no special marketing funds/resources”.¹³

3.2 Further potential of community media and recommendations

According to the Serbian researchers media freedoms have, to a large extent, moved to the Internet and to the civil society media.¹⁴ Both public broadcasting and commercial media are under pressure from the political establishment which demands submission and reporting in accordance with their interests. There is an intense commercialization of the radio and TV stations and the only rule applied becomes the race for profit, which puts quality, diversity and public interest into the background. That is why a third option is sought after - the civil sector media. Thus community media are observed in Serbia as a channel through which responsible journalism and quality information could survive and a need for the pluralism of information, critical thinking, public dialogue and the advancement of democracy can be satisfied. “Criticism of the mass media content, publishing alternative points of view and experiences, opening tabooed topics, analytical and investigative journalism - are the topics civil sector media are always concerned with, trying to confront the citizens with the social reality they live in, which can’t often be seen in the mainstream media. Such media, unlike commercial and partisan media, have an agenda dedicated to public interest in the sphere of public information, which is one of the key things for the process of democratization of the country, but also for the preservation of basic values of journalism as a profession.”¹⁵ The Government should take certain measures if they want to empower and improve the creation of civil sector media. Among others, the following measures are proposed: “- VAT and all tax levies exemption for all kinds of activities, starting from projects, through sponsorships and auction sales. - Grants for the civil sector media.- Setting up a Fund for development of civil sector media.- Income tax exemption for businesses for the amount of funds allocated to donations.

¹³ *Mediji civilnog društva, Uputstvo za upotrebu/Civil Sector Media Guide*, 70-71

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 6

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 16-17

- Directing public advertising to a certain extent towards civil sector media.- Taking into consideration the availability of the public information services.”¹⁶

Bosnia and Herzegovina

1. Number and status of community media

Only three radio stations have been registered as non-profit with the Communications Regulatory Agency: Radio Otvorena mreža (The Open Network Radio) <https://otvorenamreza.ba> in Sarajevo, Radio Active Naša djeca (Radio Active Our Children) in Zenica www.activezenica.com and Udruga Radio Marija from Mostar www.radiomarija.ba.¹⁷ The aforementioned are a humanitarian radio station, a youth/activist radio station and a religious radio station. On the other hand, there are unregistered media, which have been recognized as an example of good practice, such as UPS medija from Srebrenica <https://www.upsmedia.ba/>. It was founded by the NGO Prijatelji Srebrenice (The Friends of Srebrenica) and is aimed at young people and the local community (Srebrenica and Bratunac). Bosnian-Herzegovinian media researchers emphasize that as non-profit and independent by definition, the community media are almost invisible in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and entirely dependent on NGO projects “The community media in BiH function mostly within the framework of NGOs, which allocate funds from specific project budgets for covering the technical structure and programme creation expenses. Media objectives always correspond to both the objectives of the organization and the objectives of the specific project, which can be funded by foreign or domestic donors.”¹⁸ There are numerous internet portals for specific social groups in BiH, but having in mind that the portals are not regulated, it is impossible to accurately estimate their number.¹⁹

1.1 History and legal status

“The licence for a non-profit radio is the licence for the provision of radio media service via terrestrial analogue transmission for non-profit organizations with the purpose of satisfying specific needs of a certain social group on a non-profit basis, as a set of rights and regulations of the licence holder contained in the terms of the licence granted by the Agency”, stipulates The Rule on the Provision of Radio Media Services. The rule defines technical and programme conditions of the licence and limitations on programme contents since they cannot contain any commercial communication. Regulatory compliance rules are applied in the same way as for other licence holders. BiH have a tradition of successful community media, the first of which being the popular eFM Radio in Sarajevo which has employed numerous students over the years. However,

¹⁶ Ibidem, 101

¹⁷ <https://www.rak.ba/bs-Latn-BA/brdcst-license-holders>

¹⁸ <https://www.media.ba/bs/magazin-novinarstvo/community-mediji-borba-koja-ne-prestaje>

¹⁹ Some of the most recognizable Bosnian-Herzegovinian portals are: *Magazin Buka*, published by the *Centar za informativnu dekontaminaciju mladih Banja Luka (Centre for Information Decontamination of Youth, Banja Luka)* <https://www.6yka.com>,

Tačno, <http://www.tacno.net> published by *Udruženje “Centar za kritičko mišljenje” (Society “Centre for Critical Thought”)* from Mostar.

since they were unable to survive in market conditions, they lost their frequency and can nowadays be listened only as a play list on the Internet.

