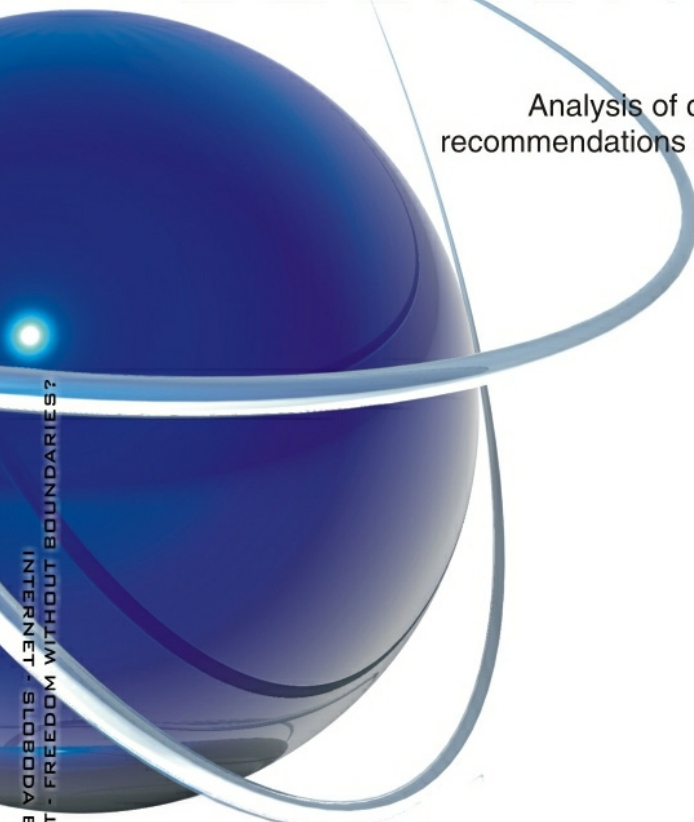


THE INTERNET - FREEDOM WITHOUT BOUNDARIES?

Analysis of comments on portals and
recommendations on better communication



Media Plan Institute in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's Media Program for South East Europe implemented the project "The Internet: Freedom without Boundaries?" The goal of the project was to use results of monitoring and analysis of influential web portals to stimulate media professionalism and the public which uses the Internet in order to actively respect professional (journalistic) and ethical postulates of communication on the Internet.



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Introduction

DEPROFESSIONALIZATION OF COMMUNICATION

Radenko Udovicic

Information technologies are changing the lifestyle of individuals and the community. The internet has become the most democratic means of communication and offers unimagined development opportunities. Internet portals and websites of mainstream public media (press, radio and television) are increasingly occupying people's attention. The trend of internet use in Bosnia-Herzegovina is rising. Portals are not just carries of information provided by news agencies and mainstream media; they are increasingly becoming exclusive sources of information in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Basically speaking, new media primarily means new channels of communication. Whenever we start using old media in a new way, we get new media. This term is often used by popular journalism which by new media denotes the Internet, network sites, computers and computer games, as well as different kinds of consoles (PS2 and 3, Nintendo), CD-ROMs, DVDs and so on. The common technical characteristic of these systems and products is that they are based on digital data (*data basic*), in other words on coded, often unclear phenomena to the human eye and ear, which achieve extreme visuality and auditivity by digital transformation. The basic unit of digital information is a bit, although it is already clear that in the future computers will operate on the basis of a quantum¹, which will enable much

¹ Controlled jump of an electron in an atom from its own trajectory to another trajectory.

faster operations. The common social element is that new media allow interactivity. Namely, in order for them to function, sometimes as a necessity and sometimes as a possibility, one must participate with one's human potentials and capabilities.

The content of new media is the basis of their credibility. Their interactivity represents a change from the one-way communication of mainstream media to diffuse communication in which every man and machine is at the same time a broadcaster and receiver. This certainly affects content and its credibility and perception. The possibility of uncontrolled posting of content on the Internet without special filtering of moral, professional and scientific research must keep us wary in its use. Unfortunately, we will never be so educated and skilled to properly assess everything we encounter. The crucial problem, if we look at the Internet purely as a medium, is that production and distribution of information on the Internet is deprofessionalized.

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The Internet offers all sorts of possibilities of publication and expression, not just to journalists and public figures, but also to those who did not have that opportunity before – to ordinary people. Forums on web portals have also become very popular and represent an irreplaceable place for exchange of information, discussion, asking various questions, as well as commenting/presenting one's opinion on all kinds of events and trends in society. However, forums on a significant number of sites, as a result of the fact that regulation of content on the net is not clearly defined, are often a place for presenting very strong nationalistic views with use of hate speech, something that is no longer present to big extent in media in BiH, at least not in direct form.

Another form of communication and public writing has also become very popular – blogs. Blogs have become an open system for presenting facts,

expressing opinions and views and public polemics. There are more and more (well-known) people who are deciding to share their thoughts with the rest of the world by creating their own blogs.

What does it look like when citizens, ordinary people, with different views, different intentions, take the pen in their own hands; in the absence of any kind of restrictions, does at least minimal culture of dialog exist in public space; what do people write about and can information published that way (which has not gone through journalistic and editorial controls) influence public opinion? Analysis of five BiH portals and two portals from Serbia and two from Croatia was based on a sample of controversial socio-political issues, i.e. issues on which political or ethnic consent is lacking, published on the home pages of the analyzed portals in a set monitoring timeframe (7 days each in June, July and August 2010). We carefully monitored readers' comments on these articles.

The following pages bring an analysis of the monitored web portals; recommendations for better communication of Internet media and their users based on the analysis results and on experience of Media Plan Institute experts in professional communication (journalism and public relations); an interview with Dunja Mijatovic, the OSCE representative for media freedom on the subject of freedom of expression on the web; and a report on a conference held in Sarajevo under the name "The Internet: Freedom without Boundaries", which brought together many editors of web portals from BiH and representatives of the regulatory agency and self-regulatory agency from BiH.

The publication in front of you portrays the current situation of very important media transformation in BiH, in which the Internet as the number two medium in BiH², trailing closely behind television which is most popular by far, is overtaking the mainstream media or entering digital convergence together with them.

² According to a survey from 2009 carried out using a poll, as the most popular medium television was chosen by 79% of respondents, followed by the Internet with 11%, radio with 7% and newspapers 4%. (Impact of Credibility on the Informational, Public Opinion and Educational Function of Media – Radenko Udovicic, 2010).

Monitoring/Analysis of Portals

THE RANGE AND IMPACT OF THE INTERNET IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPREADING OF HATE SPEECH AND SPIRIT OF INTOLERANCE

Dusan Babic

Opening remarks

Democratic character has been attributed the most to the Internet, the new and revolutionary invention, as something inherent to it, whereas its negative aspects, in contemporary jargon, constituted collateral damage. Is that really so? Of course not.

What best suits the Internet is the term – mass medium, in its literal meaning. By all relevant estimates, 40 percent of the world's population has access to the Internet today. There is no reliable data on how many people use the Internet and there is even less data on the real range and impact of the new medium.

Latest data from the Pew Research Center (www.pewcenter.org) show that 40 percent of information is obtained through the Internet and 35 percent through traditional media.

With the appearance of the Internet, advocates of absolute freedom of expression gloated.

They explained that with the dichotomy – global medium/local regulation. They alleged, namely, that it is practically unfeasible to regulate the Internet. Their triumph deflated after the case of the French branch of Yahoo in 2000, when advertising of Nazi symbols was removed by court order after strong public pressure. The French court decision was a cornerstone, after which it became crystal clear that the Internet cannot remain an unregulated medium. Most media experts agreed with the starting argument – what is illegal in traditional media must be illegal in communication in cyberspace, or in generally accepted jargon – online. The argument is derived from the starting premise – **Message matters, not the medium**. However, there is no consent yet on how to regulate the Internet. The open planetary disagreement is not the subject of this monitoring, or of the analysis which is based on it, but it is inevitable that it must touch on it.

Methodology

The focus of monitoring and analysis are websites, or as they are colloquially called – **portals** – in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In light of the close intertwinement with neighboring countries in all aspects of life, and in particular use of one language, however it may be called, as well as the political context of special ties of BiH with Serbia and Croatia, where the principle of connected vessels is strongly manifested, the subject of monitoring and analysis are also two portals from each of the two neighboring countries.

After a careful scrutiny, in particular bearing in mind the number of visits to portals and their political affiliation, we chose five portals in BiH as a representative sample:

- *Dnevni avaz (www.avaz.ba)*
- *Sarajevo-x (www.sarajevo-x.com)*
- *Poskok (www.poskok.info)*
- *Bošnjaci (www.bosnjaci.net)*
- *Frontal (www.frontal.rs)*

From Serbia, Vecernje Novosti and B-92 were included, and from Croatia Index.hr and 24 sata. It must be noted that most dailies and periodicals have online editions, but for the purposes of this monitoring and due to the specific profile of publications, as well as how representative they are among their intended audiences, the choice fell on Dnevni Avaz from Sarajevo and Vecernje Novosti from Belgrade.

As we were actually focusing on forums, i.e. comments on comments of authors or portal newsrooms, it was difficult to follow the thematic fields in the customary journalistic division, i.e. in the context of forms – news, report, commentary, interview and other. It was even more difficult to define the themes – politics, society, economy, culture, show business, sport, etc. As everything is politics in this region, its influence was inevitable and dominant and especially placed in the context of strong ethnic and religious rifts. Therefore, the basis for sampling the analyzed content was: controversial socio-political issues, i.e. issues on which political or ethnic (state) consent does not exist, and being published on the home pages of the analyzed portals in the monitored time period.

Despite all of its spectacular potentials, in terms of promoting a spirit of tolerance and overall prosperity of mankind, the Internet has unfortunately, by its immediate effects, certainly not by motivation, at the same time become a platform for spreading hate speech and intolerance. These clearly negative features have a strong echo in this region. The immediate goal of this project is precisely to examine the scope and range of the Internet in the context of spreading hate speech and spirit of intolerance. Through a sketch analysis of contents mediated through the Internet, we tried, along with pointing out its negative aspects, also to emphasize the positive ones.

Statistically speaking, we focused on comments related to monitored contents (articles) on the Internet.

We examined them through the following variables:

Type of comment:

- reaction to an article
- reaction to other comments/reactions

Stand in the comment:

- reaction containing hate speech
- not containing hate speech, but generating intolerance by narrow-minded or intolerant opinions
- comment in the spirit of discussion supported by arguments

Comment signature:

- comment signed with a person's full first and last name
- signed with a nickname
- literary or symbolic signature

In making a qualitative analysis, at the same time we tried to suggest a concise overview of the state of online journalism in this country, if we can talk at all about such a theoretic categorical apparatus, bearing in mind the fact that this type of communication in BiH and broader is still in its infancy. We also tried to draw parallels between online and traditional media, differences in messages, political affinities, as well as the aspect of interaction and synergy and related relationships and effects in the complex communication channels.

Our monitoring covered **June, July and August 2010**, with a general time span of **seven days**, although current events also required monitoring before and after the defined timeframe. It should be noted that it was not necessary to follow seven-day events in continuity.

JUNE

Dnevni Avaz

(<http://www.avaz.ba>)

In the edition of 30 June, the paper focused on a terrorist attack on a police station in Bugojno. The headline in the leading article says the attack was “revenge for Rustempasic et al.”³, quoting the Prosecutor’s Office of BiH as the source.

On the day the online edition of *Avaz* was accessed (30 June), 16 comments were observed, in which the terrorist attack is wholeheartedly condemned, but at the same time incumbent authorities are blamed for failing to act, with a message to the public that authorities can only be changed in elections. This political stand is indicative, bearing in mind that the owner of the *Avaz* company recently founded a political party which he heads, suggesting possible selectiveness on the part of the portal administrator in selecting messages and comments.

The next issue in the same edition of *Avaz* regarded confirmation of the ICTY’s first-instance sentence for Rasim Delic⁴, which was followed by 10 *pro et contra* comments, one of which, signed with a full name, was a paradigm of hate speech and intolerance: “Chetniks stink of garlic and brandy, evil-doers and criminals, they slaughtered the weak, cowards, misers, they never had the balls to fight the Mujahedins, but perished like seedlings on Ozren, we inflated you like horses...”

All comments are signed. Of course, we cannot be sure that the full names are authentic. There were no nicknames, but there were pseudonyms in the form of literary or symbolic signatures.

³ Rijad Rustempasic is a radical Islamic activist from Bugojno charged with criminal activities. A terrorist attack in Bugojno in 2010 when one police officer was killed and several were wounded is attributed to a Wahhabi group which wanted revenge for his arrest.

⁴ General Rasim Delic was the commander of the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war from 1993 to 1995.

Forum (27 June) was looking for an answer to the topic “The no. 1 problem of Muslims in BiH”. The person who initiated the topic, identified as “Osmanlija”, listed six causes of “Muslim misfortunes”, first listing “awkward neighborhood”, then “ignorance”, “poor unity of the Bosniak people”, “lack of knowledge about and lack of respect for Islam”, etc.

The *Forum* moderator, identified as “Sanjanka”, told “Osmanlija” to define “awkward neighborhood” and he tried to elaborate: “... The surroundings of the Bosnian Muslims, Serbia, Croatia, distance from the Islamic world.”

A *Forum* participant, identified as “paukov prijatelj” (spider’s friend) (28 June) quoted an unknown author: “...Find yourself within yourself in order to be found in space”, adding: “Bosniaks’ self-awareness is that no. 1, but we always see the causes in others and until we admit our own weakness, the neighbors will be blamed.”

It cannot be ruled out that these lines were actually written by one of the neighbors... This comment actually represents a crucial point for authenticity and credibility of messages on the Internet. This aspect is practically unknown in traditional media, notably in the press, where views signed by initials can be published as readers’ letters, but always stating that the full name is known to the newsroom.

Sarajevo-x

(<http://www.sarajevo-x.com>)

This portal, which presents itself as the most visited portal in BiH, especially fosters columns and commentaries.

A striking article was published on 25 June, with the superscript headline “They are not all the same” and headline “*Glasnost* to the last breath”, author Meliha Kamerić, writer.

It is an inspiredly worded plea for people to go to the polls, with the expressed hope that one day we will get the government we deserve.

It is indicative that on the day the portal was accessed (30 June), there were no reactions, comments, notes or anything else related to the column.

The Forum focused on a terrorist attack in Bugojno, posted on 27 June. By 30 June 1,293 messages were registered.

There was a broad range of condemnations of the terrorist attack in Bugojno, mostly pointing to the main culprits – SDA and Islamic Community of BiH, and also mentioning new political points for Dodik...

“The stuttering minister is a paradigm of the incompetent government, which brings us to Catch 22”, a participant in the *Forum*, signed as “Ridjobrki” (red mustache), humorously observed.

Frontal

(<http://www.frontal.rs>)

In the “Analysis” section, an article was posted under the headline “Sovereignty just a decoration” (9 June), author Dragisa Spremo. The caption under a photograph of the High Representative, “BiH has formal, but not actual sovereignty”, paraphrases a lecture given by Dr. Rajko Kuzmanovic at the “Synergy” school in Bijeljina on the subject of Constitutional Position of the Republika Srpska and BiH, which was used as a paradigm for the article. Emphasis is on unitarianist tendencies of BiH Presidency Chairman Haris Silajdzic, who “promotes his own views as the position of the state of BiH”.

Three constructive comments arrived, among which the following detail especially stands out: “... Until we all accept the reality of the relations in this region, conflicts will be our natural state of things...” Signed as “1978”.

