



Bosnia and Herzegovina in search of accountability

The role of professional journalist associations in generating professionalism and accountability of the media in BiH

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Summary

This paper follows the argument that professional standards in journalism and the rights of journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: BiH) are strongly affected by the fact that there is no unique platform or effective cooperation among existing associations of journalists. The purpose of this paper is to detect the reasons for the current situation where professional associations of journalists are divided among ethnic, territorial and political lines.

Declaratively these associations in BiH advocate for professionalism of the media and rights of journalists; however, as it is obvious from everyday practice, they are under strong political pressure and consequently, they are divided. There is also no common platform or will for their joint action and cooperation. As a result, the community of journalists is affected by these divisions, and each of them is forced to choose whether to belong to these exclusively defined associations or to stay out.

There is no systematic or evidence-based research on the role of these associations in BiH; therefore, this research attempts to fill this gap and, at the same time, to offer some solutions in order to improve the working conditions of journalists. In this regard, the experience from Serbia where various professional journalist associations established a common platform-Media Coalition-would be useful and indicative for BiH. Based on the evaluation of policy alternatives-the status quo (as in option A), various models of cooperation (as in option B), and radical change which implies the establishment of one state-based organization (as in option C)-this research will outline a list of recommendations and conclusions in order to improve current practice.

1. Introduction

The Bosnian-Herzegovinian media follow the logic of ethno-political divisions and operate according to political affiliations with certain political options. The media market in BiH is segmented: the audience is divided along ethnic lines and consumes only those media with which it is affiliated. Groups (constituent people or ethno-national) in which media and their editorial policies are embedded are important as a source of legitimacy for “their” public. As such, the media are not accountable and cannot act in their prescribed capacity as “watchdogs” of democracy.

Considering the fact that the media in BiH are not (politically) independent, it should be the role of other actors, such as associations of professional journalists or trade unions, to advocate for better professional standards in the media and to protect basic rights of journalists and, consequently, to secure the credibility of information published/broadcasted. Declaratively, these associations advocate for professionalism of the media and for the rights of journalists but, as it is obvious from everyday practice, they are also divided along territorial (entity), ethnic, political or ideological lines. There is also no common platform or will for their joint action and cooperation. As a result, the community of journalists is affected by these divisions, and each is forced to choose whether to belong to these exclusively defined associations or to stay out. Besides journalists and the leadership of these associations, media experts and certain policy makers are also involved in the problem by either supporting these divisions (as it is the case with the Association of Croat Journalists and Association of Journalists of Republika Srpska) or by inspiring certain groups toward further divisions (this was the case with the Independent Association of Journalists of Republika Srpska). The problem affecting the professional associations of journalists, and partly trade unions, mirrors the overall situation in BiH by reflecting its inner structural divisions (ethnic, territorial, political). Thus, we are talking about strong politicization (soft version) and instrumentalization (hard version) of these associations for the sake of promoting exclusive ethno-political agenda(s).

One of the main goals of this paper is to examine the linkages between the dominant pattern of political culture and media policies. As a case study, I would like to focus on professional associations of journalists in BiH. The purpose of this research is to analyse the context in which professional journalist associations in BiH operate, assess their potential and evaluate their declarative principles and implemented activities. It will assess the possibility for joint action in the field of protection of journalistic standards, which would consequently raise overall accountability of the media in BiH. In order to find a minimal consensus among diverse and divided media policies, it is important to deconstruct current media practices, compare them with other similar cases, and identify best practices on the basis of which recommendations can be drafted specifically for BiH.

This paper follows the argument that professional standards in journalism and the rights of journalists in BiH are strongly affected by the fact that there is no unique platform or effective cooperation among existing journalist associations. The purpose of this paper is to detect the reasons for the current situation where professional associations of journalists are divided among ethnic, territorial and political lines. This will take into account various types of reasons-contextual, political, economic, professional, and individual. Also, with an extensive analysis of the policy context that mainly explores the legislative framework, and with comparative insight in regard to countries with similar situations (Serbia and Belgium, where associations are also divided), this paper will seek to find potential solutions to help overcome the current situation. There is a need for some sort of professional solidarity among journalists in BiH since they are facing the same problems and obstacles in their everyday work (working conditions, different types of pressures,



salaries, social protection, etc.). This kind of solidarity should be set beyond the current ethnic, political, territorial or interest divisions. This is important for protecting the basic rights of journalists (mainly social and economic) and for improving overall professionalism of the media.

In order to look for problems/factors that cause the outcomes of journalist associations in terms of politicization rather than independence, I will use the following specific questions: Which public policies define the frame within which these associations operate in BiH? What is the exact role of these associations in regard to the protection of professional standards and journalistic rights of the media? Has the formation of some of these associations been motivated by political reasons rather than by a desire to promote professional standards and the rights of media professionals? How can they contribute (by which means or by which joint efforts) to increase overall professionalism and accountability of the media? Based on my research, I would like to identify existing public policies related to the work of professional journalist associations. Therefore, I also would like to search for those policies (laws, decisions, regulations, etc.) that are missing in order to create room for improving the work of associations, and to identify which institutions or bodies must make decisions on the adoption of these policies.

In order to conduct a comprehensive research study and draft reasonable and useful recommendations, I attempt to conceptualize this research in a comparative manner as well. Therefore, I will take a look at the situation in countries where several associations exist, for example in Belgium and Serbia. The Serbian case will be especially interesting since three associations exist in Serbia-the Association of Journalists of Serbia, Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia, and Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina. The reasons for their division are not based on ethnicity or politics. In Serbia these associations operate under different circumstances, partly following their agendas and partly working jointly.¹

In such a politically-charged environment such as BiH it will be very hard to achieve the aim of this research without facing certain limitations. First, in BiH, due to the overall politicization of public space, the decision-making process is about taking sides. Also, in regard to data collection the problem is the lack of evidence and facts necessary for investigation. For example, just two out of six professional journalist associations in BiH have a web page with a clear presentation of their organization, aims and activities, while three have no registered telephone number. The dominant pattern is a culture of unaccountability-people do not act responsibly in their public positions, they do not respond officially (by e mail, telephone, written appeal, etc.) in spite of the fact that it is their obligation. It would be very hard to find and convince people to talk honestly, free from any ideological or political bias. In order to overcome this problem, I will conduct extensive field research using, besides existing data (from web pages, official documents, past research), the method of in-depth interviews with representatives of various professional associations, media experts and journalists, whether they are part or not part of journalist associations.