1.2. Funding and sustainability

Stable funding presents the greatest challenge community media are facing. It is hard to survive as community media in a poorly developed media market, says Anida Sokol, a researcher of media policy at Mediacentar Sarajevo.²⁰ Since they are non-profit, community media cannot charge for advertising. They operate on volunteer basis (with nominal fees) and deal with local and youth issues. They live on donations and citizens' contributions.

The Communications Regulatory Agency wishes to encourage the creation of these media by exempting them from paying the registration fee when applying for frequency, unlike other media. Also, the regulator is considering the repeal of the provision which prohibits charging for commercials, in order to encourage the creation of those media. But, non-transparency is the problem. According to Anida Sokol, on the state level, funds are allocated to the media, but in a completely non-transparent manner and guided by partisan interests.

2. Case studies: Radio Active, UPS Radio

Radio Active <https://activezenica.com/> is the first community radio in BiH. It was founded by Udruženje za brigu i opšta prava djece "Naša djeca" from Zenica (Association for Care and General Rights of Children "Our Children", Zenica), which obtained their FM broadcast licence from the The Communications Regulatory Agency BiH in 2011. They provide an alternative to commercial media and public broadcasting in BiH. "We deal with positive stories, current events and issues in the local community and present young, talented people other media don't talk about", says Almedina Jašarević, Radio Active programme editor²¹. They create programme contents relevant to the community with full participation of young people and children on a daily basis. Those young people produce around 100 shows a month on average. They have neither marketing, sponsored content nor political obligations, therefore they can freely create contents they see as important for the citizens of BiH.

Youth Studio for Srebrenica and Bratunac is a radio station which operates as a part of UPSMedia, a radio and TV production within the framework of the Association "The Friends of Srebrenica" <https://www.upsmedia.ba/>. The radio station was founded in 2010 when a contract was signed with the Radio of the Republic of Srpska (Radio RS). A frequency which covers the regions of Srebrenica and Bratunac was granted to the radio by the provisions of this contract. "The holder of the radio frequency has no financial obligations to us as an affiliate and we are fully in charge of equipment maintenance and system operation. Also, the holder of the radio frequency doesn't influence the editorial policy, so our independence is not endangered in any way. Our obligation towards the licence holder is to send radio features to the Radio of the Republic of Srpska once or twice a week, says Dragana Jovanović, president of the Association "The Friends

²⁰ The skype interview, June 2019

²¹ The telephone interview, June 2019

of Srebrenica”.²² The mission of the Association is to increase social inclusion, empower the civil society and improve young people’s lives. The radio addressees issues of importance to the vulnerable groups: young people, children with special needs, people in need of social assistance, the returnees (refugees returning) to Srebrenica and Bratunac.

2.1 Business model / funding

Radio Active organizes fund-raising campaigns on a regular basis. They always get support from public life figures who are close to their ideas - mostly popular musicians from the region, sportspersons and actors. Special attention is paid to networking and cooperation with numerous domestic and international organizations and media. They are also funded through projects.

Radio Prijatelji Srebrenice (The Friends of Srebrenica Radio) is funded by projects and donations. They don’t broadcast any commercially or politically oriented contents which could bring them financial gain. They are supported by their municipalities. For example, local government in Bratunac provides office space for them and pays all the overhead costs.

2.2 Community media in urban/local areas

Radio Active is listened to in the Zenica region and **Radio Prijatelji Srebrenice** in the municipalities of Srebrenica and Bratunac. They are markedly locally profiled in choosing their topics as well.

2.3 Involvement of volunteers

Radio Active has 22 volunteers who have their own shows/programmes and get nominal fees at the end of the month. They get volunteers by announcing vacancies for radio hosts and technical support and young people apply for those positions. Those who pass the audition and trial work period, stay there to work. “Young people from Zenica mostly go to Sarajevo to study and that is the main reason volunteers leave the radio. But that doesn’t mean we lose touch. We’ve had stories sent to us from our associates from Sarajevo”, says the editor Almedina Jašarević.