Bosnjaci

(<http://www.bosnjaci.net>)

Presented as a web magazine with special focus on “the homeland of Bosniaks, the *Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina* (our italic), as well as the ancient Sandzak, Kosovo and all other regions where the good Bosniaks

have lived for centuries". By its artistic and graphic solution on the home page, the portal clearly positions the role of Islam.

Use of the name for BiH (given in italic) openly suggests non-recognition of the Dayton constitution of BiH, clearly indicating the magazine's editorial platform and concept. Although the portal is based in the United States, its staff and thematic orientation justify its inclusion among BiH portals.

The newsroom warns readers that it will delete comments which are insulting or contain hate speech, as well as comments which negate the aggression and genocide against Bosniaks. However, vocabulary used by the newsroom also resorts to labeling and intolerance speech. To illustrate, in an item on 30 June, Sredoje Novic, Minister of Civil Affairs (Serb official) in the BiH Council of Ministers, was described as a "potential declared fascist" because he approved a 10,000 KM grant "for the work of the Ustasha organization Croatia Libertas from Mostar". This is actually an NGO based in Tuzla (led by Leo Plockinic), whose political platform is open advocacy for a third, Croat entity, but it certainly cannot be qualified as an Ustasha, or pro-Ustasha organization. (The Ustasha were Nazi collaborators in World War II).

A news item by the FENA news agency (28 June), which carries a statement by a delegate in the BiH Parliament (Sefik Dzaferovic) that the state must respond to the attack in Bugojno, had three comments (30 June). Among them, one stands out, shifting the blame to "media of our friends/enemies and neighbors Serbs and Croats, which are full of articles about Bosniaks as a genocidal people." It is indicative that there were no retorts to such a worded statement.

Articles posted in "Columns" in the monitored period do not have a characteristic typical of this journalistic genre – sharp dissection of current events. Instead, they are philosophical treatises, or meditation on events from the recent past. Yet, one article stands out, entitled "Democracy of the Canadian horse-farm," by Milada Medic-Kazacic (25 June), which was directly inspired by a statement made by Canada's Prime Minister Harper, who vetoed a resolution on Srebrenica in the Canadian parliament. The article is permeated with a distinctly personal and bitter note and the editors supplemented the message with a caricature by an unknown

author with the caption: “Harper in the service of the three-finger genocidal policy”.

By 30 June, only three comments were posted. The first signed as “Kahfopija” (written in the ekavian dialect) writes with a sarcastic tone: “To them, all these Balkan people are the same mob”. The second comment, signed as “AidaaldaAida” deals more with the G20 summit and protests in Toronto, whereas the third one (“huso75000”) thanks the author for the “level of coverage of Canadian ’democracy”.

Poskok

(<http://www.poskok.info>)

In the monitored period, the most striking column was entitled “Zeljko Komsic – Prince of Bosnistan” (24 June), carried from Crovat and posavski-obzor.info. The opening paragraph reminds that Croats have an equal status under the Constitution, but in reality they are humiliated, outvoted and marginalized. It recalls Tolstoy’s famous comment on cheating and the shame of the one who cheats, but if the cheating continues, then shame should be on the cheated one. In the Komsic case – “Shame on us!”, says the columnist resolutely, noting that this case is a paradigm of dirty political games in Sarajevo.

A total of 66 comments arrived, of which nine are retorts to comments. The most striking are two: “ ... Go there to the one with whom you tied flags in ’91. Your flowers love you. Half of Croatia is Muslim anyway ...”. Signed “Popay”. And the second, “Zeljko was once a half-Croat. Now he has completely turned Turk and is no longer Zeljko, but Sejdo ...”, which is a clear allusion to Sejdo Bajramovic, who was installed in the former Yugoslavia by the Serbian leadership to represent Albanians. Signed “Zasi-de Za:...”

No obvious examples of hate speech were observed. As for intolerance – yes. Most comments, generally speaking, contain political stings against Croat policies in BiH. All comments, as well as reactions to comments, are signed by nicknames.

B-92

(<http://www.b92.net>)

Within the already cultic show *Pescanik*, attention was drawn by the theme “Anatomy of a moral”, as explained by the show host Svetlana Vukovic, which was directly inspired by a book of the same name written by Milovan Djilas, a prelude to his clash with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The guests were Zarko Korac, who was presented in the show as a psychologist, Vojin Dimitrijevic of the Belgrade Human Rights Center, and Srdja Popovic, lawyer.

The occasion for the show was the recent arrest of Kalinic and Simovic (part of Ulemek Legija’s⁵ gang). The main issue was the political murder of Zoran Djindjic and systematic interference with the murder investigation.

According to Korac, *Pescanik* is starting to resemble a movement of desperate people, something like the “the underwearless movement in the French Revolution”, the difference being that *Pescanik* brings together and animates intellectuals, adding an intriguing detail: “Both new saints of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Nikolaj Velimirovic and Justin Popovic, are anti-Europeans, which cannot be a coincidence.” The statement was made in the context of the dilemma – Kosovo or EU?

In a similar tone, Vojin Dimitrijevic varies the term “Honest Albanian”⁶, but “Honest Serb” does not seem to be uttered at all, adding that the difference between good and evil is not a difference of opinion. Thus, as a paradox we have use of the attribute “anti-fascist”, where its ideological opponent would actually be – fascist!

It is very indicative that there were no comments on this show! Is that a result of saturation with political issues in today’s Serbia and its public?

⁵ Milorad Ulemek Legija, former commander of Serbian special forces, is one of the main organizers of the murder of several senior Serbian politicians, including Prime Minister of Serbia Zoran Djindjic in 2003.

⁶ The term “honest” in this case is pejorative and represents a person who is acceptable to the ideological mind-set of another ethnic group. The Slobodan Milosevic government used the term “honest Albanians” for those who supported the Belgrade regime.

Vecernje Novosti

(<http://www.novosti.rs>)

“Where did we leave off? Had we only known ...” This is the title of a column by Vojo Zanic (26 June), written in the form of some 30 or so intriguing theses, starting with “Had we understood that Tito was dead and that he was not going to resurrect”, ... “Had we seen that the Berlin Wall had fallen”... “Had we trusted less the TV primetime news programs” ... “Had we known that when they finish with Bosnia, Kosovo would start” ... “Had we prevented the partisan feudalization of the country” ... “Had we admitted that Milosevic was not to blame for everything” ... “Had we chosen Europe at the right time, not when it was too late” ... “Had we watched less the ‘Farm’, ‘Big Brother’ and ‘Wedding in 24 Hours’” ...

Only two comments arrived. The first signed with a nickname (“Marinero”), “Had we kept Ante Markovic ... and sent Tudjman to Brioni on life-long summer vacation ...” The second comment was signed with a full name (Jovan Ilic) and admits – “We are to blame!”

Index

(<http://www.index.hr>)

“Saving the multiethnic Pope John Paul II” is the headline of an article (24 June) in which the author’s name was left out, although it can be made out from the comments that the author is a woman. The article starts in a characteristic way:

“Just as everything else has been muddled for years, the sense of proportion has been muddled in Bosnia-Herzegovina for a long time... Every new business building must be more modern and luxurious than previously built ones... Religious buildings are a category beyond all categories ... The towers on churches and mosques have not been radiating faith and love for a long time ... Our bell towers and minarets, due to their gigantic haughtiness, have changed air traffic routes in this part of the Balkans. ...

... The fuses which best ignite us in this power keg – war and religion – once again have achieved the goal of the political elites ... The deceased

Pope himself has been dragged into the latest humoresque in the most tragic region on the Planet ... The idea to erect a monument for the Pope in Sarajevo has alarmed the 'unitarian anti-fascists from the tolerant metropolis' who have threatened to destroy the monument. A few days later, 'wholehearted slaughter was taking place in virtual space' ...

Sixty-one comments arrived, roughly one-third of which are retorts to comments. All are signed with nicknames. There was no "wholehearted slaughter" on this portal, but there were some rare remarks, especially about Dodik, in the context of his initiative to erect a monument for the Pope in Banja Luka. Most commentators agreed that he was collecting cheap political points on the eve of the next general elections in BiH, but noted that it was an own goal, in light of the negative perception of the Vatican among the vast majority of Serbs.

JULY

Sarajevo-x

(<http://www.sarajevo-x.com>)

Column "Under the same roof" (superscript headline), "On abandonment" (headline), and "Great symbolic acts least benefit those for whom they are actually done" (sub-headline). Author Ahmed Buric, published 9 July.

The article is directly inspired by the Football Cup in South Africa, but contains reflections to Srebrenica on the eve of the 15th anniversary of the horrendous crimes. It focuses on the lower-league soccer club "Guber" to illustrate that harmonious coexistence is possible in this corner of Bosnia. The portal warns readers to abstain from hate speech, reserving the discretionary right to delete inappropriate comments.

On the day the portal was accessed (14 July), 25 comments were registered, which are practically impossible to categorize thematically because they contain at the same time elements of politics, society, culture, scandals, gossip, etc.

Here is a characteristic fragment of a comment signed as “Buric glavom...”: “It’s clear even from Mars that you are a Bosniak ... Because Serbo-Croats don’t care about healing the Bosnian wound, they want as much blood to gush from it, with which they will feed their deep and black Chetnik-Ustasha throats camouflaged by Social-Democracy from Banja Luka and pro-European Ustashahood.”

“... Only someone as stupid as a Bosniak could expect a minute of silence for Srebrenica at the European Cup final,” writes a person signed as “salihamidzic”, although the author of the column did not mention a minute of silence for the deceased in Srebrenica.

Despite the portal newsroom’s warning, a painfully vulgar curse was allowed through and was left: “Screw Srebrenica”. Posted on 10 July and signed as “hala kao kuca”. It is indicative that just one anemic reaction to the brutal curse was observed.

On the occasion of a meeting between Silajdzic and Ganic, a headline read: “Serbia must pay for everything it destroyed here” (posted on 28 July).

A broad range of comments was posted, for example – “Now Serbs will start making their primitive comments” (“Antrax”), “Everyone who is displeased by this outcome can pick up around 3 meters of reinforced clothesline and hang themselves from a plum tree” (“Bonaparte”), “... Bosnia had been waiting for such sons for centuries and all things come to him who waits!” (“Patriot”), “In the picture, only a sofa is missing” (“SSSS”), which is a clear allusion to a photo next to the article – of Ganic in Silajdzic’s office.

Unfortunately, there were also literally bloodcurdling comments, such as “I am selling land in Srebrenica. Without bones 20,000 KM per acre, with bones 50,000 KM per acre.” Signed as “Pipo”. In short – morbid!

There were some comments that are utterly offensive and vulgar. Even worse than what we call street language. Thus the rightful request to dry out the internet forum swamp.

Although the portal newsroom disassociates itself from inappropriate vocabulary, reserving the right to delete contentious content, an additional reservation was added, that “due to the large number of comments, we

are not obliged to delete all comments which violate the rules". There is no need to point out how unconvincing this reservation is, as it opens room for spreading hate speech and spirit of intolerance.

Frontal

(<http://www.frontal.rs>)

"Girls to mosques, not cafes!", presented as an analysis of a bomb attack on a police station in Bugojno. Published 14 July.

The article asks the question – "Could the tragedy have been prevented, with prior knowledge that suspects in the terrorist act had been attacking girls with knives?"

In the introduction, the unsigned article explains the essence of *tekfir* ideology, which advocates a state according to the norms of the Sharia law.

The last paragraph of the analysis, entitled "Who is next?", warns of information leaks from the top of the security structures in Sarajevo, which is why Islamists were being warned about planned security forces' operations.

The comments that arrived are moderate, without bitterness, labeling, etc.

"What do we need The Hague for?" "Issue of the Week" (21 July). Author Srdjan Puhalo, with the starting premise – will it take 100 years to investigate what happened 15 or 20 years ago?

On the day the portal was accessed (23 July), six level-headed comments arrived, emphasizing that events from the relatively recent past must be viewed in a broader political and socio-cultural context.

Report on alleged plan of C. Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy, to assume the leading role in BiH after the October elections with the aim of disciplining the "hard-line Serbs who are opposed to the BiH state and who oppose political reforms" (*Daily Telegraph*). One com-

ment catches the eye, signed as “mislim.dakle.postojim” (I think, therefore I am) (28 July): “Razija Mujanovic is Cinderella compared to this hag... The facial expressions of this so-called woman are so authentically ugly that I rightfully wonder if she is the result of incest, or perhaps zoophilia?? Forgive me for such abusive words, but the politics which she represents force me to defend myself vilely, just as I have been attacked vilely all these decades! ...”

Or, a comment signed as “magnaterra” (29 July): “Things have heated up nicely. From Ashton to polarization of national(istic) interests ... The fact is that Mile has done a lot for the RS, but even more for himself ... And that is why he doesn’t give a damn what the opposition is saying...”

A fragment of this comment, among the 50 or so which arrived, actually sublimes the essence of what was said. Apart from insulting comments about C. Ashton, all other comments are distinctly fair, with an abundance of apt political observations on the subject of internal Serb disputes, in the context of the current situation in the RS.

Poskok

(<http://www.poskok.info>)

“FAIR The Islamic Community is calling for bilingualism to be established on FTV or a special channel to be set up in the Bosnian language” (21 July).

The news item quotes *Vecernji List*, according to which Reis Ceric, last weekend at the opening of a mosque in Ilijas, said that it is unacceptable that Bosniaks must listen to a “language which they do not understand” on the public broadcasting service. Ceric was alluding to use of the word “rujan” instead of “septembar” (meaning September).

This is the first time that the top authority of the BiH Islamic Community openly called for the creation of a special public channel in the Bosnian language. Bosniak political parties have so far vehemently rejected that possibility. Salmir Kaplan, SDA spokesman, reminded that Mula-Mustafa

Baseskija⁷ was using the term “rujan” as a word in the Bosnian language 200 years ago.

Most comments that arrived (18) dispute even the existence of the term “Bosnian language”, whereas the more malicious ones suggest the term “Bosniak language”. The dominant view of the participants in discussion is that this is Croatian or Serbian language.

News on an announcement by the Wahhabis related to organization of sports games on Mt. Vlasic was accompanied by 15 truly toxic comments (21 July).

“They must have planned to play rotten mare” (“jaca.jadre”), or “They will lead Bosniaks to the proper path (“Maxo...”), or “No kidding, sports games, or fast ass washing, under the auspices of Silajdzic and Bakir (“sport”), or “... Jump around Vlasic and call Muhamed the slutty one”, also signed as “sport”. One comment especially catches the eye: “The Wahhabis are Ustasha brothers. For Home...”, signed as “kupres”.

A radiant column, entitled “SEPTEMBER IS NO LONGER LUSH”, was also carried from an author’s blog (Rajko Vasic, 20 July), “... And then, on that communist FTV, recently, they mentioned *rujan* (September)...” After that a genesis of this calendar term is provided (*rujan* is the word for September, but also means dark red). “... Rujan is an Old Slav evil, which does not originate from the East and is not a word that marks blood from a saber, but rather the coloring of nature in early autumn, when everything is dark red...”

Seventy-three comments arrived in support of the author of the column, a frequent guest on this portal whose official slogan is “For social decontamination”.

In the spotlight was the column “Croats for, Rant against” (31 July), author Jozo Cosic.

⁷ Well-known Bosniak intellectual and writer.