The study is divided into three parts. In the first part, the context of the problem and the main aspects of it-in terms of legislative, economic, social and political influence - will be assessed. In the second part I will outline several scenarios for solutions to the problem, and I will analyse each within the presented context taking into account both their strengths and weaknesses. And, finally, based on this analysis, a list of recommendations will be drafted.

In order to overcome this problem, I conducted extensive field research and 19 interviews with representatives of various professional associations, media experts and journalists, whether they are part or not part of journalist associations.

¹ The best example of their complementary activities is joint support and advocacy for the Draft on Strategy for Public Information systems in the Republic of Serbia until 2016.

2. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

2.1. Contextual insight

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a transitional, post-conflict and politically divided country. Almost 17 years after the end of the war (which lasted from 1992 to 1995), BiH remains divided, characterized by polarizing political dynamics, a fragmented party system, and complex administrative structures that hamper the country's transition towards being a functioning democracy. The administrative structure of the state has proven to be highly inefficient, extremely expensive and corrupt. The situation is even more complicated and polarized by rather irreconcilable ideological and strategic positions of leading political parties at various administrative levels, resulting in a general absence of basic consensus on the organization and future of the country. The socio-political context has a decisive influence, and it is reflected in the media system of BiH as well.

In many ways, the media remain divided along ethnic and territorial lines, catering to different ethnically-profiled audiences, with only a few exceptions which try to reach a cross-ethnic, state-wide audience, such as a few large, commercial television stations with predominantly entertainment programming. The media landscape of BiH belongs to the "Mediterranean or polarized pluralist model" that is characterized by low newspaper circulation, an elite-oriented press, external pluralism and a high degree of political parallelism, commentary-oriented journalism, weak professionalism and instrumentalization of media for political purpose(s). In this sense, political parallelism refers to media content (and the way in which different media reflect different political views), organizational links between media and political parties, partisanship of media audiences, and a tendency of media personnel to be active in politics.² Also in this country, besides parallelism, the trend of political clientelism is very strong. Clientelism refers to a pattern of social organization in which access to social resources is controlled by patrons (politicians and media owners) and is delivered to clients in exchange for deference and various forms of support.³

² Hallin, and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three models of media and politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2004: 26-29, 67.

³ See in: Eisenstadt and Lemarchand, 1981; Piattoni, 2001; Hallin and Papathanassopoulos, 2002; Hallin and Mancini, 2004.

⁴ Sandra Bašić-Hrvatini, Mark Thompson and Tarik Jusić, eds., *Razjedinjeni propadaju: Javni radio-televizijski servisi u multietničkim državama [Divided They Fall: Public Service Broadcasting in Multiethnic States]* (Sarajevo: Mediacentar, 2008), 81 - 118.

⁵ Marko, Davor. "The Role of Opinion Leaders in the Dissemination of Media Messages during the pre-Election Period: The Case of BiH". *CEU Political Science Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2, April 2011.

⁶ Radenko Udovičić, *Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina: How the Media Covered the Election Campaign*. Sarajevo: Media plan institute / Konrad Adenauer Foundation, December, 2010.

The Bosnian-Herzegovinian media follow the logic of ethno-political divisions and operate according to certain political affiliations. Often, the media are aligned with important political and economic power centres and frequently advocate narrow political and economic interests of their powerful owners and political sponsors. The media market in BiH is also segmented; the audience is divided along ethnic lines and consumes only those media with which it is affiliated.⁴ Groups (people or ethno-national) in which the media and their editorial policies are embedded are important as a source of legitimacy for "their" public. First, people belonging to a certain group benefit from sharing the opinions, attitudes and behaviours of those with whom they want to be identified. Second, primary groups construct their social reality and, as such, present themselves in validation of their own interpretations and evaluations.⁵ Affiliated in such a manner, the media are not held accountable. Among many reasons, I will refer to the following: first, public consumers of the media in BiH are not unified, but are rather ethnically segmented; second, editorial policy (even on public service broadcasting) is not independent but instead influenced by political pressures⁶, ownership interests and ethnic affiliation; third, the position of journalists and professional standards in the media have not been protected and secured in a practical manner. In spite of the fact that BiH has advanced legislation, in the domain of media there are no mechanisms or political will for its implementation. In such a complex environment the media and journalists are not able to play their "watchdog" role and inform the public in a transparent manner.



There is no unique media policy on the state level in BiH or a strategy for media development as it is in the case in Serbia, for example.⁷ With the exception of the Public Service Broadcasting of BiH, all significant media (broadcasting, print, online) are privately owned. Consequently, their editorial policies and professional standards are derogated and jeopardized either by their owners or by political options to which a certain media outlet belongs. For example, while reporting on issues related to the war in Libya, journalists of the daily newspaper *Oslobođenje* were not allowed to criticize Muamer Gaddafi since the owners of the newspaper have their own business interests in Libya and relied on Gaddafi's collaboration and friendship.⁸ On the other hand, during the election campaign in September 2010, the daily newspaper *Dnevni avaz* favoured its owner Fahrudin Radončić and his newly established party – Savez za bolju budućnost BiH [Alliance for the Better Future of BiH]. During the same campaign, the leading mainstream media from Republika Srpska reported on only a very small amount of crime, in spite of the fact that crime and corruption are very important topics and hot issues in BiH. This could be easily connected to their support of Milorad Dodik's regime and his indirect control over the contents of the leading media in Republika Srpska.⁹ In the same manner, most democratic states have their own ethnically or politically affiliated presses, and even this is something that is considered legitimate. Also, private owners give their papers and other media outlets a certain "tilt" or orientation; however, in contrast to the situation in BiH, those biases do not overly colour the news that people get. In BiH, there are no state-based or state-oriented media, and neither do the current media share nor create any kind of discourse with which all groups (or individuals) may affiliate. Rather, they create separate and exclusive discourses that are of a changing nature according to the specific political and ethnic affiliation of a certain media outlet.