Radio Prijatelji Srebrenice (The Friends of Srebrenica Radio) has six permanent employees and around twenty volunteers. The station is a place where young people are trained to work on the radio through different education programmes and by senior staff mentoring work. “We think there could and should be more volunteers on staff. Namely, the number of volunteers was decreasing as our operation was becoming more professional, the reasons being that our staff was unable to devote more time to quality training of our external associates, the steady decline in interest for volunteering among the young people in our community, and growing popularity of social networks which promote nationalism”, says Dragana Jovanović.

2.4. Exchange and dialogue across generations

Radio Active has young associates and listeners, aged 16 to 25. Older members of the radio act as mentors for the new members. None of them is a professional journalist or a student of journalism.

²² The email interview, June 2019

They educate themselves in seminars and at Mediacentar Sarajevo. Knowledge is passed on from older to newer members.

The associates and target groups of **Radio Prijatelji Srebrenice** (The Friends of Srebrenica Radio) are young people, vulnerable groups and all local population. Senior staff members mentor the junior staff and pass on their knowledge.

2.5 Use of social / digital media platforms

Radio Active employs all the digital platforms because their associates and target group members are very young people who use all the available media tools and networks on a massive scale (streaming, web portal, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Mixcloud). Other than over an FM frequency, you can also listen to the radio online or on the radio web site.

Youth **Radio Prijatelji Srebrenice** (The Friends of Srebrenica Radio) can be listened to in the municipalities of Srebrenica and Bratunac and online. They actively use the digital platforms: Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. The social networks are used for communication with young people, who send their contents, suggest topics and actively participate in the production of radio programme.

3. The role of community media in the larger media landscape

3.1. The challenges community media are facing

“Reasons for low interest in registering non-profit radio stations are: the relatively great number of media in BiH proportionate to population (as many as 138 private and public radio stations as opposed to three non-profit ones), the undeveloped culture of volunteering and voluntary employment, lack of financial support, as well as development of technology, especially the Internet and social networks which are also used as platforms and channels of information and for broadcasting media content”, argues Lea Čengić, head of Division of International Cooperation in Broadcasting at the Communications Regulatory Agency.²³ “Allocation of funds is not transparent, both for private and public media, it is fragmented, public calls are not public enough, the funds are often allocated for political causes and the (politically) eligible get the money. We don't know the names of people on the committees as well as the assigning points criteria, the procedures are imprecise, actually there are no criteria. As a part of the media sector, we advocate for the institution of regulatory rules, a state law which would regulate media ownership, transparency and means of funding through the public Budget”, says Anida Sokol, and especially emphasizes that changes in media policy on state level are necessary in order to regulate and encourage the operation of community media.

Dragana Jovanović from **Radio Prijatelji Srebrenice** (The Friends of Srebrenica Radio) says that one of the problems lies in the lack of networking, linking and exchange of experience between community radio stations. The facts that the main protagonists don't know enough about the concept of community media sector and that the legislation is incomplete and puts private and

²³ <https://www.media.ba/bs/magazin-novinarstvo/community-mediji-borba-koja-ne-prestaje>

public radio stations in a much more favourable position for obtaining funds than the community stations present additional problems.

3.2 Further potential of community media and recommendations

„The most important thing is including ordinary people into the work of community media and not only professional journalists because these media can play a big role in developing media literacy. It is good for the citizens to see for themselves how the media work, so they would understand media contents and media policies in BiH better”, argues Anida Sokol and adds that those media can also play a big part in relation to the minorities, sexual, ethnic and other groups who are not represented in the mainstream media in BiH. Local matters and topics are also not represented in the mainstream media and the community media are the ones that should deal with them. “Media which are managed and funded in that way, with programme objectives defined within the community, on participatory basis, are considered to be an important indicator of democratic quality of a society and the so-called third media sector. There should be a grant for such media awarded on state level or entity level. The regulator should encourage the establishment of such media, make sure there is more discussion about it in public, the problem of funding should be solved, i.e. of not charging for their own advertising, the citizens should be informed about the importance of these media for the local communities and the state should work on more progressive media policies, so as many media as possible would be established”, concludes Anida Sokol.