“Federalization of BiH is talked about a lot. For each argument presented, opponents want more ... Arguments are not the problem; the problem is the narrow-mindedness of those who want more. The situation is explained by the fact that opponents of federalization and entitization mostly reside in Sarajevo. It is sneaky that they are registering themselves as Posavina residents and Bosnian Croats ... Guided by healthy logic, we reach this conclusion, but unfortunately not everyone has that logic! Mr. Dean Rant (leader of Posavina Croats, our note) is opposed to the idea of a Croat territorial unit, but he advocates what ??? Actually, not even he knows what he advocates, but it is important that he is opposed.”

The author of the column concludes that “a third federal unit is the only road to equality of Croats in BiH”.

Most comments are skeptical regarding the idea of a third entity. There was no hate speech in the comments, but mostly stings as an echo of inter-ethnic animosities.

Bosnjaci

(<http://www.bosnjaci.net>)

In the course of monitoring, it becomes obvious that the portal is dominantly pro-Sandzak⁸ profiled.

On 1 July a column was published under the title “The Cross and the Mufti”, by Ferid Fetko Santic, directly inspired by a photomontage published in the Belgrade paper *Blic*, which shows the Mufti of Sandzak Zukorlic in an Orthodox garb and with a cross on his head. The *Blic* newsroom in the meantime apologized for the blasphemic act, but the author of the column insists on the message of the photomontage: “That message was short, simple, direct and it says: “You will be converted to Serbhood. You will be Christianized... you will be converted to Montenegrinhood, Croathood... you will be turned into *White Gypsies*”, printed in bold type.

⁸ Sandzak is a region divided between Serbia and Montenegro and is mostly inhabited by Bosniaks (Muslims).

The author provides a concise genesis of the term “White Gypsies”, which dates back to the time when Serbia gained independence and when Muslims in order to keep their land had to become Christian or declare themselves as Gypsies, later popularly called “White Gypsies” to differentiate them from the authentic “black Gypsies”.

The author recognizes the gravity of the expressed qualifications, with the intention of bringing Bosniaks to their senses.

The weak echo of the column is indicative. By 14 July only three anemic comments with moderate support for the article were posted.

A MINA agency news item (15 July) on a meeting between Reis Cerić and Ejup Ganić in London was abundantly commented. One comment especially stands out:

“If the academician Prof. Dr. Ganić, our most eminent citizen of BiH, falls, no one will be able to guarantee a single official of Britain or Serbia freedom in BiH and they will never again be desirable to come to our country!!! All of US who love BiH, we are all GANIC, we are all BiH. WE are all proud of the work and name of Ejup Ganić who has marked (written in ekavian dialect) the time that we are living in!!!” Signed as “trend”.

Announced church bells on the day the International Court of Justice pronounces its decision were greeted with cynicism. Here is a typical comment: “Ha, ha, ha, political prayer of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The more one lives, the more wonders one learns about.” Signed as “Elifa”, 21 July.

“New defeat of the policy of creating a Greater Serbia,” by Semir Džulić (28 July).

“... The acquittal only confirms what all patriots, Mr. Ganić himself and his family, as well as the whole democratic world, knew from the day Mr. Ganić became a victim of the Serbian judiciary in the service of the Greater Serbia ideology, effort to revise historic facts, negation of genocide and planned equalization of the victim and aggressor.”

It is noticeable that the author frequently uses the term “acquittal” which is pure manipulation. The British court, namely, only decided on Ganic’s requested extradition to Serbia, explaining that he would not have a fair trial there, without going into Ganic’s potential guilt or innocence. Other media in Sarajevo also used this angle in reporting.

On the day the portal was accessed (31 July), not a single comment on the above article was posted.

Dnevni Avaz

(<http://www.avaz.ba>)

An interesting column, “NIQAB”, was written by Sead Numanovic, Editor-in-Chief of *Dnevni Avaz* (26 July).

Here are some remarkable parts of the article: “BiH is evidently in the same situation as countries that survived terrorist attacks. That situation is characterized by insecurity, which is manifested in aggressiveness, intolerance and wariness of everyone who is even the least bit ‘suspicious’ ... Is our attitude to women ... fair? ... Do we need the niqab in BiH today? Short and clear – YES! ... Of course, things are not that simple. It must be decided what is the line at which my freedom jeopardizes the freedom of someone else and who is authorized to draw the line of freedom...”

On the day the portal/online edition of *Dnevni Avaz* was accessed (30 July), 34 comments were posted.

Debate was initiated by Aida Sabic who pointed out in the first retort that if it is someone’s right to wear the niqab, it is her right to criticize it or express her opinion about it.

“A Muslim cannot criticize Allah’s rule because by doing that he declares himself an infidel ...” (“mmmm bbbb”), after which Sabic points out the problem of interpretation, recalling different statements by Muslim clerics, some of whom claim that the covering of women is an obligation (farz) whereas others claim the opposite, noting that the issue of interpretation is typical not just in Islam, but in the other monotheistic religions too.

Vecernje Novosti

(<http://www.novosti.rs>)

“Reconciliation above everything” is the title of an opening article signed by initials (D.M.) and starting with the statement that reconciliation in the region will be at the very top of two presidents’ political agendas. The article was published on 19 July on the occasion of Croatian President Ivo Josipovic’s visit to Belgrade.

The next day, 14 comments were observed, only two of which hailed the Croatian president’s visit to Serbia, whereas the others contained negative perceptions of that event. Hate speech was not observed, but they did focus on history, recalling genocides experienced by Serbs in the 20th century.

In short, there was no vulgarity, or hate speech and intolerance in the posted comments. Here and there, there were some witty comments, stings, etc.

“We stand by Serbia even when it errs” is the title of an interview made by Dubravko Vujanovic with Milorad Dodik (27 July).

The article emphasized Dodik’s stand, presented in a sub-headline: “...Serbia must be aware that Kosovo is lost. It’s time to try to get a part of the province through division.”

Commenting on the situation in BiH, Dodik concluded among other things that “Bosnia is a mentally divided country. Bosnia is a big mistake of the West”, to which the journalist responded: “The West will never admit that, and will continue to view you as a destroyer?”

Thirty-seven *pro et contra* comments were posted, but without inflammatory rhetoric, vulgar words or hate speech.

B-92

(<http://www.b92.net>)

The forum “Politics and society”, started following a physical attack on the journalist Teofil Pancic, contained condemnation of that act, expressing regret that something like that happened in Serbia. Yet, one comment

deviates to some degree, signed as “strani placenik” (foreign mercenary) (25 July). “I don’t know if the bus was cheering on, but statistics show that at least two of the passengers must have recorded the whole event by mobile telephone ... You can’t expect protection from the state which raised these clubbers and which very possibly even sent them on assignment.”

It should be pointed out that *B-92* is going through a crisis, which is primarily reflected in a staff drain, notably loss of their top professionals. The cult shows “Pescanik” and “Insajder”, due to a combination of still unclear circumstances, are stagnating, which has had a negative reflection on the media organization’s overall position.

Index

(<http://www.index.hr>)

According to credible estimates, *INDEX.HR* is considered the most authoritative and most visited portal, not just in Croatia, but in the immediate neighborhood as well. What is especially popular is the *IndexForum*, whose motto is: “100% tolerance for diversity, 0% tolerance for insult.” All comments are level-headed and witty. Participation from Serbia is noticeable, at least judging from the ekavian dialect used. Items on President Josipovic’s visit to Serbia were commented on with distinct sympathies, especially an article entitled: “To Ivo with friendship, Boris”, signed by the initials F.M. and posted on 19 July.

24 sata.br

(<http://www.24sata.hr>)

This is a clear news portal, but it also fosters discussion. As a rule, politically sensitive issues are raised, such as – “Is it time for B. Tadic to visit Vukovar?”, asked on 19 July. On the day the web site was accessed (20 July), 23 comments arrived.

“The war is still going on, but using other means!”, a participant in the discussion concludes his thoughts, defining Josipovic’s visit to Serbia as “scheming between a godless man and a Chetnik.”

It is indicative that mutual animosities are especially displayed by those who were not even born during the siege of Vukovar.

There are some comments based on completely opposite inspirations too. Especially illustrative is an example of a café in Borovo Naselje, where Croats and Serbs and others together cheered on Serbia during the recent World Cup in South Africa! That truly sounds almost unreal. Or perhaps we are too used to the stereotype that dominates the Internet forum blog...

AUGUST

Dnevni Avaz

(<http://www.avaz.ba>)

In the spotlight is a column dubbed “Belgrade loser in London” (2 August) written by Nihad Krupic.

A sub-headline in the form of a lead says: “The Serbian authorities’ motivation in this process is among other things related to giving importance to its current role of the West’s ‘stable’ partner and impressing in particular the American government with the political climate in Serbia, which should give it a special and even leading place in the consolidation of the situation in the Balkans.”

The author first states that the Belgrade government suffered “two knock-outs in a matter of just ten days”, referring to the advisory opinion of the International Justice Court in The Hague on the legitimacy of Kosovo’s declaration of independence and refusal of a London court to extradite Ejup Ganic to Serbia.

The author is shocked by a statement by Milorad Barasin, Chief Prosecutor of the Court of BiH, that Ganic has not been cleared of charges for the Dobrovoljacka Street crime, but only of extradition to Serbia. The author also agrees with the views of some Bosniak political leaders, as well as part of the Bosniak public and Bosniak media, that the London court decision at the same time confirms the character of the war in BiH as an act of aggression committed against BiH.

Further, payment of war reparations would finally lift the morale of the “already completely disappointed and nearly desperate Bosniak people”.

That this column contains a note of anti-Serb sentiment is vividly illustrated by the following sentence: “Just as all Germans could not be SS or Gestapo officers, all Serbs are not Chetniks, but responsibility must be borne by *everyone* (our bold), due to the very percentage of the infatuated Serbian masses from the Gazimestan rally to this day.” ?!

On the day the online edition of *Avaz* was accessed (3 August), six comments arrived. Three comments were written by one author (Nedžad Selmanovic), who mostly laments over the disappearance of Yugoslavia. However, an interesting comment was signed as “astarea” and literally says: “Why don’t you, Indian, have the first kick, as you have already stated so much nebulousness.”

The author of the column, namely, at one point describes the current political situation as a football game, in which the ball is right on the Serbian goal line and someone from the BiH political team just needs to push it over the goal line...

“Elections and BiH diaspora” (11 August). Author Mirela Kukan

“Serb and Croat government officials are not allowing the way voters outside BiH are registered to be changed because they are afraid of Bosniak votes, but what are Bosniak politicians doing”, says the sub-headline of the article.

“ ... The figure of 36,474 of them who will have the right to vote in this year’s general elections in BiH is more than devastating compared to the fact that 1.2 million BiH citizens live outside their country”, reminding that the diaspora consists of “most Bosniaks by far, for whom Serb and Croat representatives are not allowing a passive registration system.”

At the end of the article, the barb of criticism is pointed at responsible ministers who, “what a coincidence, come from the Party for BiH which has been driving us crazy for years with the story of their nation-building policies.”

Of the 18 comments that arrived, among which as many as five are posted by one author (“e-davud”), blame is mostly attributed to the Bosniak side, to politicians equally as the Bosniak diaspora.

Inappropriate language was not observed in comments, but we sense a selective approach on the part of the *Avaz* online edition's administrator in choosing, i.e. deleting undesirable comments, in the context of favoring a newly-created political party headed by the *Avaz* owner.

"Vildana-style as a phenomenon" (part three). Author Ugo Vlasisavljevic (12 August)

The third part, like the previous two, was originally published in *Global* political magazine, an edition of the *Avaz* company, but it is advertised and available in the *Dnevni Avaz* online edition. Ugo Vlasisavljevic is a regular *Global* columnist.

"How, then, have the three candidates been presented: one is excellent, the other does not amount to much, and the third as a thief and thug! The candidates were not really presented here; they were on trial." (Article sub-headline).

A concise genesis of the term "Vildana-style" (*Vildanovstina* in Bosnian) must be provided here. It is derived, namely from the term "Avaz-style" (*Avazovstina*) which is attributed to Ivan Lovrenovic (2003) and stands for a paradigm of poor journalism: "petty politicking, lack of professionalism and tendency toward public lynch."

The third part of the essay is directly inspired by an issue in Saturday's *Oslobodjenje* supplement *Pogledi*, whose author is Vildana Selimbegovic, the paper's editor-in-chief. Three candidates were presented: Haris Silajdzic, Bakir Izetbegovic and Fahrudin Radoncic. Extensive interviews were made with the first two (more extensive with the first one, with more convincing spin in editorial presentation), whereas the third candidate was truly just put on trial, "because he, in her view, deserves a cell, not an office!" (Vlasisavljevic)

This is all related to a deep political and media conflict between *Dnevni Avaz*, which until recently presented an all-Bosniak front and which today presents the political line of its founder Fahrudin Radoncic, and secular media from Sarajevo, which are mostly left-oriented. These media often, in arguing their stands and convictions, very aggressively, sometimes

unprofessionally too, attack those with different political views. The term “Avaz-style” has been used by these media as a paradigm of non-professionalism, and Vlasisavljevic, who comes from a secular-liberal ambiance, calls this kind of political lamenting “Vildana-style”.

It is indicative, however, that in the two weeks after the publication of the third part of the essay, only one comment was observed, anemic and clumsy, reinforcing our previously expressed feeling of a possible, on someone’s hint, selective-arbitrary process on the part of the *Avaz* online edition’s administrator. Or, perhaps, the distinct abstinence in commenting is actually a result of weak public opinion? We have to remember that around 40 percent of the population here is functionally illiterate! They know how to read, but they do not know – what they are actually reading. Vlasisavljevic’s essay certainly does not constitute popular reading.

Be that as it may, this aspect of media and communication phenomenology requires more extensive research.

Sarajevo-x

(<http://www.sarajevo-x.com>)

In the spotlight is a concert held by Zdravko Colic⁹ at Kosevo. The opening article and video clip received as many as 243 comments!

On the day the portal was accessed, 3 August, we read *pro et contra* messages. Despite the newsroom’s unconvincing reservation that not all contents can be deleted, we observed the following comment, a paradigm of hate speech:

“There you have your Serb slaughterers, since you haven’t learned anything from the wars and their slaughters across Bosnia-Herzegovina. Now it will not be Srebrenica, but Sarajevo that will be the target of Chetnik slaughter. There you have your Serbs and they should slaughter you that way in every war,” signed as “@sarajlija”, 1 August.

A short reaction to the above comment came from a commentator signed as “Dr”. (1 August)

⁹ Zdravko Colic is the most popular singer in the former Yugoslavia coming from Sarajevo. Right before the war, he went to Belgrade where he lives and works today. At the concert in Sarajevo, which the article speaks about, there were 60,000 visitors.

“All scum has access to the internet. Long live healthy and open mind!”

There was an abundance of comments in Zdravko Colic’s defense, reminding that he went to Belgrade before the war, that he never kissed three times¹⁰, nor spoke ekavian...

There were messages of surprise at the scope of the expressed inter-ethnic hatred...

Poskok

(<http://www.poskok.info>)

“CROATS - LIKE MONKEYS IN A BOX: How Serbs lost the ‘Krajina’ and won the RS”

Title of an unsigned column posted on 3 August.

“... In BiH everyone attributes the phasing out of the HRHB¹¹ to Tudjman and a big part of unaware Croats in BiH tragically considers it a shameful part of their history.”

Rejection of Peace agreement for Croatia “Plan Z-4”, which would in effect constitute a state within a state, was commented on lucidly and humorously: “That sometimes even the universe conspires to thwart an injustice was confirmed when Mile Martić refused that plan in Geneva!!”

In the end everything is spiced up with an experiment with monkeys who are trying to reach bananas hanging from the ceiling, but they are thwarted each time by splashes of ice-cold water. The experiment with monkeys, as a political metaphor of Croat behavior, was carried from the Zagreb-based portal *Obzor*.