2.2. Socio-economic position of journalists

The vast majority of journalists in BiH work under permanent political pressure or under pressure from their owners-big business companies or tycoons-who have taken over the private media sector.¹⁰ Examples from certain private media illustrate how the profession can be neglected, even ruined, for the sake of defending the interests of media owners, whether such interests are of a financial or political nature (or both). Dependencies of this kind stem from the material position of journalists who in most cases are underpaid and are in some way forced to "sell" their freedom and dignity. These are the main reasons for the difficult situation and humiliating position in which journalists in BiH find themselves.¹¹

BiH fails to comply with Resolution 1636 (2008) of the Parliamentary Assembly the Council of Europe which states that "journalists should have adequate working contracts with sufficient social protection, so as not to compromise their impartiality and independence".¹² As it is concluded by the Balkan Media Barometer for 2011, journalists in this country are "exploited and poorly paid, afraid of being sacked, and cannot be truly free and motivated to adhere to professional standards in their daily work". Quite a number of media employees work for periods of more than five years without any contract, health insurance or employer's contribution to pension or disability fund.¹³ Results of research conducted by Mediacycenter Sarajevo from 2008 indicate that the most prominent violations of labour rights of media employees are related to salaries (43%), working conditions (33%), and length of the working day (39%). Some of the problems identified were unregistered work engagements and freelance engagements that often violate labour rights more frequently. The quality of the labour contract is often poor (job description is inadequate; payment rates are not always listed). As a result, journalists feel insecure by individual labour contracts in terms of unjust penalties or dismissal.¹⁴

⁷ This will be discussed later on within the last sub-section of this chapter.

⁸ For example:, consider the following front page headlines: "Tripoli živi mirno i slavi Gadafi" [*Tripoli lives peacefully and celebrates Gaddafi*], 24 February 2011; or "Zavjera SAD-a i Al-Kaide protiv Gadafi" [*Conspiracy of the USA and Al-Qaida against Gaddafi*], 11 March 2011.

⁹ Udovičić, *Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

¹⁰ Examples are various – from Fahrudin Radončić who owns the daily newspaper *Dnevni avaz*, TV station "Alfa", Željko Kopanja from Banja Luka who is the owner of the daily newspapers *Nezavisne novine and Glas Srpske*, and MIMS Group (Mujo and Hilmo Selimović) who possess the daily newspaper *Oslobođenje* and newsmagazine *Dani*.

¹¹ Interview with Eldih Hadžović, journalist at Balkan Insight.

¹² Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 1636, 2008., available on the following link: <http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta08/eres1636.htm> [accessed on 10 December 2011]

¹³ Balkan Media Barometer, 2011: 61

¹⁴ Hodžić, S. "Bosnia and Herzegovina", in *Labor Relation and Media*, Moldova: International Policy Institute, 2008. 92 - 130

Research conducted by the NGO "Lara" in 2006, shows that the average salary of journalists in BiH was 350 EUR per month, while 22% of respondents to the research declared that they had incomes of less than 250 EUR per month. Also, this research indicates that the amount of income depends on the type of media and the city where a journalist works. Therefore salaries were higher in big cities (Sarajevo, Banja Luka), while they were much smaller in Doboj and Bijeljina. Trade unions of media and graphic workers in Republika Srpska showed that salaries in this entity were even lower, on average about 275 EUR per month.¹⁵ For example, upon completing a university degree in political science, journalists in Republika Srpska are in the best case able to earn up to 400 EUR as professionals. Before being employed, they usually work for honoraria or on a voluntary basis. Ordinary journalists work under constant fear of job loss and are openly blackmailed by editors, who serve as gatekeepers of the political affiliation of their media owners and bosses, and who therefore are a critical force in journalism in the region.¹⁶

¹⁵ Milojević, M. "Radno-profesionalni i socijalni položaj novinara u BiH", in: Blagočević, Srđan, *Bosna i Hercegovina 2007: Uloga i stanje medija*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung / Transparency International, 2007: 90 - 92.

¹⁶ Interview with Tatjana Duronjić, Professor of Political Science, University of Banja Luka.

2.3. Professional associations of journalists in BiH

Considering the fact that the media in BiH are not (politically) independent and that the socio-economic rights of journalists (as we saw in the previous section) are not protected, it should be the role of other actors than the state, such as associations of professional journalists or trade unions, to advocate for better professional standards in the media and to protect the basic rights of their journalists. These associations are important for protecting and strengthening the rights and freedoms of journalists, upholding and improving professionalism and high standards of journalism and education in journalism, improving the social and working conditions of all journalists, and encouraging and supporting member unions in collective bargaining.¹⁷ In order to narrow down the scope of their activities, I would like to outline the two most important functions that these associations should have: protection of journalists and their rights, and promotion of high journalistic standards and professionalism. Throughout this research I focus my attention on these two domains.

¹⁷ These principles are part of the International Federation of Journalists' "Principles on the Conduct of Journalists", to which the main national associations of journalists are affiliated.

For a detailed analysis of the current policy environment in regard to professional associations, trade unions, and journalists' rights generally, we have to take into account several aspects: the media landscape, legislative framework, activities of associations and the scope of their activities.

The existing legislative framework for the media, developed after the war, is sufficient to guarantee a framework for further democratic development. But it is simply a formal framework that is not being implemented properly. In practice, the media and journalists are not protected from political pressures, especially on the local level, let alone from the influence and manipulation by media owners. Together these developments have resulted in the return of hate speech both in public and commercial media outlets, destruction of professional quality and violations of ethical standards. We are witnessing media self-censure and the return of "patriotic journalism" in practice, which solely serves the interests of concrete political, religious-national or economic lobbies.