The cooperation of different community media civil organizations from the region is an example of good practice. The association “Prijatelji Srebrenice” (UPS radio) from Bosnia and Herzegovina and “Centar za unapređenje društvene svesti – Super građanin” (Super radio) from Niš, Serbia are carrying out a project of giving voice to marginalized groups and promotion of vulnerable categories in the media.²⁴ The project is comprised of workshops in matters of interest to marginalized groups, civic journalism and production of radio programmes which will give an opportunity to the vulnerable to express themselves and improve the process of inclusion into the community.

“There is no developed awareness of the importance of volunteering. People want to be paid for what they do”, says Anida Sokol and suggests community media should become a place for the training of journalists in the future. “There are ten departments of journalism studies in BiH, which is a great number for such a small country and a lot of students of journalism. However, the studies of journalism are focused on theory, and not on practice, so the community media could be a way for them to acquire skills and work experience and thus be prepared for their future profession.”

Slovenia

²⁴<https://www.upsmedia.ba/vijesti/upsmedia-i-super-radio-iz-nisa-projekat-jacanja-glasa-i-promocije-ranjivih-kategorija-u-medijima>

1. Number and status of community media

The term “community media” does not exist in Slovenian legislation. The Mass Media Act recognizes “media programmes of public interest” which include regional media (ten radio programmes and two TVs), local (eight radios and five TVs), non-profit radios (two radios) and student radios (two radios). However, the problem is in one of the conditions for getting this special status which stipulates that the media must have three employees on regular basis for local media and six employees on regular basis for non-profit media. “That is the hardest nut to crack for the small producers”, says Ivan Oven from The Ministry of Culture²⁵. Small radio stations which can be called “independent” link themselves informally into independent media networks. “That media group could be what you call community media. Within that group, media with the public interest status and those without that status can be found”, says Oven. The problem is that advertising agencies don’t notice small media and that’s why they organize themselves, so that their mutual representative could get the piece of advertising cake. An online radio is classified as an electronic media and therefore it needs to fulfil fewer obligations in order to be registered, but an internet radio as well as an internet portal cannot get the status of media of public interest because the status can only be acquired by radio or TV programmes.²⁶

1.2. History and legal status

Although Slovenia has a long tradition of community media, as *Radio Študent* is one of the oldest community radio stations in Europe, its legislation doesn’t recognize the term of “community media”. *Radio Študent* is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and *Radio Marš* from Maribor will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year if it manages to survive by then because it operates in very bad conditions. But, the support for community media hasn’t been developed any further since the nineties, says a long-term associate of *Radio Študent*, Robert Mohorič²⁷ and emphasizes that the responsibility for the survival of these media has been fully shifted to the media owners. *Radio Študent* and *Radio Marš* have legal status of “student radio stations”.

1.3. Funding and sustainability

The Government issues a decree on the regular Annual Public Call for Applications for Co-funding Production of Media Programme Contents, whereby more funds are allocated to the media of public interest from the state Budget.”The amount corresponding to 3% of the RTV Slovenija licence fee, collected in the previous year, shall be allocated to the development of the programme of radio and television programme services with the status of a local, regional or student radio or television programme service or a non-profit radio or television programme service”²⁸. “Media of public interest“ can make a profit on condition that it is used strictly for programme development purposes. The state recognizes that such media operate in public interest and as such they have an

²⁵ Interview, June 2019

²⁶ As well as in other countries from the region, there are numerous quality, independent civil society web portals in Slovenia as well, and some of them have their podcast programmes: <http://podcrto.si>, [https://www.drzavljand.si/...](https://www.drzavljand.si/) A great number of podcasts can be found here <https://podcasti.si/>, as well as the popular podcast association <https://apparatus.si/>.