On 4 August, 26 comments were registered. Here are some characteristic ones:

¹⁰ When they greet each other, Serbs kiss three times, unlike Bosniaks and Croats who kiss twice. Although this is rooted in religion, it is a rare secular difference among the three peoples in BiH.

¹¹ The Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna (HR HB) is a territorial unit which was active in BiH during the war. With the creation of the Federation of BiH in 1994, territories controlled by Croat and Bosniak military forces were united.

“Paradoxically, but the wry-mouthed one accepted the Z-4. However, the thick-headed Mile saved us. It is most important to have a fool in the enemy ranks, who is a bigger fool than your own fool ...” Signed as “ja” (me).

A long message was also posted (signed as Franjo Komarica). Regardless of the item’s authenticity, whether it is the Bishop of Banja Luka Komarica, what is certainly welcoming is the constructive way he suggests for improving the position of Croats in the RS.

“The columnist is probably talking about monkeys first hand because he obviously lives at Maksimir Zoo”. Signed as “pero kvrzica:...”

There were no outbursts of intolerance either ethnically motivated or as a result of disputes within one ethnic group. In this case specifically Croats. Everything mostly came down to humorous comments and stings, as normally characterizes internet forum communication, which is visibly more leisurely and relaxed than polemics in traditional media.

Reactions to Zeljko Komsic’s presence at this year’s 205th Tilters’ Tournament of Sinj in Croatia were fierce, especially related to absolute lack of legitimacy of Komsic’s presence as an alleged representative of BiH Croats.

Here are just two characteristic messages:

“As a result of greed and vanity of Croat politicians in BiH, converts to Islam will again elect Komsa for us”, signed as “kukavicije jaje” (cuckoo in the nest).

A message by “RID jo Brki”, written in capital letters, says: “Zeljko, give our salaam to Stipe at the pig tilters’ tournament!”

“POLEMIC FROM *BH DANI*: LUCIC’S RESPONSE TO IVAN LOVRENOVIC”

Poskok portal carries (6 August) an article by Ivo Lucic from *Dani* in full.

A concise genesis of the polemic must first be provided. Namely, after a two-year pause, the 14th issue of Mostar-based *Status* magazine came out. Its preparation was accompanied by a lot of controversy on the proposed theme, to paraphrase – in search of a paradigm of Croat policies in BiH.

Ivan Lovrenovic, after finding out the names of authors of items in *Status*, refused to write his article and published an extensive explanation in *Dani*, where he especially swooped down on Ivo Lucic. In an equally extensive response, Lucic did not spare him either. Here are just a few characteristic fragments:

“ ... His picture of Bosnia is badly needed by the illusionists who are trying to reintegrate 'these territories', to unite 'our peoples' and to square accounts with 'their nationalisms' ... Croat politicians in BiH are not accepting his ideas and do not consider them their own, just as he, judging by everything, does not see political Croathood as part of his identity... Lovrenovic alleges that I don't understand 'Bosnianhood as a deep historic identity structure without which no serious historic and political foundation of Croathood is possible in Bosnia-Herzegovina', and states that 'the depth and identity-related polyvalence resulting from it are a red flag to all Lucics', i.e. to everyone who stands for general Croat national interests ...”

On the day the portal was accessed (6 August), a total of 17 comments arrived, most of them pro-Lucic. One comment (“djivo”) gives Lovrenovic credit for his style and erudition, but emphasizes that he was “mentally and intellectually shaped and matured in a time of political conformism ... everything else is just petty acting for a crust of bread in Sarajevo, where he will always have to prove his alleged anti-Croat integralist position ...”

In a similar tone is a comment labeling Lovrenovic as a “Bosniak helper ... totally sunk in Bosniak 'multiculti”.

Only one comment offers an obvious example of hate speech and spirit of intolerance:

“Why didn't they blow up this Lovrenovic guy instead of that Leutar guy?!” Signed as “mostarac888”.

“COUNTERATTACK BY COVIC'S ERRAND BOY” (11 August). An article by Dr. Slavo Kukic, carried in its integrity from *Depo.ba* portal, resulted in 37 comments, most of which display strong antipathy toward the author of the column. Here are fragments of some characteristic comments:

“You were gripped by panic because to write ten commentaries against Covic in one month says something... After all, I am one hundred percent certain that you will be prosecuted for breaking off an insurance contract with Hercegovina Osiguranje and concluding a contract with Euroherc. That way, you damaged HT Mostar by 1.2 million marks. And for that, buddy, one goes to Zenica (prison) ...” Signed as “MR. KUKAC”.

“To repeat, the ‘Republic of Croatia committed aggression against Bosnia-Herzegovina’, Vecernjak, April 2002.” Signed as “Slavko bez Mirka”.

“My friend Slavo, once a fighter for ideals and today a Bosniak governor and regent for Herzegovina, talks about honesty and morality ... What does comrade Zlaja say, when does the column have to come out again? ... “Signed as “drug” (comrade).

“ ... Don’t defend Mr. Prlic, prepare your own defense.” Signed as “besjeda”.

Apart from political stings, there was no hate speech in the posted comments. The official motto – “Portal for social decontamination” clearly suggests a political affiliation, in the sense of moving away from retrograde ideologies and movements. Not without significance is advertising of portals of a similar political option – *Depo.ba* or *Buka, online magazine for online thinkers*.

Along with comments, the portal regularly issues the warning that it will remove articles which are insulting or labeling.

Frontal

(<http://www.frontal.rs>)

“QUANTUM POLITICS” is the title of a column written by Srdjan Puhalo (1 August), with the sub-title: “How can the term quantum politics explain the rule of the SNSD?”

“ ... In order to explain the SNSD’s current rule, we must use a new term, quantum politics ... Quantum physics and mechanics allow for atoms, molecules and our prime minister to be located in two places at the same time ...” Here are two characteristic comments, out of several which arrived on the day the portal was accessed (4 August):

“It is a lesser problem that DODIK is overturning the principle of quantum physics. It is a greater problem that he is stealing and destroying what took generations to create and that he is allegedly making what thousands of VRS (RS Army) soldiers and innocent civilians died for, while he was making RONHILL.” Signed as “Milashin” (2 August)

“Don’t fall for Puhalo’s provocations. Until recently, he was swearing on the SNSD and Dodik and now he is criticizing him. He must have been left without the promised fee. Mile fooled him and now he is standing up to him, poor him, or is it their trick again?” Signed as “lugar” (forester) (2 August)

These two comments illustrate attitude to the SNSD and Dodik, in other words perception of political options and current events in the RS, mediated by this portal. A spin message catches the eye: **“Frontal’s first birthday! The only Cyrillic portal west of the Drina!”**

“VASIC: IVANIC AND CAVIC ARE FOREIGN PLAYERS” (4 August). In the form of a lead, with a big photo of Rajko Vasic, the SNSD executive secretary, he was quoted as saying that PDP President Mladen Ivanic and DP President Dragan Cavic are actually “the favorites of the international backstage factors”, which Raffi Gregorian allegedly confirms in his farewell interview with RTRS.

Further on, the unsigned article says that Gregorian’s interview revealed that the opposition in the RS is manipulated, emphasizing that the SDS was just used as a voting potential which is supposed to do the work for Ivanic and his seat in the BiH Presidency.

In the end, the article underlines Vasic’s view that after the cards are revealed, the “SDS structure and membership will probably wonder why they are losing time with the Ivanic – Cavic duo”.

Here are some characteristic fragments from comments that arrived the same day the article was published:

“Does anyone still remember Spiric’s words ‘Milokrad Dodik’ (combined with the word ‘*krasti*’ which means to steal, our note). Either I am wrong or I shouldn’t believe my own eyes, because I watched when Spiric said that”. Signed as “mlato”.

“ ... Every vote for the PDP and DP is the same as betrayal of the Republika Srpska. I pray to God that the SDS finally gets the upper hand and starts ruling together with the SNSD so that traitors, followers of the grave-digger’s policies, false radicals, red bastards and all other scumbags would drop dead”. Signed as “Mladjan Dinkic”.

“... Vasic admitted that he had been a sniper during the war – throughout the war. It is known in the whole world that such soldiers become psychiatric cases, which is already the case with Vasic, but there is no one to shut up the dog, so he should not be taken seriously.” Signed as “lugar” (forester).

“... If foreigners brought these and punished those, how come now those who were punished are foreign mercenaries and these that the foreigners brought are patriots? Try not to turn things upside-down and to maintain a line of reason, because reason has not yet said good night here, and we don’t know when that will happen ...” Signed as “kosta”.

“... It will come to light one day how much money the Americans invested from 2002 to 2008 through NDI in Dodik and his party. The figure will be mind-boggling.” Signed as “mika-hakkinen”.

The posted comments all reflect internal Serb disputes, occasionally inflammatory, with elements of defamation (“red bastards and all other scumbags”). It seems that the prevalent view, at least on this portal, is that hate speech and intolerance spirit within one ethnic or national group is a lesser evil than inflaming inter-ethnic hatred. Unfortunately, in the context of the tragic Balkan frictions and disputes, focusing on the past and too much history, mythomania, spirit of revendication and related social pathologies, the above comment on the lesser evil seems appropriate...

Bosnjaci.net

(<http://www.bosnjaci.net>)

“THE POLITICAL POINT OF DODIK’S STATEMENTS ON REPUBLIKA SRP-SKA SECESSION” Author: Fikret Muslimovic (9 August): The article states in the form of a lead: “Dodik’s statements on RS secession are a call for illegal arming”. Further elaborating the argument, Dodik’s secession statements are actually the cause of illegal arming. This “armament race

is a threat to BiH and the Balkan region, which may escalate all kinds of organized crime and corruption, even terrorism ...”

The author says that there is no secession without war, from which he concludes that the Serb side is ready for that option too. He adds, “Therefore, with the secession story, questions of war and peace are raised in the most direct way”, and concludes the article by saying: “... In Dodik’s latest statements, there is enough justification, in the interest of peace and preventing bloodshed, to deprive him of any possibility of working in politics.”

On the day the portal was accessed (11 August), only 4 comments arrived, all doubting the credibility of the article author, in the context of his past as a high-ranking intelligence officer in the former JNA (Yugoslav People’s Army) who came to BiH in 1993.

Index

(<http://www.index.hr>)

“STORM: 15 YEARS SINCE CROATIA’S DESTRUCTION OF GREATER SERBIA”. Author Zvonko Alac (3 August). “The implementation and effects of the operation were not without sin, but Storm is one of the most important events and the greatest victory in Croatian history”, says the article in the form of a lead, with a characteristic sub-section heading: “Greatest victory with a big shadow over it”.

This commemorative article on the day the portal was accessed (4 August) was accompanied by 412 comments. Although INDEXFORUM constantly emphasizes its motto of tolerance to diversity, vulgar and even defamatory language often slips through. Is that a reflex of relaxedness in internet forum communication, or is it a reflex of our deep inter-ethnic rifts? Be that as it may, in retorts from the Croat side, there are also elements of fascism, such as “you have Turks to thank for your being so black and sooty”!

There are threats from the position of a Greater Serbia too, in the style of Beckovic’s¹² poem “Ceracemo se jos” (meaning we will continue to chase

¹² Matija Beckovic, well-known Serb poet. In BiH and Croatia, he is considered a big Serb nationalist

each other). Or, even quoting an inscription in the form of a catchphrase standing on the façade of a church in Magdeburg: “Protect us God from the plague and Croats”, inspired by the allegedly sadistic behavior of Croats who came all the way to Germany during the 30 Years Religious War, when they allegedly displayed unheard-of cruelty and barbarianism. Or, as the author who is evidently a historian reminds that the biggest crimes at Cer in World War II were committed by the Devil’s Division of the Austro-Hungarian Army, mostly “Croats and Mohammedans ... All that before Jasenovac and other execution sites of Serbs, during the Ustasha reign of terror.”

“SERBS ON WILLOWS: WHAT IS CELEBRATED BY STORM, VICTORY OR REVENGE?” Written by: Tomislav Klauski (5 August): “The game was around the 20th minute when ‘My Homeland’ resounded from the Maksimir Stadium stands. As enchanting, pompous and slimy as it is, it brought to the people the memories of those fame and glory days. And just as the surprised HTV commentator was starting to praise the Bad Blue Boys, at the same time that well-known roar started from the stands: “Serbs on willows! Kill, kill, kill the Serb!”

That is folklore. A bit of love for the homeland, a bit of hatred for Serbs. That is also the image of Storm: explanation that it was a legitimate liberating operation, mixed with accusations of war crimes whose perpetrators are currently waiting for sentencing by The Hague tribunal...

...What has burdened relations between the two countries for years has now become a formality that is performed every August. And while it is clear that the Croatian government, under the influence of Brussels and Washington, has accepted that Serbia still considers Storm a crime, the much more important question is whether at the same time it has accepted that Croatian citizens are silent about or approve the criminal aspect of Storm?

“Victory is revenge”, sub-section headline

Unfortunately, last night’s chanting on Maksimir confirms that victory in the Homeland War is still identified in Croatian society with revenge against Serbs. Many Croats rejoice at the country’s liberation almost equally as at the fact that 250,000 Serbs were expelled from Croatia by it. They love Croatia as much as they hate Serbs. Thus it is entirely logical that the sickly sweet ‘My Homeland’ is followed by the thunderous roar ‘Kill the Serb!’

... Will we ever for our own sake deal with the ghosts of Storm?

Numerous print and broadcast media, both in Croatia as in neighboring countries, carried the column in parts or in full, or quoted some impressive paragraphs, which confirms the importance of *INDEX.HR*.

On the day the portal was accessed (6 August), as many as 437 comments arrived, varying broadly – from dispute to approval.

Here are some characteristic ones:

“Klauski is evidently going through some very difficult moments of mental derangement”, signed as „kfskjkhajkhal“.

“It is sad that on a portal with an HR domain a journalist can write that My Homeland is slimy ... Klauski, shame on you, that song does not insult anyone, why would it be slimy?” Signed as “PeraDjetlic” (Woody Woodpecker).

“... There is no STORM, there is no heroic fight of the Croatian armed forces, it’s a shameful expulsion of 250,000 people from their homes where they had lived for centuries, with some sporadic resistance by a few little groups of the Serb DISBANDED army ...” Signed as “77swelfer”.

“... Tomislav, the hatred for Serbs is a hatred that dates back to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and it is not from yesterday, and Croats are least to blame for that hatred; those who wanted to rule over Croats (are to blame) ...” Signed as “dubravko64”.

In short, explicit hate speech was not observed.

“WITH SANADER AND CHRIST AGAINST COMMUNISTS” (12 August)
Written by: Tomislav Klauski

“The way events unfolded was very symptomatic. As Ivo Sanader was landing in Los Angeles with his family, and his friend’s mistress landed at Remetinec, the editor-in-chief of *Glas Koncila* lit the stake for all those ‘communists’ who ‘took complete control of the strongest Croatian party after Sanader.” This is the opening paragraph of the article.

“What would the church do without communists?”, says a sub-section headline.

“ ... In all that, 'communists' sound so good. So ominous, perfidious, selfish, non-national. Like once 'Jews' in Nazi Germany. Or 'terrorists' in the Bush America. At their very mention, blinds are rolled down and HDZ is voted for”.