According to the current legislation, journalists, having the same status as other citizens of BiH, have the opportunity and the right to establish their organizations/associations. This is regulated by the Law on Associations and Foundations of BiH, in which article 2, paragraph 1 states that "an association can be established by mutual agreement in which a group of three



or more persons or legal subjects, in all combinations, voluntarily associate in order to achieve a certain common or public interest, without having the intention to make profit. The association becomes a legal entity upon its registration as provided by this law”.¹⁸

Besides professional associations of journalists, journalists are free to seek their rights and protection of their rights (mainly socio-economic) through trade unions. The right to organize independent trade unions in BiH is defined and guaranteed by entity laws and constitutions. In BiH trade unions are established along entity lines, and additionally there is a union at the level of Brčko District. There are four trade unions in BiH, and their integral parts are branch unions of graphics, publishing and media workers. Two out of four are located in the RS, one in the Federation and one in Herzegovina. In 1998, there was an initiative for the formation of the Union of Journalists, which was supposed to take action in connection with the exercise of labour rights of journalists throughout the country. However, the union didn't actively perform its duties.¹⁹ Today we can find trade unions of employees in public services in both entities- Federation TV (FTV) and Radio Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS). In regard to RTRS, for a long period of time there was a problem with the organization of journalists in unions and the recognition of the union's representativeness as a party in negotiations with management. The research, conducted by Sarajevo Mediacenter in 2008, shows that 31% of respondents (the total number of respondents was 122) were enrolled in trade unions, whereas those journalists employed by private media houses were not union members.²⁰ Other data indicate an even worse situation-that only around 15% of journalists are members of trade unions.²¹

From 2011 to 2012, the Press Council of BiH and the Association “BH Journalists” [BH Novinari] prepared the first shadow report on implementation of domestic regulations and legislation on freedom of expression and the rights of journalists in BiH. The analytical framework of this research was developed in line with the indicators of Resolution 1636 of the Council Europe, the European Convention of Human Rights and the standpoints of the European Court of Human Rights.²² As the results point out, the work of trade unions in general has been evaluated as bad and inefficient (81% of the respondents considered the effects of their activities to be poor), and should, in the opinion of respondents, play a greater role and take more initiative to protect journalists.²³

¹⁸ Zakon o udruženjima i fondacijama Bosne i Hercegovine (“Službeni glasnik BiH”, br. 32/01 i 42/03)

¹⁹ According to the president of the trade union, Amer Toskić, this was just an idea that still exists on paper, without implementation. Source: Izvještaj o stanju medijskih sloboda u BiH, Sarajevo: Mediacenter, 2010. Pg. 31

²⁰ Hodžić, 2008. Pg. 120-121

²¹ Balkan media barometer, 2011: 63

²² According to this frame, Indicator 8.12 refers to the freedom of association of journalists. During their research, the following questions have been examined: Are journalists in BiH free to organize themselves into trade unions/ associations? (8.12a); Do you see any limitations in regard to this? Give some examples (8.12b); How would you evaluate the role of trade unions? (8.12d); Do you think that trade unions or councils of employees have to be established for each media? (8.12f).

TABLE 1:
Analysis of the freedom of associations of journalists and the role of trade unions²⁴

	YES	%	NO	%	No Statistics	%	Neutral	%	Number of responses
8.12.A	17	80,95	3	14,29	0	0	1	4,76	21
8.12.B	19	90,48	2	9,52	0	0	0	0	21
8.12.D	0	0	13	81,25	0	0	3	18,75	16
8.12.F	5	38,46	5	38,46	0	0	3	23,08	13

(This table contains only direct answers to the question 8.12d – “NO” means “bad”, “YES” means “good”, and “Neutral” means “it is fine, but it could be better/improved”)

Generally speaking, the role of unions in the media is not recognized as a strong factor of journalist's protection. Media workers still do not see unions as an important mechanism in resolving their problems, and many employees do not know whether the possibility to become a member (with respect to the type of media in which they are employed) exists. In practice, elected representatives of the Council of Employees and the elected leadership of trade unions may be found to be, somehow, alienated from their real goal and from the employees or union members who elected them, and the unions may instead be turned into a “service” of employers/owners.

²³ Izvještaj o stanju medijskih sloboda u BiH u 2011. godini. Sarajevo: Vijeće za štampu / Udruženje “BH novinari”, 2012.

²⁴ This research has been conducted among experts from various fields (media, politics, economy, law, trade unions, academia, etc.) that were gathered together in a focus group.

Currently, due to limited data, only general information on professional journalist associations and their missions and activities in BiH are publicly available. These limited data show that not all of the journalist associations in BiH exist for the protection of the rights of journalists. There are six journalist associations in BiH—three in the Federation of BiH and three in Republika Srpska. These associations are the following: the Association “BH Journalists” [BH Novinari], the Association of Journalists of RS, The Association of Croat Journalists from BiH, The Association of BiH Journalists, the Association of Young Journalists of RS, and the Network of Women Journalists. One more association, which is not registered separately, is the Association of Reporters from the Court of BiH, and this association is part of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN).

It is important to mention that only three out of six—the Association “BH Journalists”, the Association of Journalists of BiH and the Association of Journalists of Republika Srpska (their web page is still in progress, while the one in use www.novinarirs.com serves to present their current activities)—have a web page, while three couldn’t be found in the register of telephone users. Compared to the web pages in neighbouring countries, for example in Serbia, those of the associations in BiH are very modest, not up to date, with many sections that are under construction. Only “BH Journalists” has some sort of archive of activities, projects and releases on the web, together with contact information and useful links. Due to this fact, it is clear that more than half of these associations did not reach the elementary conditions for normal communication with both their members and the wider public. This is also a reason for why some of them were hard, even impossible to approach in order to evaluate their scope and effectiveness, and generally speaking, the reasons for their existence.

2.3.1. The Association “BH Journalists” [BH Novinari]

“BH Journalists” (or BHJ) is defined as a non-partisan, multi-ethnic, non-profit association with the aim to bring together individual journalists, freelance licensed journalists, journalism students and other media employees (photo-reporters, readers, cameramen). It was founded in 2004 as an umbrella association of journalists in BiH with activities covering the entire territory of the country. The three founding organizations of “BH Journalists” were the Independent Union of Professional Journalists from BiH, the Journalist Association “Apel” from Mostar, and the Independent Association of Journalists from Republika Srpska (NUN RS). The main goals of the newly formed association were the protection and improvement of freedoms, rights and responsibilities of journalists as well as the protection of the reputation and dignity of the profession of journalism, and the improvement of the public’s basic constitutional right to be informed about events in society. Additionally, it aimed to support each person’s right to freedom of opinion, expression and access to the media.