²⁷ Interview, June 2019

²⁸ https://www.rtv slo.si/files/razno/mass_media_act.pdf

opportunity to get more funds from the Annual Public Call. But getting this status is the problem since having six employees on a regular basis is an impossible mission for nearly all such media. Another problem is the fact that a media publisher must provide 50 % of the budget from non-public resources in order to be co-funded by the state through the public call and that is unattainable for many NGOs.

2. Case studies: Radio Študent, Radio Marš, Radio Romc

Radio Študent (www.radiostudent.si) is “a home for independent journalism and alternative music”²⁹, founded after the “student awakening” of 1968 as one of the oldest non-commercial, non-conformist, independent, urban radios in Europe. The station promotes civil society initiatives, particularly in connection with urban lifestyles, freedom of speech, independent thought, libertarian values, cultural diversity, social critique, tolerance, social solidarity and human rights.³⁰ It operates as a standard public broadcaster on one hand since it has news bulletins, educational programmes and regular shows. On the other hand, it has a very widely set and open platform within which it operates as a community media because different minority representatives have their own shows and programmes. One of its main roles is educational one. Many prominent journalists in Slovenia went through Radio Študent school of journalism and it affect in positive way the quality of journalism in Slovenia and the society as a whole. The program is broadcast on 89.3 MHz (500 W) UKV stereo, covering Ljubljana and its surroundings (500,000 potential listeners) and via internet stream since 6 May 1998.

“Historically speaking, our community radio is connected to migrations and to the region of former Yugoslavia. Main part of that community programme is comprised of shows created by the former Yugoslav communities”, says Polona Torkar, editor-in-chief of Radio Študent.³¹ The Bosnian show was very intense because there is a need for that, it is a large community but it is not represented in any other media. Radio Študent is also the only media in Slovenia where other languages can be spoken without the need for translation or synchronization. There are also shows produced by the LGBT community, migrant community, shows devoted to workers etc. Different communities and subcultures produce their programmes within the framework of Radio Študent.

Radio Marš (<http://www.radiomars.si/>) “an independent radio with alternative music which critically defines society” from Maribor will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year, which is a miracle having in mind all the problems it has been facing for years. The Student Union of the University of Maribor decided to leave the association as one of the founders in 2007 and thus Radio Marš lost the status of media of public interest and was incorporated into the multitude of commercial radio stations. Katja Turica, the only employee of this radio, says that the co-founder tried to influence the editorial policy and that was the main reason why The Student Union of the University of Maribor had left Radio Marš.³² Their key target group are students and other young

²⁹https://books.google.si/books?id=jEtnNDQqHhIC&pg=PA53&lpg=PA53&dq=community+media+slovenia&source=bl&ots=6tt9_7s-17&sig=ACfU3U3Cb58W7Y0evaPKReRPftSeFzSIOA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj_4_Dryl7jAhXtkosKHfwvDi84FBDoATAhttps://radiostudent.si/infoAegQICRAB#v=onepage&q=community%20media%20slovenia&f=false

³⁰ www.radiostudent.si

³¹ Interview, June 2019

³² Telephone interview, June 2019

people as well as vulnerable and marginalized groups. The radio is non-commercial and non-conformist in its core.

Radio Romi (<http://www.rromic.com>) from Murska Sobota is the only Roma radio in Slovenia. It was founded in 2008. Two languages are spoken on the radio: Roma and Slovene. The publisher is the NGO *Romski informativni centar (The Roma Information Centre)*. Monika Sandreli, the radio editor-in-chief, says that they don't want to be a commercial radio since they are a minority radio raising consciousness, preserving Roma culture and language, opposing hate speech and prejudice.³³ The journalists are of Roma origin, which is very important for communication in the Roma community, says Sandreli. Radio Romi applies to the regular Annual Public Call of the Ministry of Culture where they obtain funds which are not sufficient for media operation. They haven't got the status of the media of public interest because they have only two employees and around six part-time associates.

2.1 Business model / funding

Radio Študent is co-funded by the Student Union of the University of Ljubljana. It is a basis that enables other funds. They also do marketing for outside clients, some commercials and projects which generate most of their funds. But the problem with a student organization is that the support is falling year after year.

Radio Romi is funded only through projects. They must get the status of the media of public interest so they could provide resources more easily. Slovenian government does not recognise the importance of the only one Roma radio station in Slovenia and does not grant any help to this unique radio station.