The last paragraph, with the sub-section headline: “Church rarely on victim's side”, states:

“The HDZ has already started mentioning Tadjman, the atmosphere is heating up in Cavoglave, the orthodox right wing is threatening with rallies, Reverend Sudac is singing at festivals, a reception is being organized for Ante Gotovina in Pakostani, and Miklenic (Ivan Miklenic, editor-in-chief of *Glas Koncila*, our note) is opening the communist hunt season. The proper way to forget about the one who landed in Los Angeles a few days ago. Instead of at Remetinec (prison).”

Below are some characteristic comments, in full or in fragments.

“ ... Young PROLETARIANS are coming all over the world! The church is now a thing of the past!”. Signed as “barufniopticaј”.

“Long live communists ... what would the church do without them ...”
Signed as “kokica-rikica”.

“A clerical-fascist organization such as the church should be condemned by all progressive forces in the world. More people died under the sign of the cross and at the hand of the inquisition than from the swastika and five-pointed star together. Literally dripping from every cross is the blood of Christ, who died on it, and of billions of victims of the perverted organization ... The paradigm that communists and Serbs are to blame for everything here is more than shabby ... Unfortunately, there are enough of them in Croatia for their party to win elections. Certainly, they could not do that without the help of our dear guardians who are using experience thousands of years old – how to control a stupid flock of sheep and other small-toothed cattle.” Signed as “binarni-vitez” (binary knight).

“That’s all true, but I just don’t know where we can find those progressive forces”. Signed as “borges”.

“If it were up to them, we would return to the Middle Ages, again burn witches and bring back the inquisition.” Signed as “Pero-Batina”.

“Is this like some little INDEX pamphlet against the Church? They are not very imaginative, I’ve read better atheistic articles. This one is full of hate, without humor.” Signed as “teutina7”.

“Don’t bullshit, hermaphrodite”. Signed as “olinko”, in reaction to the above comment.

“I see that atheists are foaming around the mouth with hatred for the Church. What probably bothers them is that the Church has defended Croatian identity for centuries.” Signed as “teutina7”.

“And also burned some Croats at the stakes”. Signed as “boliber”.

“It would be better for the article author Tomica to take a little bath, perhaps he can wash out the atheistic stench.” Signed as “teutina7”.

“The church should foam at the mouth at the very mention of the jerk miklenic’s name. That someone like that is walking the Earth and even has an opportunity to edit a newspaper (although that would be a funny voice of a pedophile, pardon, *Koncila*).” Signed as “demofil”.

“It would be enough to read the disputed article in the pedophile’s voice and insult is the only method that imposes itself.” Signed as “olinko”.

“Klauski, who is sponsoring these anti-Catholic, blasphemic and anti-Croatian article? For whom are you pouring your poison on the Church, the faithful and Croatia? Signed indicatively as “StandartenfuhrerV”.

“And you have a sponsor too? Or are you a turbo Croat funded by the people?” Signed as “bollbr”.

“Miklenic is copulating with penguins in the anus.” Signed, also indicatively, as “TvojSlatkiHitler” (your sweet Hitler).

With this vulgar comment, the polemic sank to the bottom of insulting language.

Whether because of that detail or not, on the day the portal was accessed (13 August) a warning was put up: “Comments on the forum are published in real time and Index.hr cannot be considered responsible for what is written. Insults, swearing and defamation are prohibited. Posts with such comments will be deleted and their authors reported to the responsible authorities.”

24 SATA

(<http://www.24sata.hr>)

In the spotlight: “BIG SPECIAL ON OPERATION STORM – 15 YEARS OF PRIDE”, posted on 3 August. Here are some striking comments on the opening article:

“Tractor competition 95! We Croats!!!”. Signed as “makiii”.

“Unfortunately, I look forward less and less to the Storm anniversary ... 15 years has passed and we are sinking deeper and deeper ... What they are doing to us is worse than Storm ... This is a tsunami ... we are bigger enemies to ourselves than anyone else ...” Signed as “barkun”.

“What are you getting heated up about. The poor always suffer on one or the other side. I don’t see any reason for pride for expelling from their homes innocent peasants, workers, honest people, women, children, whoever they may be ...” Signed as “nemam pojma” (I have no idea).

“For a long time I haven’t felt like a defender ... actually I don’t have any special emotions related to that war – as if I wasn’t in it. I feel that that period of my life is more of a hole which I have been trying all these years to ‘jump over’ or forget. That’s what these politicians have succeeded in doing. They have contaminated everything ...” Signed as “puzzo”.

“Same old shit, because we fought for shit”. Signed as “agent-007”.

“A state built on genocide will always be doomed”. Signed as “drug Tito” (comrade Tito).

A participant in the discussion, signed as “crveni bozo” (red bozo), to paraphrase, mentions data on 138,000 members of Croat forces against 31,000

Serbs, whereas military casualties on both sides do not exceed 1 percent of the total manpower on the front. "What kind of military operation is that?"

This kind of attitude to "Storm", at least according to this portal, is very indicative. It is hard to make a positive-negative gradation. To put it simply, apathy is the general characteristic of participants in the discussion.

Section "Most commented contents in 7 days" (9 August). An article was singled out whose title is "These people at the concert displayed Ustasha insignia", posted on 6 August, author Hrvoslav Pavic.

In the form of a lead, the article says: "Despite expecting a record number of visitors at this year's celebration of Homeland Thanksgiving Day in Cavoglave, you could not feel the crowd as in previous years ...", noting that Sibenik-Knin Police Administration had the figure of 60,000 visitors.

Posted comments were mostly pro-Thompson¹³, but without explicit comments of open affirmation of Ustashahood or anything like that.

B-92

(<http://www.b92.net>)

The homepage of the portal on 4 August is dominated by a news item on a memorial service for casualties of "Storm".

"STORM IS SEPARATING BELGRADE AND ZAGREB" (headline), and "Storm again tenses relations between Serbia and Croatia", sub-headline of a commemorative article.

"After an evident thawing of Serbian-Croatian relations, whose culmination was Croatian President Ivo Josipovic's visit to Belgrade, the two countries have again started aiming poisoned arrows at each other", states the opening paragraph of the article.

"Coinciding with 'Storm' is a request by the ICTY Prosecutor's Office for punishment of those who are allegedly to blame for this operation. That

¹³ Marko Perkovic Thompson, popular Croatian singer who emphasizes Croatian pride and victories from the recent war in his songs. Although he claims he is not pro-Ustasha (Nazi) oriented, there are many chauvinistic and Ustasha outbursts at his concerts.

was enough for a stormy reaction of the Croatian public, which reacted the same way to President Tadic's statement that a crime occurred during the 'Storm' operation which must not be forgotten.

... It is obvious that for the 15th year in a row, 'Storm' has blown away protocol smiles, hand in hand walks and joint lunches and dinners of Serbian and Croatian statesmen."

Of the 58 *pro et contra* comments that arrived, two sublime opposing opinions on these dramatic events from our recent past.

"... Criminals should be punished, but there is no doubt that the operation was justified. Serbs from RSK (Republika Srpska Krajina) were simply holding Croatia in an unenviable position ... Serbs were expelling the non-Serb population from the territory of the so-called RSK, committing mass crimes and refusing to recognize Croatia as their country!...". This is a fragment of a message, signed as "hrvat-ri" (5 August), by an author who identifies himself as a Serb refugee '91 to '92.

"... The Croatian authorities did everything to give Serbs reason to rebel and then accused them of rebellion. The Serbs simply fell for Croatian propaganda. Everything was devised a long time ago in kitchens in Zagreb and Ustasha emigration centers across the world." Signed as "Bez cenzure" (without censorship), 4 August.

In an abundance of strongly opposed opinions and views, there are no explicit expressions of ethnically inspired intolerance or defamatory qualifications which may be categorized as hate speech.

A blogger, Ana Radmilovic, raised an intriguing subject, "Why right-wing organizations?" (9 August). Focus is on kids, with the assertion that "the problem is that two-thirds in Serbia are thinking what these kids are saying." It remained unclear how she reached that finding.

Further on, she reminds of increasingly pronounced nostalgia for former regimes in eastern European countries "... These kids will no longer be kids, they will be veterans in political life in Serbia ... and Serbia identifies the left wing with foul dealing and loss of sovereignty ... and heresy is fun when there is no other fun, and there is no other fun because people here are increasingly poor, and that is forgotten by those who prohibit."

We have singled out just a fragment of a characteristic comment out of the 274 which arrived the day the site was accessed (10 August):

“ ... Marxism tried to write off those 'two-thirds' as 'petty bourgeois mentality'. It tried to write them off, but did not manage to do that. They wrote it off. It (petty bourgeois mentality) is the carrier and substratum of the '90s ideological circle. We all remember:

- everyone is against us
- we are victims of injustice
- they are stealing our people
- language
- country
- alphabet
- Who? Masons, communists, Croats, Vatican, Americans, Martians...

Today? The same. After 20 years of 'glory' and 'success' we are back to square one, to go another circle ... And what else can an angry young man do when he drinks three beers but pick up a stick. Today we don't have tanks, but fortunately 'domestic traitors' are close by, and for them even a stick is enough ...". Signed as "Goran2".

There was an abundance of interesting comments, which are sharply confronted politically, actually they are irreconcilable, but correctly worded, without labeling or insults.

Vecernje Novosti

(<http://www.novosti.rs>)

The online edition of this high-circulation daily in Serbia very modestly commemorated "Storm", as well as taking note of a memorial service for casualties in the operation.

On the day the site was accessed (5 August), only two comments arrived in Q&A form.

Question from Prijedor – "Whose policy do you think resulted in this column of tractors leaving their homes?"

A laconic and sarcastic answer followed – "We don't know, we are waiting for you to tell us."

Both the question and answer sublime opinions in two intra-Serb camps. The question is a clear allusion to S. Milosevic's disastrous policies. The answer probably intimately agrees with that, but it is dominantly a result of wide-spread frustrations among a big part of the Serb people over the lost wars...

“Europe has kicked us off track!”. This is the headline of an interview made by the journalist Milan Babovic with Emir Kusturica (7 August).

“(Film) director Emir Kusturica: we did all they asked of us and they kicked us out. I am not for neutrality, even the Russians want to be the West. The international court committed a misdeed”, states the sub-headline.

When asked – why he sings to Radovan Karadzic at concerts – he answers:

“... A song about someone who walks around Belgrade with a changed identity is a Chaplin-style excess that interests me as an artist; it certainly doesn't mean support to war crimes, which squeaky politicians impute to me...”

“**To Sarajevo not even for coffee**” is the title of a box text, with the concluding sentence “... The secret is only that I believed that Sarajevo must not enter war at any cost.”

Of the 78 comments that arrived (10 August), we singled out three characteristic ones:

“Greatest artist from this region = worst man from this region”. Signed as “pekar” (baker).

“... It's hard to count to 8,000 and that's just one portion of the non-Serbs killed in BiH ...” Signed as “Suad.K”.

“It's hard to count to one million !!! ... Serbs have been counting that figure for 80 years now!!” Signed as “gogsy”.

The first comment actually sublimes the wide-spread opinion of a large number of Bosniaks about Emir Kusturica as their renegade, in the context of the fact that he is an artist of international importance.

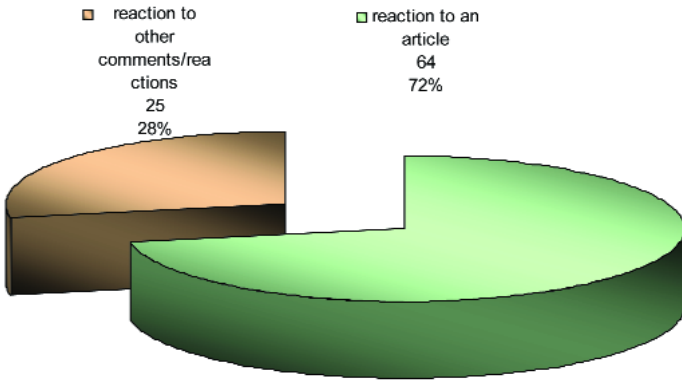
The second comment is a paradigm of inverted arguments, a wide-spread pastime in this region, and certainly not typical of just one ethnic community. The third comment is in line with another wide-spread pattern – what did you do to us ...

Among the comments that arrived, there was no hate speech. There was an abundance of outbursts of latent intolerance.

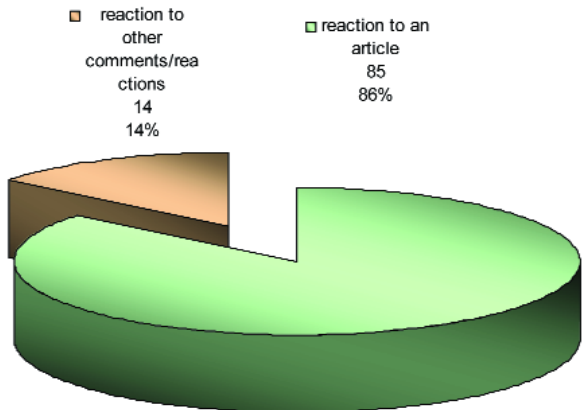
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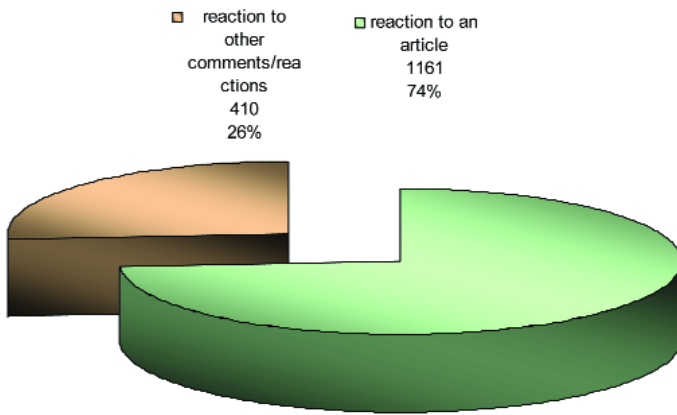
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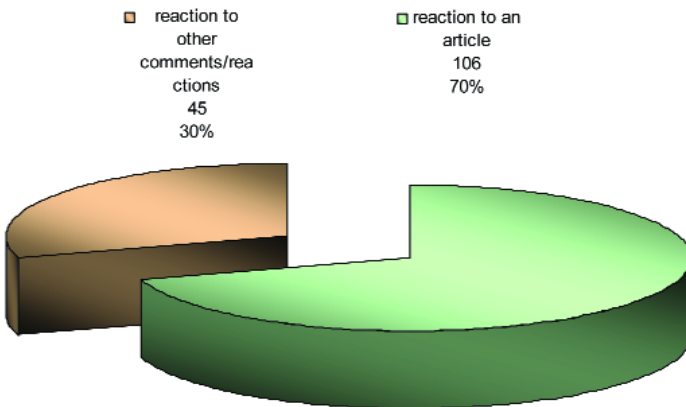
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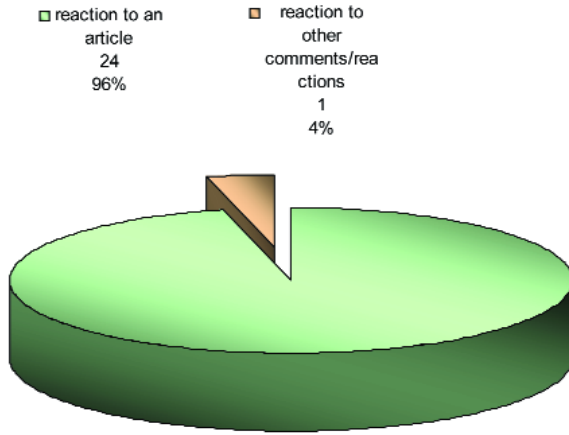
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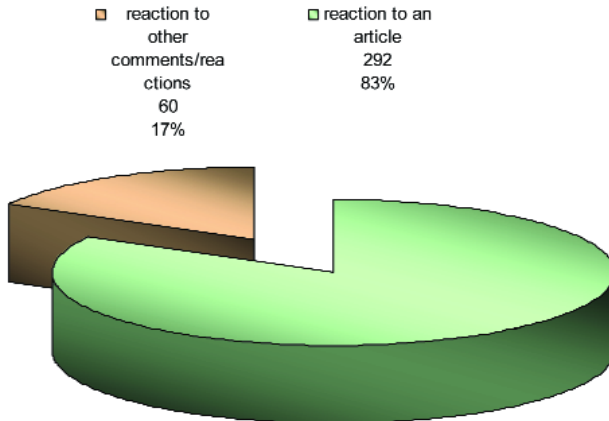
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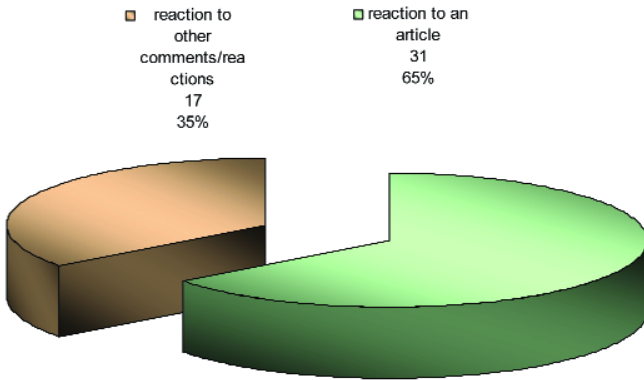
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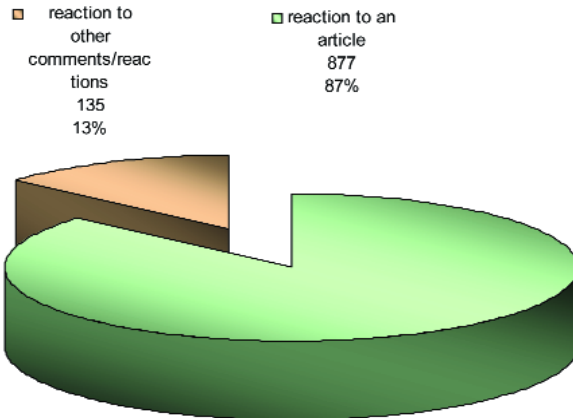
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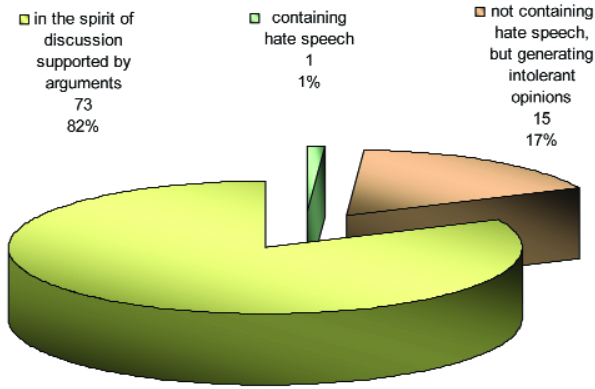