“BH Journalists” has developed the following primary services at the disposal of its members: free legal and professional assistance, specialized and thematic trainings, social services and protection, discounts and other services, and advocacy and lobbying. It offers three kinds of membership: full membership (for journalists and other media employees whose main profession is journalism); associate membership (for students of journalism who have started working in the media as volunteers or associates); and honourable membership (for journalists who started working in PR, marketing, media management or other media-related activities and are no longer working actively in journalism). The association currently has 750 members, out of which 500 are active, from all kinds of media (print, radio and TV, news agencies and on-line media), coming from all parts of BiH, representing all ethnicities and various age groups.²⁵

²⁵ Interview with Borka Rudić, Secretary General of the Association “BH Journalists”; Web page of “BH Journalists”, available online www.bhnovinari.ba



BHJ is a citizens' association headed by a board of managers and an executive board. It is managed by the association's president, vice-president and secretary general, who has an executive-administrative role. Its current president is Milkica Milojević from *Euroblic*, Banja Luka, while the secretary general is Borka Rudić from Sarajevo.

Respondents to various researches usually categorized the Association "BH Journalists" in a positive light. This association is not based on purely ethno-national criteria; it has its headquarters in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar, and members come from all parts of BiH. However, some respondents to the research conducted by Mediacycenter said that even this association has not been perceived as fully professional and sinless and has not overcome ethnic divisions as has been officially declared.²⁶ Several respondents stated that the credibility of this association was violated due to the case of financial malfeasance. According to an indictment from 18 March 2009, the former office manager of NUPN, Aida Durakovic-Poričanin was charged with financial malfeasance during the period between 1 December 1998 and 22 March 2006. She is suspected of cheating 89 journalists and members of the Association "BH Journalists", stealing their payments for pension and health insurance, thus obtaining a material gain worth 326,762 KM. The legal successor to NUPN is the Association "BH Journalists", which was established in late 2004. This judicial process is still on-going, and the affair left a serious mark on the work of "BH Journalists", in spite of the fact that this association submitted a criminal charge against Duraković-Poričanin. Those against this association usually use the affair as their only argument, especially the fact that its leadership did not offer its resignation afterward.²⁷ At the end of the day, some interviewees would agree that in spite of these problems, the association is doing a good job, struggling to preserve professionalism and to help its members.²⁸

2.3.2. The Association of Journalists of Republika Srpska (UN RS)

Initiative for re-activation of this association was launched at the beginning of 2011, when three journalists from Republika Srpska redraw their membership from "BH Journalists". The Association of Journalists of RS was formed through the unification of three previously existing journalist associations in the RS—the Association of Journalists of RS, the independent Association of Journalists of RS, and the Association of Young Journalists of RS.²⁹

The Association of Journalists of Republika Srpska (UN RS) was established in 1996, and since 1997 it has been a full member of the International Federation of Journalists (IJF). This association was rarely active in the last ten years, but it was finally re-activated in January 2011 when a group of unsatisfied journalists from the RS left the Association "BH Journalists". This was declared at a press conference held on 10 January 2011 in Banja Luka, and two months later in March 2011, UN RS adopted a new statute and elected a new presidency. At the same time, it declared its aim to unify the three existing associations of journalists from the RS into one, including the Independent Association of Journalists from RS and the Association of Young Journalists from RS.

According to its statute, the main goals of this association are to develop professionalism in the media (to enhance objective, accurate and timely reporting), to support a plurality of opinions and free expression, to protect the rights of journalists and the interests of UN RS members, to promote better working conditions for journalists (in terms of socio-economic conditions and better legislation), and to foster cooperation between associations from within the country (BiH) and abroad that share the same objectives and principles.³⁰

Currently, according to its president Dragan Jerinić, the Association has around 850 members. The association has a management board, supervisory board, a court of honour, and an assem-

²⁶ Mira Lolic-Mocecic, former program director on Radio-television of RS, mentioned this as a reason for her resignation from the association. As an example of inconsistency in the work of this association, she said the lack of any reaction to the ongoing tendentious journalism and the rise of ethnic tension by certain journalists from Federal TV.

²⁷ Interview with Amer Džihana, media expert from „Internews“

²⁸ Interview with Faruk Borić, director of the Federal News Agency (FENA)

²⁹ The leader of this process, Dragan Jerinić from daily "Nezavisne novine", publicly withdrew his membership from the association "BH Novinari", together with his two colleagues from Republika Srpska, which, in his own words, operates in favour of journalists and media from the Federation of BiH at the expense of journalists and media from the RS.

³⁰ Source: Temporary web page of the association, available at: http://novinaris.com/?page_id=69

³¹ Interview with the President of UN RS, Dragan Jerinić.

bly. Its president is Dragan Jerinić from the daily *Nezavisne*, while other members are: Suzana Rađen Todorčić (Vice President, TV BN, Bijeljina), Igor Gajić, Sasa Bižić, Zoran Sovilj, Dubravka Gajić, Siniša Mihajlović and Žarko Marković.³¹

³² "Skup novinara slovenskih zemalja u Tesliću", *Nezavisne novine*, 30 September 2011, available online <http://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/bih/Skup-novinarar-slovenskih-zemalja-u-Teslicu-108344.html>

The biggest event organized by this association was held in September 2011, when representatives of journalist associations from Serbia, Russia, Montenegro and Republika Srpska gathered in Banja Vrućica, near Teslić, in order to celebrate the hundredth year anniversary of the Great Slovenian Journalists' Congress and to discuss prospects for cooperation between journalist organizations.³² Some would consider this event to be a purely political event since journalists from three countries (Serbia, Montenegro and Russia) and one entity (Republika Srpska) have almost nothing in common, while the main guest of the conference was the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, who gave a speech on economic perspectives of the RS.³³

³³ Interview with Faruk Borić, Director of the Federal News Agency (FENA)

2.3.3. The Association of Croat Journalists from BiH

As stated by the former president of this association and current president of the assembly, Ilko Barbarić, the Association of Croat Journalists from BiH was created due to the lack of communication and real empathy for local problems from the side of organizations, including professional journalist associations located in Sarajevo and Banja Luka.³⁴ It was established in December 1998 and, according to data from 2007, it has 183 members. This association is an affiliated member of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).³⁵

³⁴ Izvještaj o stanju medijskih sloboda u BiH, Sarajevo: Mediacentar, 2010: 33

³⁵ "Bosna i Hercegovina 2008: Uloga i stanje medija". Transparency International BiH / Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2008: 122

In December 2010, Ljubo Kovač was elected as the new president of the association, while the vice-president is Branka Jukić.