Radio Marš hasn't got the status of the media of public interest so they are left to the mercy of the market. They are funded by projects and donations, which is not going well at all. They receive no help from the local government, quite the contrary - they are being evicted by the city.

2.2 Community media in urban/local areas

Radio Študent and **Radio Marš** are very urban-oriented. Radio Študent is listened to on FM only in Ljubljana, but also online in every larger city and by people who see themselves as alternative and different from the mainstream. **Radio Romi** has regional coverage for Prekmurje.

2.3. Involvement of volunteers

Radio Študent has seven permanent employees and around 250 associates who are badly paid. Their fees are twice as small as in the other radios, so we can talk of semi-volunteering, says Mohorič. "The culture of volunteering on Radio Študent is present because people are prepared to make programmes for small or nominal fees. Desire to work on the radio and to learn must be present, because otherwise Radio Študent wouldn't be able to survive", says Mohorič. They find volunteers in auditions they hold every two years. Most of them are students and young people.

³³ Telephone interview, June 2019

Radio Marš has around 15 volunteers and only one employee. They attract them by visiting universities, distributing leaflets, pasting up posters, inviting students to auditions with the help of their friends and acquaintances. However, the volunteers generally leave after a few months.

Around six volunteers and two employees participate in the operation of **Radio Romic**. The problem is in the lack of funding and staff, since people learn how to do the work very quickly and then they leave because of the shortage of funds.

2.4. Exchange and dialogue across generations

Radio Študent and **Radio Marš** are formally recognised as student radios. Their associates and listeners are mostly young people. But the communities which are created around Študent and Marš are not only made up of young people. There are many older colleagues who can teach the younger ones how to operate a radio and also many older associates, authors of radio shows. Therefore the exchange across generations is very vivid and intense. The younger learn from the older and they make friends. There is no authority in this respect and the intergenerational communication is established on equal terms.

2.5. Use of social / digital media platforms

All three radio stations can be listened both over FM frequencies and on the Internet. Radio Študent has a well organized on-line archive of their programmes and shows. Radio Študent and Radio Marš use all the Internet platforms for promotion of their programme and networking with their listeners. Both stations say that the potential of these new digital platforms hasn't been fully exploited and that they could be used to a much larger extent. Radio Študent produces also internet TV which can be viewed on its website and on Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/user/radiostudent893>.

3. The role of community media in the larger media landscape

3.1 The challenges community media are facing

Non-recognition of community media by the government is one of the greatest problems which further results in little or no help for those media. The very demand for non-profit media to have six employees is contradictory. The government requests quite a number of employees from the media which are non-profit and which should employ volunteers from the community so they would be able to fulfil their non-profit role. The state doesn't recognize and doesn't give special status to media of the civil society and treats media founded by a company and media founded by an NGO equally. Thus, the only Roma radio Romic is treated completely the same as any other commercial radio on the only state Annual Public Call. The only two remaining community media are treated as student media. There is no plan for the minority media, so media in minority languages are treated the same as all other commercial media. It is not taken into account that such media fulfil the needs of specific communities (ethnic and other minorities) and they have trouble attracting advertisers.

3.2 Further potential of community media and recommendations

There is a tendency to blend and link investigative journalism and community media. These media are funded by citizens through their donations and subscriptions. They want to know more and they can't achieve that anywhere else because the state media are influenced by politics and commercial media are influenced by the market. That is why these web portals, podcasts and radio stations are the only place where watchdog journalism is pursued. It is noticeable in the entire region. Two best examples of blending investigative and community journalism should be mentioned: podcrto.si in Slovenia and <https://www.krik.rs/> in Serbia. They have often been in the firing line of politics and business because of their independence and uncompromising research viewpoint, especially in Serbia. According to Milan F. Živković "It's not just a matter of certain information and topics becoming "huge scandals" after being initially discovered by the non-profit media, and many media techniques, innovations and new generations of media professionals "hitting the scene" from this very sector - just like "post corporate newspapers" in the USA, for example, but the fact that non-profit media nowadays represent some kind of "the last stand" of journalism."³⁴

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