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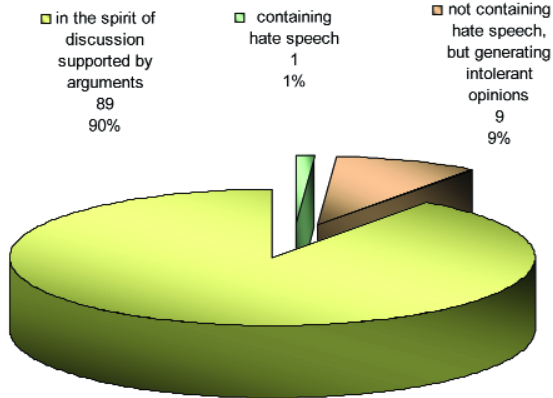


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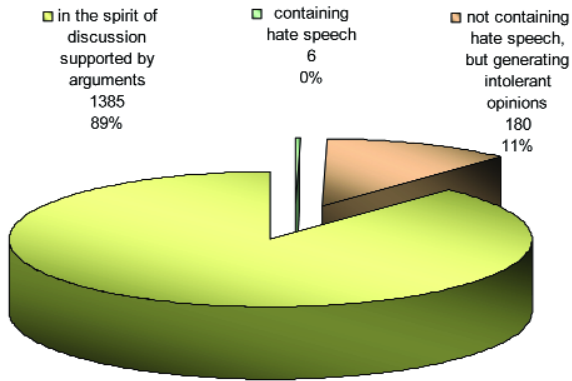
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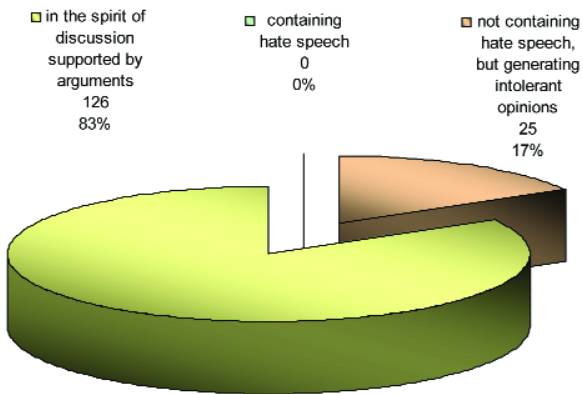
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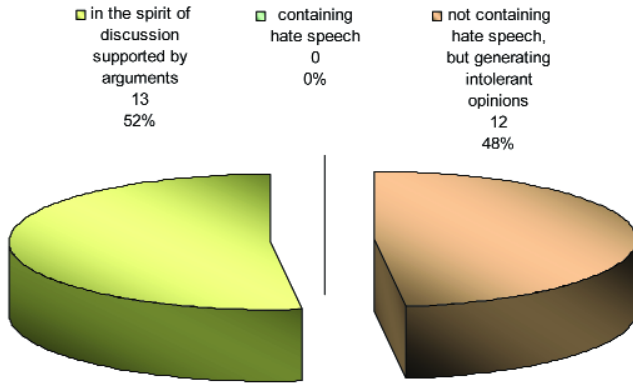
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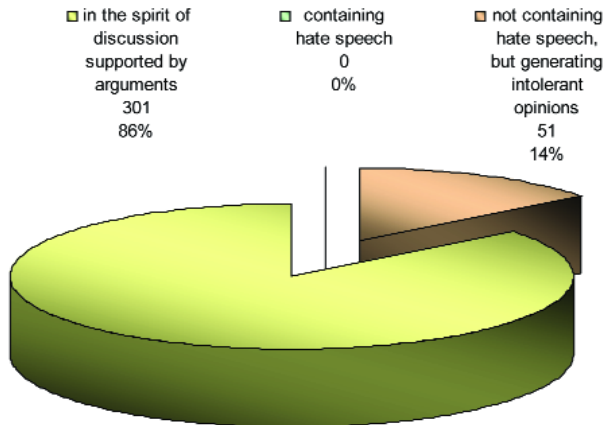
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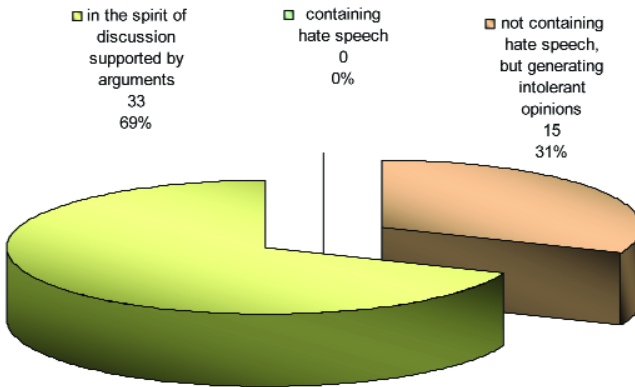
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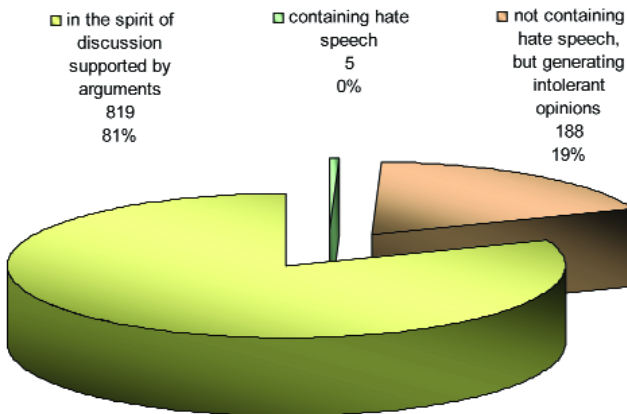
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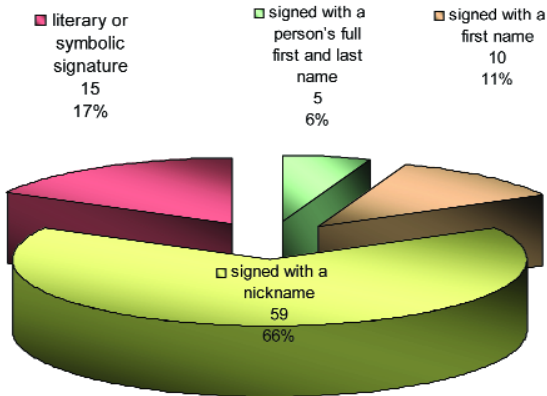


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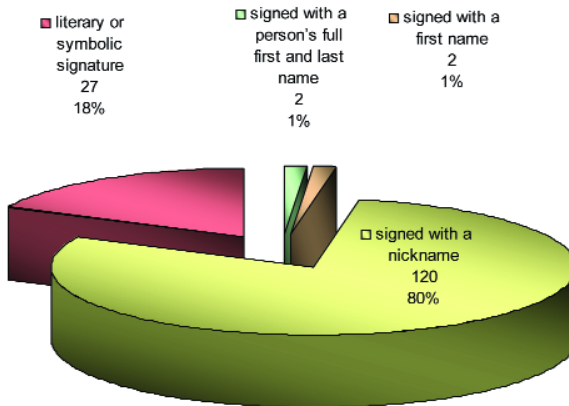


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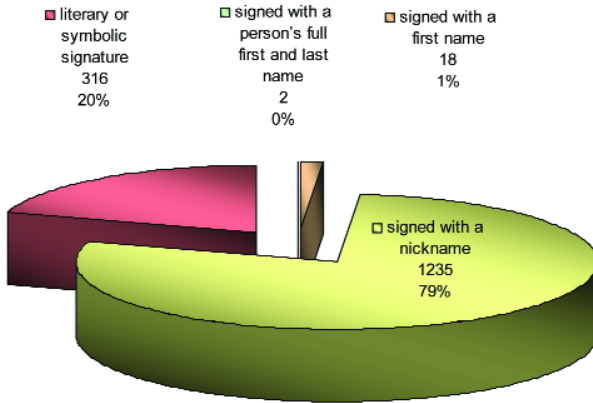
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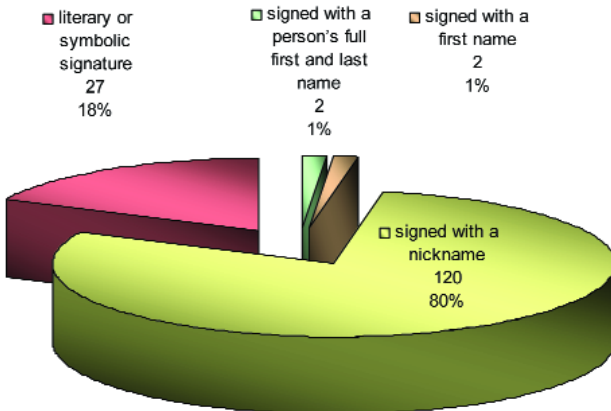
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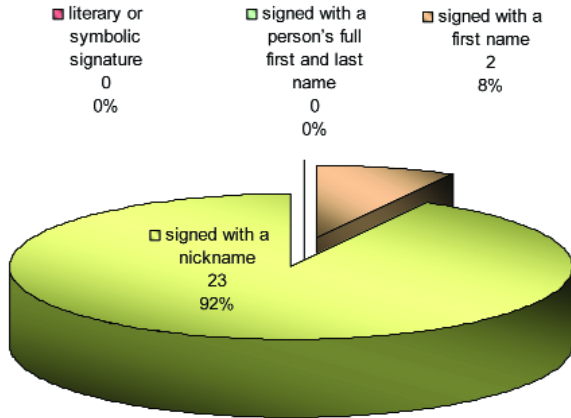
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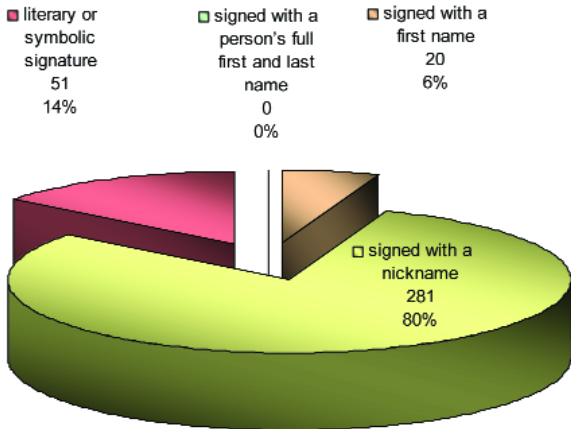
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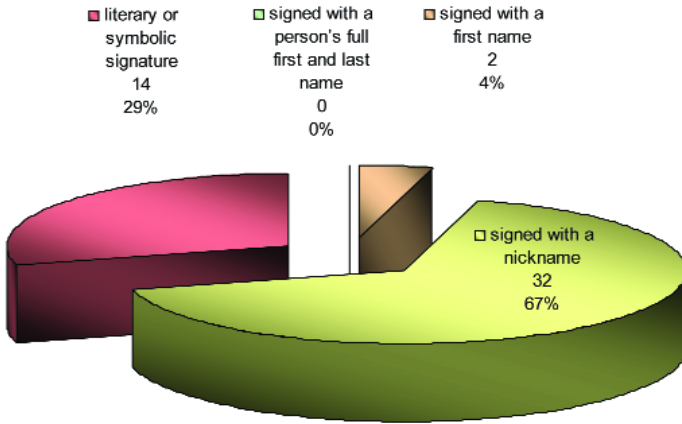
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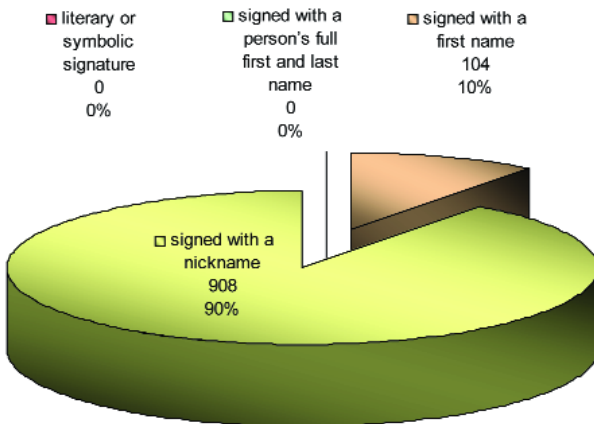
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Abstract and conclusions

- Media Plan Institute performed monitoring and analysis of content of web portals/media with the aim of identifying the main trends in how published contents are commented on, or to put it better, the main trends in internet discussions. Monitoring covered June, July and August 2010, with a general period of seven days each month. Taking into account the number of visitors and portals' editorial affiliations, we chose five portals in BiH as a representative sample: *Dnevni Avaz*, *Sarajevo X*, *Poskok*, *Bosnjaci.net* and *Frontal.rs*. From Serbia, we covered *Vecernje Novosti* and *B-92* and from Croatia *Index.br* and *24 sata*. The sampling basis for the analyzed content was: controversial socio-political issues, i.e. issues on which social, political or ethnic (state) consensus does not exist, and being published on the home pages of the analyzed portals in the monitored time period.
- A limiting factor in the research was the fact that consent on a definition of the term «hate speech» does not exist globally, regionally or locally. In the methodological grading that we established, intolerance speech functions as a sub-type of hate speech. We fixed constructive criticism or well-argued criticism, mediated by the Internet, as the opposite pole of hate speech and spreading of intolerance spirit. However, a large number of comments on the internet semantically do not meet the theoretic criteria of well-argued criticism, but each comment which expressed a stand, without generating intolerance, was included in this category.
- A summary overview of comments and retorts clearly shows that glaring examples of hate speech (intolerance speech is a little more pronounced) **are not a mass phenomenon in this region**, contrary to the assertion that can frequently be heard in media circles. Vulgar language is wide-spread, usually free of political connotations in the sense of ethnic, national or religious conflicts, but mostly coming in

the form of insulting someone's character, as a result of the overall low level of culture among participants in this kind of communication.