2.3.4. The Association of BiH Journalists

This association is the legal successor to the Association of Journalists of Bosnia and Herzegovina that was active during socialist Yugoslavia. By the decision of the Assembly of the Association of Journalists of BiH, in 1994 it was first renamed as the Union of Journalists of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That name remained until the end of 2004 when it became known as the Association of BiH Journalists. They declared themselves as an independent, non-partisan and non-profit association of professional journalists operating in the territory of BiH in accordance with the rights and obligations defined by the constitution and laws of this country.

Their offices are in Sarajevo. The president of this association is Nađa Ridžić, a journalist from Federation TV from Travnik, and she was elected in 2007. According to available data, during 2011 this association had 384 professional journalists from all parts of BiH as their members while in addition, the veterans or retired journalists section numbered 74 members.³⁶ The latest event organized by this association was the manifestation "Journalists of the Year" where awards were granted to Nisvet Džanko as the best journalist in 2011, a journalist of Radio Tuzla, TV magazine "Crta" from BHTV, and Andrijana Copf, journalist of the daily *Dnevni list* from Mostar.³⁷

³⁶ Web page of the Association of BiH Journalists, available online <http://dnbih.ba/>

³⁷ "Nisvet Džanko - Novinar godine 2011", 5 May 2012, available online <http://www.radiosarajevo.ba/novost/80466/nisvet-dzanko-novinar-godine-2011>

2.3.5. The Association of Young Journalists of RS

This association was founded in 2004 in Banja Luka, with the aim of gathering together students of journalism and journalists who are not older than 35 years of age. The founders were



discouraged by the existing situation in media and journalism and were unsatisfied with the overall performance of other professional associations. During a period of five years this association organized several round tables, lectures, and the list of its members expanded to 200. In 2007 together with the Foundation "Friedrich Ebert", they organized a big and important debate titled "The State of Media in the RS and FBiH and Organizations of Journalists" where they concluded that the media in BiH are "severely divided and ethnically affiliated". They also were very critical towards the government of Republika Srpska and its decision to forbid its officers to give statements to BHTV1. As a conclusion of this conference, participants proposed the establishment of an ad hoc working body that would consist of members of all journalists' associations from BiH and that would not be a supra-organization, but rather a kind of platform for joint activities fostering solidarity.³⁸ Today, this organization doesn't exist and its prominent figures are instead part of the regime-controlled media (for example, the former secretary general is employed by the daily *Fokus* in the department for marketing) or are not in journalism anymore (the former president Milorad Labus is the owner of a café in Banja Luka, while his father Jovo Labus used to be the director of the Republika Srpska News Agency-SRNA)

2.3.6. Network of Women Journalists

This informal journalist association was founded in Bijeljina, as a branch of the women's NGO "Lara". Its members are 30 female journalists from all parts of BiH. This association was not bound by territorial, national, ethnic or religious markers, but in terms of activities it was pretty limited since such a disperse membership could only advocate for improving the position of female journalists through joint statements and appeals. Their president is Milkica Milojevic, a journalist from the daily *Euroblic*, Banja Luka, and member of the steering board of "BH Journalists".³⁹

2.4. Associations in practice and problems

According to research conducted by Mediacentar in Sarajevo, professional journalist associations are not efficient due to the fact that six is too many for a country the size of BiH. Additionally, these associations are not united and some of them operate as part of certain political circles, and consequently their role is not essentially important. Reasons for divisions among these associations are on political, ethnic, or territorial lines. Their focus is mainly on local problems while, in a declarative manner, their aims are to protect journalists and their working status. Instead of cooperation, there is strong and unnecessary competition between these associations.⁴⁰ Some of the respondents to this research said that these associations serve as a channel for the promotion of certain personalities, while others claim that these organizations promote various political⁴¹ or ideological interests, rather than fostering cooperation among journalists and promoting professionalism in the media. Some respondents were sceptical due to the fact that these associations (and it is obvious when comparing their names) are organized along ethno-territorial lines, which is a crucial argument in favour of their politicization. Fragmentation along entity, ethnic, territorial, ideological or interest lines is the main reason for their inconsistency, unaccountability and selectivity. Thus solidarity within the professional journalist community is an exception rather than a rule.⁴²

Based on the presented situation and obvious fragmentation along entity and ethnic lines, it is important to outline the problem of not having a legitimate and recognized association of journalists in BiH. This would lead me to the following problem: How can associations of journalists

³⁸ "Bosna i Hercegovina 2008: Uloga i stanje medija". Transparency International BiH / Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2008: 122 - 124

³⁹ Web portal of NGO "Lara", available online <http://www.zenskiforum.com/orga-nizacija-zena-lara-/index.php>

⁴⁰ Izveštaj o stanju medijskih sloboda u BiH, Sarajevo: Mediacentar, 2010. Pg. 32-33

⁴¹ Tanja Topic, from the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung in Banja Luka, illustrates this disunity by the boycotting of BHT by the Republika Srpska Government in 2008 where the leadership of professional associations of journalists in the RS in some way defended this attitude of the government of the Republic of Serbia (This is confusing, are you talking about RS or Serbia here??), while the entire professional public rallied to defend the profession.

⁴² Izveštaj o stanju medijskih sloboda u BiH, Sarajevo: Mediacentar, 2010. Pg. 32-33

be able to play the role of agents in (a) the process of protecting journalistic rights and in (b) the promotion of high professional journalistic standards, if they are divided along ethnic and political lines, and if they are only held partially accountable (meaning, they are only accountable to the journalists/members that affiliate with them)? In order to have unbiased, professional and efficient associations, it is important to have certain criteria fulfilled: clearly defined public policies and a legislative framework that enable and define their duties and activities, promote trust among journalists in the credibility of their work and accordingly, a publicly and unanimously accepted image of journalist associations as those agents in society with whom certain institutions (governmental bodies, international donors and partners) negotiate in order to improve the status of journalists and to professionalize the media.

According to available data, professional associations of journalists in BiH, with the exception of "BH Journalists", are not active in exercising their declarative goals. On the other hand, while trying to act as an umbrella organization representing the interests and rights of all professional journalists in BiH, "BH Journalists" has no support or legitimacy. It can be seen by the example of journalists from Republika Srpska and their recent request for their own entity-based association. In spite of their ethnic and political affiliation, associations of journalists have to obey certain professional standards in order to fulfil their watchdog role in society. By default, they have to protect journalists and establish high standards in their everyday work. These professional standards are supposed to secure: (a) the position and autonomy of journalists and editors (*autonomy domain*), (b) the credibility of information disseminated/provided by the media (*content domain*), (c) a platform for various discussions that is open to a plurality of ideas and opinions (*plurality domain*), and (d) continuous activities in regard to skill development and knowledge of journalists (*sensitization domain*).

In order to look for the problems and factors that cause the outcomes of journalist associations in terms of politicization rather than independence, I will use the following specific questions: Which public policies define the frame within which these associations operate in BiH? What is the exact role of these associations in regard to protection of professional standards and journalistic rights of the media? Has the formation of some of these associations been motivated by political reasons, rather than by a desire to promote professional standards and the rights of media professionals? How can they contribute (by which means or by which joint efforts) to increase overall professionalism in and accountability of the media?

2.5. Comparative insight - the case of Serbia

In order to conduct comprehensive research and draft reasonable and useful recommendations, I will conceptualize this research in a comparative manner as well. Therefore, I will take a look at the situation in Serbia where several associations exist, but have a joint platform for work. In Serbia, three associations exist-the Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS), the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia (NUNS), and the Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina (NDNV). The reasons for their division are not exclusively ethnic or political, but rather ideological (in the case of UNS and NUNS it is their relation towards the past and the 1990s⁴³) or territorial (the case of NDNV shows a much higher degree of sensitivity towards minority issues and diversity in general terms). In Serbia these associations operate in different circumstances, partly following their agendas and partly working jointly.

⁴⁵ UNS did make some form of discontinuity with its policies during the time of Milosevic. In 2001, its Court of Honour excluded from membership eight leading journalists from the most influential media for disrespecting a professional code. NUNS however insists on banning all journalists who took part in the regime's media promotion of war, hate speech, ethnic and political discrimination. In 2009, NUNS filed a criminal charge against an unnamed journalist who worked for RTV Belgrade, RTV Novi Sad and dailies *Vecernje Novosti* and *Politika* in the 1990s. UNS strongly opposed the idea of examining the media's role during those years and described the initiatives as chases against people who 'just did their job'.



In Serbia, trade unions do not play any significant role in the protection of journalists' socio-economic rights. Until 2003 the associations took care of social protection of journalists. In 2003 UNS initiated the establishment of the Union of Journalists of Serbia, which has about 800 members today. The Union's main goal is to prepare a national collective agreement for journalists and to help them in collective bargaining agreements with specific media owners, since the relations and mutual obligations have not yet been agreed upon. According to the Union's data, about half of the 800 media personnel without a permanent contract get irregular or minimal wages. The position of journalists in local media that go bankrupt because of the unsuccessful privatisation process is particularly difficult: they have no social protection of any kind.⁴⁴ According to recent research, the average salary for journalists in Serbia is between 200 and 500 EUR per month, while 60% of the respondents receive their salaries on a regular basis.⁴⁵

TABLE 2:
Comparative insight into the number of journalists, professional associations and trade unions in three targeted countries

Country	Population	Number of journalists	Average Salary	Number of Associations	Number of Trade Unions	Journalists in trade unions / associations	Media freedoms
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.8 mill.	2,000 – 2,500	350 EUR	6	4	17 - 32 % ⁴⁶	58th
Serbia	7.1 mill.	8,000 -10,000	200 – 500 EUR	3	2	70 %	80th
Croatia	4.4 mill.	7,000	700 – 1.200 EUR	1	1	70 %	68th

The Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS) is the largest and oldest association of professional journalists in Serbia, and it is a member of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). It was founded in 1881, and today it has more than 6,000 members.

Under the umbrella of UNS, two branch-associations exist-the Association of Journalists of Vojvodina, based in Novi Sad, and the Association of Journalists of Kosovo and Metohija, based temporarily in Gračanica. From 2010, on the premises of UNS in Belgrade, the modern Press Centre has been launched. The governing bodies of UNS are the president, the assembly, the board, executive board, supervisory board, the court of honour committee. Currently, the president is Ljiljana Smajlović.

Among the main objectives, the following are listed as the most important: **promotion of Serbian journalism**, defence of freedom of thought and expression, protection of journalists and the interests of the profession, and strengthening of journalistic solidarity and assistance to vulnerable colleagues.

An important part of the activities of UNS is related to education. The School of Journalism is for beginners who want to be professionally engaged in journalism, whereas the web journalism school founded in 2008 represents the first of its kind in the region. In addition, UNS organized a large number of seminars, lectures and courses in foreign languages.⁴⁷

The introduction of political pluralism in the 1990s resulted in the sharp polarisation of journalists and their division into two main camps-those who act as "guardians of national interests" or patriots, and those who advocate as "guardians of the profession". The leadership of UNS

⁴⁴ Media Landscape: Serbia, available at the European Journalism Centre, http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/serbia (accessed on 15 April 2012)

⁴⁵ Milivojević, S., ed. "Profesija na raskršću - novinarstvo na pragu informacionog društva", Centar za medije i medijska istraživanja, Beograd: FPN, 2011.

⁴⁶ It is hard to estimate the exact number of journalists who are affiliated to existing professional associations in BiH. Exemption to this are „BH Journalists" that has a transparent list of their member available online (750 members, 500 active) and Journalists Association of BiH with 384 members.