- Statistically speaking, dominant comments are those in the spirit of well-argued discussion – depending on the media organization, between 52 and 90 percent. They are followed by comments which generate intolerance, between 9 and 48 percent. Some divergence in percentage was only observed in the case of *bosnjaci.net*, which had the largest number of comments of this kind. This website is basically nationally (ethnically) profiled and selects issues which are strongly related to the bloody events in the war in BiH and the plight of Bosniaks. But not a single comment containing hate speech was observed on this media outlet. As far as comments containing hate speech are concerned, they are very rare and range around only 1 percent; in terms of frequency, there are just several of them and only on some of the monitored media. It is evident that editorial (administrator) activity is present, filtering such comments.
- Comments (discussions) are mostly related to the issues the articles talk about and to the opinions of other participants in discussion related to the issues in the articles. In terms of percentage, such comments take up, depending on the media organization, between 65 and 96 of the total number. The rest are comments unrelated to the issue, but rather various digressions and issues which have nothing to do with the subject matter.
- Comments are usually signed with nicknames (between 66 and 92 percent). Under that we included abbreviations of names (Fudo, Sale, Goga...) as well as various descriptive characteristics (yellow, eagle, snake...). Internet communication often uses various symbolic and literary signatures too (XYZ, Eagles fly young, I want to die...), which this monitoring also observed. On most media, the number of comments signed this way ranges between 17 and 20 percent. A somewhat bigger number, nearly 30 percent, was observed on *24sata.hr*; whereas on *bosnjaci.net* there were no such signatures at all. Next are comments signed with just a first name, whereas the number of comments signed with a full name is negligent. This is one of the main differences from so-called traditional media, where comments or reactions

are published only if they are signed with a full name. New media have interactivity based on nearly full anonymity.

- Articles which cover issues in a relatively simple way, especially issues which are very present in everyday, media and interpersonal life, attract incomparably more attention than various so-called intellectual discourses of authors. For example, among the more commented contents were a terrorist attack in Bugojno, Zdravko Colic concert in Sarajevo, anniversary of Military Operation Storm...)
- Looking at the media individually, differences in percentages in all categories are very similar, which shows us that we have obtained indicative, but empirically based findings related to the observed variables.

Controversies that should yet be discussed

Over the centuries, it became clear that technology as a rule is faster than perception of its range and impact. By this we primarily refer to mass communication media. In this context, media regulation and legislation particularly lagged behind.

The Internet especially confirms this view. Due to its allegedly inherent democratic nature, the Internet is often described as a global virtual agora. Classical communication channels have their audiences. In line with that view, it is logical to speak of an Internet audience too.

There is no reliable or recent research on the range and impact of the Internet audience in BiH. In that regard, this monitoring, and the sketch analysis produced on the basis of this monitoring, in a way presents a pioneer attempt to at least mark the basic directions of the range and impact of the Internet in BiH. Focus is on hate speech mediated by the Internet.

Before that, it should be noted that there is no global consent on a definition of the term "hate speech". To illustrate, what is prohibited in Europe, such as negation of the holocaust or propagation of Nazism and

Fascism, is allowed in the United States under the letter and spirit of the First Amendment to the US Constitution.

On the other hand, there have been attempts in Europe to make freedom of expression via the Internet absolute. Luckily, the view prevailed that there is no freedom of expression without responsibility. Absolute freedom of expression on the Internet will ultimately mean an end to the Internet! In short, what is illegal in traditional media must be illegal on the Internet too.

At this moment we are interested in the following question – which form of audience will have bigger influence? The audience of traditional communication channels or the Internet audience?

The latest information that nearly 40 percent of the total BiH population has access to the Internet may be impressive, but that information tells us little about the intensity of communication via the Internet and almost nothing about the range and impact of that medium.

“Once bitten – twice shy” goes the old saying, quoted here in the context of the role of the media in inflaming the conflicts and wars in this region in the early 1990s. Can the spreading of hate speech and spirit of intolerance over the Internet pose a latent danger of renewed clashes in this region? It is impossible to give a precise answer to that. Everything remains in the realm of guessing and speculation.

The performed monitoring shows the presence of hate speech, regardless of the controversy surrounding the defining of the name of such inappropriate language. Is this form of communication widespread in BiH and its immediate neighborhood? It is widespread, but it is not a mass phenomenon. Can it be any consolation that shocking outbursts of hate in America are nearly a mass phenomenon in communication in cyberspace? Most certainly – yes! On the other hand, it is disturbing to find out that hate speech and spirit of intolerance in America are still dominantly inspired by disagreement over the character of the American Civil War! An event that happened nearly a century and a half ago!!

If we bear in mind the fact that disputes in America continue although they appeared from within one people, albeit with divergent ethnic roots, what can we expect, deeply entrenched in our ethnic sheep pens?

With this we come to the sensitive realm and complex issue of Internet regulation.

The contemporary regulatory approach is based on a triad – legislation, social norms and code. Three modes were derived from that triad – regulation, co-regulation and self-regulation of media.

An effort at self-regulation was recently presented by the Global Network Initiative, which along with journalist associations and non-governmental organizations for protection of human rights and media freedom across the world, was also joined by Google, Yahoo and Microsoft. To begin with, guidelines were adopted on protection of freedom of information and privacy on the Internet. The guidelines contain elements of a global code of ethics because they exclusively rely on the principle of self-regulation (www.globalnetworkinitiative.org). In the meantime, ISPs adopted their own codes too.

There is no doubt that the Internet by its expressive form is closest to press. However, by the gamut of contents, **video** will soon have a dominant place over text and narrative. True, narrative has an audio dimension, which is also applicable to the new medium. The latest Cisco Visual Networking Index says that video already makes up nearly one-fourth of all contents circulating on the Internet. By 2012 it is estimated that the video component will make up close to 50 percent of all contents on the Internet (www.cisco.com). This information is especially important in the context of future Internet regulation.

Precisely due to this dominant component of content – video, and the fact that technically and technologically speaking the Internet is basically a broadcaster, it is logical to place it in the jurisdiction of a regulatory agency. In our case specifically, the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA). However, CRA strongly rejects all attempts to expand its jurisdiction to the Internet.

That this is a case of disorientation on the part of CRA is confirmed by the fact that several years ago its mandate was expanded to cover SMS messages broadcast on TV channels. Several commercial TV stations were warned and one was punished for showing inappropriate SMS messages. In addition, CRA clearly sanctions child pornography and the spreading of cyber crime as part of the generally accepted civilization norms and standards. In other cases, including hate speech, according to CRA the only relevant address is – the court.

Multimedia, interaction, synergy – they are the media paradigm of the 21st century.

Saddam Hussein's execution was recorded secretly (was it?) by mobile telephone and broadcast across the world, both on commercial as well as on public TV stations, which is a violation of at least the European media standards, pertaining to showing of scenes of violence. As far as we know, no regulatory agency stood up. A positive pole is footage of bombings on the London Underground in the summer of 2005. Just a few minutes after they happened, footage made by citizens on their mobile devices was in TV newsrooms and on YouTube. That is media synergy in action.

A recent leak of highly confidential documents posted on Wikileaks on US military engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan is the latest example of the need to redefine media regulation in general and Internet regulation in particular. Opinion is nearly unanimous that the future of journalism lies in its online form.

As said previously, regulating the media space has three forms: regulation, co-regulation and self-regulation. The latter is closest to the essential nature of the Internet. Namely, as we have pointed out, by its expressive form the Internet is closest to press.

Self-regulation is based on a code, or ethical principles. Communication in cyberspace has a specialized code, also known as Netiquette, derived from Network Etiquette. It contains basic rules of conduct in cyberspace communication, with the starting premise – let's make friends instead of enemies! Unfortunately, this noble premise has not yet taken hold, either globally, or regionally, or in our micro space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On Better Communication of Internet Media and Their Users

Internet media today are the shortest link between producers of information and their consumers, whereas user forums are giving everyone the chance to express their opinion or comment. The internet media are becoming the backbone of a big citizen forum in which freedom of expression is unlimited, but can be abused. Responsibility for use of the internet lies on media and their administrators, but also on all citizens who use it.

These Recommendations were created based on discussions at the “Internet – Freedom without Boundaries” conference held in Sarajevo on 23 September 2010. Their goal is to help internet media in Bosnia-Herzegovina improve communication with their users in order to strengthen freedom of expression and its ethical protection, as well as to motivate relevant professional and academic institutions in the field of media and use of information technologies to research and improve the culture of communication in virtual space.

1. Professionalism of journalists – requirement for good communication

On the internet, journalists inform and send their messages to urge their readers to communicate about them. In order for communication among media users and between media users and the media to be beneficial, meaningful and usable, journalists themselves must apply the most professional standards in their public performance – truthfulness, objectivity, use of arguments, unambiguousness and clarity of message.

Citizens in internet communication are first motivated by the information, the journalist's comments and the multimedia visual character of presentation, after which communication continues in mutual confrontation of information and comments. High professional standards in selection and presentation of information and adherence to ethical standards that apply to editing internet contents will dimension to great extent the character of the citizen forum, urge free expression and reinforce responsibility of all participants for culture of communication.

2. Journalists are not outside the internet user forum

The point of any kind of internet communication is to learn something new, to send a message, to confirm and verify one's own opinion, to exchange experience, to polemicize on controversial issues and to send one's voice which can rarely reach the public in traditional forms of communication. People should benefit from internet communication and deal with life more easily. The internet is suitable precisely so that media messages and journalists' messages do not remain one-way, which is the shortcoming of mainstream media.

An internet newsroom through the information it publishes or a journalist who starts a discussion through his/her comments should not distance themselves from them. In virtual space all participants in communication are equal and everyone can say what they have to say. A journalist who starts a discussion can offer new information to resume communication with users, or supplement and explain something or participate in a polemic. Participation in this communication circle should not be avoided. Instead of the motto "this is not the newsroom's position", it is better to present the journalist's or newsroom's position, equally respecting everyone else's right to present their own position. In this case, a journalist is not a router of communication, but an equal participant in it. A journalist's active stand can help prevent a discussion from acquiring elements of hate speech or other expressions which are legally prohibited or ethically inappropriate in public communication. In order to assume this role in communication, internet media must train their reporters and commentators.

3. Priority – self-regulation of content

There is disagreement on how and even whether to regulate content in internet communication, apart from what most legislations declare as criminal acts. As this discussion continues, it is advisable to build self-regulation standards, the media's own responsibility for what they publish as well as of the citizens who participate in it. Positive experiences in implementation of the Press Code (BiH Press Council) and Broadcast Code of Practice (Communications Regulatory Agency) should be used in development of ethical standards of self-regulation.

Support should be given to an initiative of the BiH Press Council to join internet portals to standards contained in the Press Code in BiH although the next step, due to the specific characteristics of the internet compared to mainstream media, should be aimed in the direction of developing a specific code for internet communication. Relevant experience of some internet media in the neighborhood and elsewhere in Europe should be used, including the possibility that the more developed portals create their own codes. In developing these codes, one should take into account the already standardized guidelines on internet use in public communication, to which some internet portals point (<http://www.globalnetworkinitiative.org/>).

4. Continuous education in internet journalism

Internet media administrators, journalists and their web newsrooms have an opportunity to educate themselves using the huge potentials offered by the internet for acquiring know-how and information skills. Most internet portals were created in the first place thanks to their founders' and owners' enthusiastic exploration of the internet's secrets and potentials and least of all through classical forms of journalist and media education.

Everything good and bad is visible on the internet; what is not visible are the standards, criteria and methods on which journalists and administrators

build their performance toward the internet audience. It would be useful for internet media to introduce the practice of continuous education in specific forms of journalistic expression and internet editing skills in order to make better use of the internet's information advantages. Portals should also foster their own journalistic resources so that they are not mainly carriers of information and comments, but also their primary creators, both in the written and audiovisual segments. In this regard, mainstream media portals have a lot of work ahead of them because they do not use enough the internet's communication advantages and are often just an "electronic picture" of mainstream newspapers or radio and TV programs.

How to communicate with your users and how to best use the advantages of the internet should become standard themes in education and exchange of experience among journalists and media managers, as well as internet administrators, at journalism schools, journalism and media workshops and seminars. The media community in BiH should express its interest toward journalism faculties so that these issues become mandatory and more present in journalism studies, both theoretically and practically.

5. Controversy about the internet – taking part in the discussion

With a delay, but not too late, a critical mass of theoretical considerations, know-how and practical experience related to the internet and information media on the internet has been created in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The entire media community, especially owners, administrators and journalists of internet portals, journalist associations and media institutes, schools and journalism studies, Communications Regulatory Agency and Press Council, should consider the phenomenon of the internet as one of their analysis, research and project priorities. Digitalization of production and distribution of radio and TV programs will be a revolution for mainstream media and a new development chance for internet media. It is necessary to stimulate synergy of our own potentials in BiH and actively participate in scientific, professional and development activities and projects taking place in Europe and the world.

The “Internet – Freedom without Boundaries” conference answered some questions, but raised many controversies and open issues to which answers and solutions should be sought both in BiH and in global considerations on the future of the internet.

These questions are:

- What is the real impact of internet media on the public in BiH; is its growth anticipated; do mainstream media take that into account in their strategic development plans?
- Does the increasingly strong presence of video and audio (i.e. radio and television programs of mainstream broadcasters) on the internet raise the issue of regulation by the Communications Regulatory Agency of BiH?
- Can privacy be protected in internet media and their citizen forums and how can it be protected?
- What are the new forms of hate speech and its derivatives that have appeared in global communication and how should they be dealt with?

6. Culture of communication – in the education system

Use of computers and training in information skills are increasingly becoming part of the education system. But our education system as a whole lags behind in conveying know-how and mastering practical uses in everyday life and work, including use of the internet as a medium for information and free expression.

The culture of communication on internet portals can be built efficiently only within a general social movement for building information society which contains, along with digital culture, also culture of communication. This process should start in elementary schools and encompass the entire education process in continuity. The NGO sector and media should develop activities and campaigns to raise public awareness on the necessity of introducing appropriate education courses and advancing existing courses in the education process.

**Interview: Dunja Mijatovic, The OSCE
Representative on Freedom of the Media**

**THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE RIGHT
TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

Dunja Mijatovic, who was appointed OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in March 2010, is an expert in media law and regulation from Bosnia and Herzegovina. As one of the founders of the Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1998, she helped to create a legal and policy framework for media in that complex post-war society.

Mijatovic was appointed Chairperson of the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities in 2007, the biggest media regulators' network in the world. She held this post until her appointment as the Representative. From 2005 to 2007, she chaired the Council of Europe's Group of Specialists on freedom of expression and information in times of crisis. She also played a key role in developing Guidelines on protecting freedom of expression and information in times of crisis.

Mijatovic has written extensively on "newmedia" topics. She also has served as a consultant on projects relating to media regulation and new technologies in Europe and the Middle East.

- There have been a number of initiatives to reach some kind of global agreement and to establish generally acceptable criteria for regulating the right to freedom of expression on the internet (UNESCO international conference and many other scientific, communication, information and other events). Two positions were mutually opposed: right to freedom of expression without restriction and right to protection from abuse of that freedom. What is the situation like today? What can be considered abuse? What are the Council of Europe and EU standards and what are European and what are American views?

The Internet is even nowadays a rather new platform and medium. Governments are still in the process of fully understanding its full potential, social and political powers and possibilities. Also, no one knows what consequences in the long term the Internet will have on our social behavior, interaction and structure. These are all aspects that have or could not yet been researched and fully explored. In this respect we are surrounded by many variables and even more unknowns. When it comes to how and if to regulate the Internet and more importantly, how to ensure freedom of expression on the Internet, I believe there is a common understanding being formed that we do not need a separate codification for guaranteeing freedom of expression on the Internet. Our international and national notions are perfectly sufficient to include the Internet as a medium and platform. We should bear in mind that the right to freedom of expression and information was not enshrined in several international documents in order to cover particular media but to cover content. It is a “platform-neutral” right. This equally should apply to abuses of that right. We do not need additional legislation tailored for the Internet but better enforcement of existing legislation.

It is certainly indisputable that illegal content is illegal regardless of the media which carry it. The means of content regulation, however, vary a lot, depending precisely on the medium. The developed democracies have taken stand that the press is self-regulated while broadcasting is regulated by the independent regulatory bodies.

With regard to the internet, the current status of laws and government policy within most of the European countries and US shows that there is prevailing tendency not to introduce specific internet regulation, as all those countries have laws of general application applicable to Internet content such as child pornography or incitement to racial hatred. It is presumable that appropriate application of such laws should in effect regulate the illegal content on the internet.

With specific regard to broadcasting regulators I can certainly confirm the statement of the independent broadcasting regulatory authorities in Europe are, as a rule, not competent to deal with the regulation of illegal (such as hate speech) or harmful content that is broadcast on the internet (e.g. in fora of discussion etc.). The remit of these independent administrative regulatory authority

encompasses of course television and radio services and is to be extended, further to the audiovisual media services Directive, to non-linear audiovisual services such as video-on-demand and catch-up TV. These non-linear services are less heavily regulated than traditional television but the prohibition of hate speech applies to them as well. However, the internet is not covered by this Directive. Some regulators may however be competent for broadcasting services simultaneously retransmitted on the internet.

- Have the dangers of terrorism and the devastating consequences of violation of children's rights on the internet shaken the argument in favor of absolute freedom of expression on the internet? How is this regulated in Europe and how is it regulated in the United States?

There is no absolute right to freedom of expression. International standards (e.g. EConvHR, UN Declaration of HR, ICCPR, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights) and national legislation stipulate that this right comes with duties and responsibilities and may be subject to certain restrictions. However, these restrictions shall be prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic society. The interpretation of what is necessary in and for a democratic society naturally differ from country to country depending on the historical, socio-political and cultural context. The US First Amendment allows for wider interpretation of freedom of expression compared to German legislation for example, but even in the US there are limits to freedom of expression, particularly if speech constitutes an imminent danger to the safety of others.

- Do some governments, under the pretext of protection from terrorism, pedophilia, etc., often put pressure on providers or even pass decisions on bans or restrictions on the use of the internet and particular contents on the internet? What are some of the more extreme cases in the world? Does something like that exist as a tendency or practice in Europe or in our region?

Governments have a legitimate role to play when it comes to protecting children or the society at large from pedophilia, terrorism and harmful content. The question is how the state defines "harmful". We agree that child pornography must be fought with all vigor of the law, but we have very differing opinions to what is hate speech

for example. There are some governments in the OSCE region that used the increased threats from terrorism in the last years to pass legislation with very questionable definitions of “extremism”, for example. Vague, unclear definitions bear the risk of arbitrary judicial decisions and of restricting or sanctioning legitimate criticism or simply differing opinions. Cases where governments have passed such legislation and where as a result journalist and media face serious legal consequences are listed in our regular reports to the OSCE Permanent Council.

Those who incite others to violence, engage in and promote child sexual abuse and exploitation, terrorism and human trafficking cannot be tolerated and must be prosecuted with the full vigour of the law. We also need to recognize the legitimate role of government to take steps to protect privacy and personal data. However, legal frameworks and governmental action, needed to protect these rights, should be designed in a manner that furthers freedom and should not go beyond what is necessary in a democratic society.

Challenges to apply existing legislation and laws passed before the Internet era to the online world and the Internet must not become an excuse for governments to violate the fundamental rights and privacy of those who use the Internet for satire or criticism.

- Information technology, distribution and content can be regulated by law. However, all that exists in BiH is regulation of technical aspects by the Communications Regulatory Agency. Content is unregulated, i.e. it is liable to criminal legislation (pedophilia, incitement to commit a crime...) and civil legislation (libel). What kind of level of regulation of internet contents do other countries have?

This differs from country to country and there is no one-fits-all model for how to regulate content except for certain international framework instruments, such as the CoE Cyber crime Convention, that was also signed by a number of non CoE members. Generally, we advocate that what applies offline should apply online. We have been lobbying for the last 10 years, for example to decriminalize defamation and have such offences solely handled under civil law proceedings. If defamation should not constitute a criminal offence offline it should

also not constitute such on the Internet. As I said above, the Internet is simply a new platform for distributing content, it is not a new world, although many tend to think, wish or fear so.

- Mainstream media have their internet sites and forums motivated by articles from newspapers, radio or TV items. Should these media be responsible for content of citizen forums the same way they are responsible for content in the original media (based on regulation or self-regulation)?

Most of the professional media have already – to the extent possible – taken up responsibility for user generated comments by moderating content through: requiring registration and the agreement to a code of conduct before being able to post comments, allowing for flagging content that violates the code of conduct and taking such content down. We see that responsible media do not have an interest in exposing the reader/user/audience with pages long unmoderated user generated comments. The audience, when accessing an online paper or online media or a professional blog is mainly interested in edited news and opinion pieces of public interest.

- What is the expert and scientific stand on large networks such as Facebook, etc.? Basically, these are private files that are publicly available, but sometimes with very debatable content.

I think this question should be directed to researchers, academics and sociologists.

- Is it possible to pass rules which are valid for everyone or should cultural characteristics of individual countries or regions be taken into account?

Human Rights are universal and applicable to every individual. Universally applicable moral and ethical values, however, are not the same as universal human and fundamental rights. Given our cultural, social and historical diversity it is neither possible nor desirable to define universal morals and values. It is our diversity that makes us richer and should be preserved, even if it comes along with difficulties. And it is through dialogue that we get closer to understanding and accepting our differing views, positions and definitions of where the limits of free speech are, for example.

- What are the Council of Europe, EU and OSCE doing regarding these issues?

These organizations and their member states have stipulated – in their respective international instruments – universally applicable fundamental rights and commitments. National legislation, taking into account cultural and historical circumstances, defines restrictions to these laws. These restrictions have to be defined by law, necessary in a democratic society and proportionate. The CoE, the EU and the OSCE have all put mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate whether any restrictions fulfill this tri-part test. In the case of the CoE, it is the European Court of Human Rights, in the OSCE, one instrument is the institution of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, that is mandated to monitor the adherence of the OSCE participating States to media freedom commitments and to intervene in cases where these commitments have been breached. Internet Freedom to me, to the work of my Office, is NOT different to media freedom, to freedom of expression, to the right to seek, receive and impart information beyond national and administrative borders.

- What would you recommend doing in BiH in the professional field in mainstream and internet media, in education, journalist associations or institutions such as Media Plan Institute?

Just like “media literacy” was introduced in the first half of last century as a term and a pedagogical tool to foster and increase critical analysis of mass media content, to educate the audience to ask critical and sometimes difficult questions about what media offers them to read, hear and watch, “internet literacy” should be the one of the focus of today’s education. With the volume of available information data, facts and misinformation, the careful evaluation and selection becomes a skill which needs to be acquired and trained. This is particularly necessary for children and minors - and does not only apply to the Internet.

Conference "Internet – Freedom without Borders"



RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTENT – YES, CENSORSHIP – NO

A conference dubbed "Internet – Freedom without Borders" was held in Sarajevo in September 2010, organized by Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Media Plan Institute. Along with editors and journalists of Internet portals from all over BiH, the conference was attended by representatives of the BiH Press Council and Communications Regulatory Agency. One of the conclusions was that this is one of the most comprehensive meetings so far of people who have ideas and who also have influence on the

media landscape with regard to Internet portals. They welcomed an initiative of the Press Council presented by its representative Dario Novalic. In the framework of the initiative, the Press Code will be offered for signing to Internet portal editorial boards in BiH, by which they would commit to adhere to the Code consistently, and readers would know that portals carrying a Press Council stamp are working in line with the Code and would have an address where they can send any complaints.

The theme of the “Internet – Freedom without Borders” conference, at a time of rapid increase in the number of Internet users, is entirely proper, concluded the participants, because there are more and more online media, their influence is growing, and for now no one has control over contents published on the Internet, nor can they officially be regulated, unless it is a case of a grave violation of the penal code, such as publishing child pornography or calling for liquidation. It was concluded that the segment of non-journalistic content should remain under the control of relevant institutions, in terms of violation of the law, as well as of portals themselves, which by publishing comments or various video clips are responsible for any social deviations. In this regard, a suggestion was made that representatives of police and relevant institutions should be invited to another seminar to explain the legislative and technical capacities for finding those who incite to crime. As for journalistic content, there was a dilemma whether media on the Internet should be controlled at all. The majority believes that professional postulates valid for mainstream media should apply to the web too. In light of this, support to introducing self-regulation and accepting the Press Code is no surprise.

Media Plan Institute Program Director Radenko Udovicic presented some basic data on Internet users in BiH, for example that their number increased from four to 37 percent between 2002 and 2009. He also pointed out that the Internet is a medium of the younger generation and that 89 percent of those in the 18 to 29 age group use it. “Many users in BiH still primarily use the Internet for sending and receiving e-mail and it is interesting that 59 percent of users do not use social networks including the most popular Facebook. For most of the BiH population, television remains the preferred way of receiving news and following events, but the moment digital TV arrives in BiH I think that everything else will fall in the background because digital conversion will be significant”, said Radenko Udovicic.

Media analyst Dusan Babic, presenting his analysis of articles published on Internet portals which have the largest number of users in BiH, spoke about the problem of anonymity on the Internet, which numerous users are taking advantage of without responsibility for leaving comments on articles which cross all boundaries of civil communication and turn into insulting of individuals, as well as entire ethnic groups. “Not too much hate speech



Information technologies are changing the way of life and work of every individual and community, said Zoran Udovicic, founder of the former Media Plan High College of Journalism. The education system in this country lags behind information society and post-industrial society. Computer skills are not all that should be taught in schools. Our children and young people should be taught how to communicate in the virtual world, maintains Udovicic. A broad education movement is needed to learn the culture of communication in information society, in which the most important role is on schools, media, non-governmental organizations... Therefore, more ethics in Internet user forums does not depend just on journalism codes and responsibility of editors or operators, but also on culture of communication which takes years to acquire, said Zoran Udovicic.

was observed in our analysis, but many comments reflect views of intolerance and narrow-mindedness", said Babic. Comments were also discussed by Lejla Turcilo, of the Department of Journalism, Faculty of Political Science of Sarajevo, who spoke about control of journalistic and non-journalistic contents on the Internet and about

traditional and new conception of Internet journalism and what can be considered journalism. "The problem is credibility of information on the Internet as well as non-journalistic contents. Internet publishing is not just a journalist's job and that's a big difference between the Internet and mainstream media," said Turcilo.



“I think that portals are not a journalistic genre. There is a lot of copying of articles from other media, agencies are quoted, and there is very little authorial work”, commented Tvrtko Milovic of the Poskok.info portal, but Kenan Efendic of Radiosarajevo.ba said he does not agree. “There is more and more quality content on portals and you will see more and more cases of TV news programs quoting Internet portals or print media carrying quotes from portals”, said Efendic.

Among representatives of portals, most attention was attracted by discussion on how to regulate and control comments on news and whether introduction of some kind of censorship on comments jeopardizes what many consider the essence of online media: their interactivity with users. When we talk about administrators, we are talking about a kind of censor”, said Lejla Turcilo. The issue of “funding censorship” was also pointed out, as advertisers have not yet realized the power of portals and thus most of

them operate on modest resources and rather employ a journalist than someone who will just deal with comments. The common assessment of people directly involved in the work of portals is that the most disgusting comments on newspaper articles, comments with most hate and inflammatory comments come from users who are presently outside of BiH, which can be seen from their IP addresses.

“When we introduced visibility of IP addresses to everyone and thus enabled people to see where a comment is coming from, the number of comments was cut in half. Then we saw that some of them had debated with themselves and simply stirred up trouble in discussions”, said Milovic, adding that the reduced number of comments did not reduce the number of visits.

“We have hired an administrator at the portal who is in charge of deleting insulting comments. Everyone should do that, but it costs, and there

is also the question of which comments should be removed and who can decide that," said Milan Sutalo, editor of the Dnevnik.ba portal. He added that the portal he edits now survives mostly thanks to the fact that it is supported by the Pincom company which operates in other areas too. As an idea how Internet portals can be improved, he mentioned the possibility of the state co-funding their work, but the idea was assessed by other participants as unrealistic because it is clear that it would question their independence. "That kind of interference of the state is definitely not a solution, because there is no way that those who give money will not expect something in return. In Tuzla we had the case of a portal which received support from the municipality and which became the municipality head's mouthpiece", said Admir Cavalic, editor of the Tuzla-x.ba portal.

Owner and editor of the Depo.ba portal, Jasmin Durakovic, spoke about how an Internet portal in BiH functions, saying that his portal functions thanks to the fact that the company that stands behind the portal operates in other areas too, but he said he believes that in the future thanks to growing influence of Internet portals, this landscape will be different and quality portals will find their place on the market. He announced that his portal in addition to distributing news ultimately plans to broadcast TV



Our foundation supports the creation and improvement of free media and the goal and role of the Media Program is strengthening freedom and democracy in media. In addition, digital culture is one of the Foundation's narrow focuses and we want to establish how the culture is reflected and what its effect is. Today's meeting is headed in that direction and the title of the meeting is very good: Internet – Freedom without Borders. A question mark may be added to the title, because this unlimited freedom requires the responsibility of those who use it", said Matthias Barner, Director Media Program South East Europe, Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

series on the Internet, as well as using numerous other opportunities offered by the Internet. Speaking about control of comments, he said there is no censorship at the Depo.ba portal and that he is one of the people that readers in comments attack and insult the most.

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