⁴⁷ Sources are the web page of this association, www.uns.rs

at that time understood the media as an instrument of the state and promoted Serbian national interests and patriotic journalism. Many members left UNS, and in March 1994 they established a new association, adding the term 'independent' to the name. **The Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia (NUNS)** strongly opposed political instrumentalization of the media and considered that a pluralist society required new professional norms, above all impartiality and balance in the treatment of political parties. It tried to resist attempts to put the media in the service of the reformed Communist Party led by Slobodan Milošević. The founders of NUNS were mainly members of the steering committee of the Solidarity Fund as well as representatives of thirty media outlets from all parts of Serbia.

Today, NUNS has over 3,300 members, and its president is Vukašin Obradović. Besides the president, the main bodies of NUNS are the assembly, executive board, supervisory board, the honourable court and the commission for admission of new members.

The main objectives of this association are: free journalism and pluralistic media, promotion of professional and ethical standards, protection of the rights and interests of journalists (media professionals) including trade unions and legal protection, and **mutual cooperation between journalists and journalist organizations in the country and abroad**. NUNS has 19 trustees in Serbia and in the various cities of Serbia, it is also engaged in organizing seminars and training journalists as well as publishing (it has its own journal *Dossier*).

The association is financed by membership dues, donations and revenue from the Belgrade Media Centre, whose founder is NUNS. Since 1994, NUNS has been a member of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), based in Brussels and the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Sources are the web page of this association, www.nuns.rs, and interview with the president, Mr. Vukašin Obradović.

Both journalist associations agreed on the common Ethical Code of Serbian Journalists [*Eticki kodeks novinara Srbije*] in 2006. The Ethical Code is an important step in advancing professional self-regulation. However, it has been violated a number of times. The violations have been particularly frequent in daily political tabloid papers. The Press Council was established in 2010, after years of planning and debating its structure, decision-making, and sources of finance. Its members are the nominees of press publishers and professional journalist organisations as well as public representatives. It monitors the way the print media respect the Ethical Code of Serbian Journalists which was adopted in 2006, deal with complaints filed by individuals or institutions in regard to press content and mediate in conflicts between the newspapers and damaged individuals.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Media Landscape: Serbia, available at the European Journalism Centre, http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/serbia (accessed on 15 April 2012)

The Independent Association of Journalist of Vojvodina (NDNV) is a non-profit organization founded and registered in 1990 in Novi Sad on the initiative of a group of prominent journalists from the Serbian province of Vojvodina. From the start, almost all media from Vojvodina and their journalists joined the newly formed organization, and it counts around 270 members. Its mission is to develop free, objective and professional journalism, to advocate for the protection of the rights and interests of journalists as well as to be committed to the values of civil society. A particular focus of this association, because of the specific environment in which it operates, is to promote and protect minorities and media in minority languages. NDNV offers a wide range of services designed for their members, the media community, NGOs and citizens in general. This includes educational services (trainings, workshops and seminars), legal assistance, research and analysis, publishing, campaigns to protect journalists, rental of premises and equipment, and special subsidies for membership. NDNV also



provides free legal assistance to journalists in Vojvodina. Additional activities of NDNV include research and analysis in the field of media and media policy, particularly in the following areas: decentralization and the media, minorities and the media, multiculturalism and the media. This association has launched its own website at www.autonomija.info and it is intended for the general public, the citizens of Vojvodina, and the wider region.⁵⁰

In August 2010, the leading associations of journalists in Serbia (the three above-mentioned plus ANEM-Association of Broadcasting Media⁵¹, and Local Press⁵²), established cooperation within the frame of **media coalition**. These five associations agreed on a common platform and accepted the same general principles of their work (Codex), organized joint meetings, projects, and issued numerous joint statements when their colleagues, journalists, or certain media houses, were attacked or endangered.

Additionally, they formed a joint front in order to be an equal partner with the state of Serbia, and their ultimate activity was to draft the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia until 2016.⁵³ This document is based on the standards, experience and regulatory framework already achieved and established in the developed world. The Strategy aims to define the main directions of development of the public information system in Serbia taking into account the freedom of the media as a basic principle. It defines public interest, the state's role in the public information system, the status and role of media outlets in democratic society and ownership of media outlets. It devotes particular attention to ownership transparency and media concentration. The Strategy also focuses on print media and news agencies, which have been affected the most by the crisis in the media sector. This was an externally-supported initiative by Irex and the European Commission.

This coalition faced numerous obstacles in their work, but they have shown that it is possible to cooperate in spite of ideological orientation, territorial scope, primary aims and personal motives. On April 6, 2011, representatives of five members of the coalition held the joint press conference titled "What's with the Serbian Media Strategy?" at Belgrade Media Centre. On this occasion, they sent an open letter to the President of Serbia, Boris Tadic, in which they pointed to the extremely difficult situation in the media sector that is a serious threat to freedom of the press. They also pointed out the necessity of media reform and strategic regulation of the media scene.⁵⁴

3. POLICY OPTIONS / SCENARIOS

Considering the current political situation in the country, personal and institutional relations among associations and the constitutional setting that gives legitimacy to various forms or reasons for establishing associations, three options/scenarios have been defined as the most indicative for the situation in BiH. Two extreme-the status quo (divided associations without joint activities and a common platform) and radical change (establishment of a unique, state-based association of journalists) have been adapted to a much more moderate and desirable scenario with three types of models of cooperation.

3.1. OPTION 1: State-based models (radical change)

A state-based model of associations implies the existence of one unique (model A1) or one umbrella (model A2) that operates on the central level of the state of BiH and has support and

⁵⁰ Sources are the web page of this association, www.ndnv.org and interview with the president, Mr. Dinko Gruhonjić.

⁵¹ The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) is a business association comprised of 28 radio stations and 16 television companies, as well as more than 60 affiliated organizations. It was founded in 1993 in order to strengthen independent broadcasters in a period that was very difficult for the media that opposed the regime. Their activities include lobbying for the media laws, education of media staff, legal help, and technical support for its members.

⁵² Local Press is a media organisation gathering local print media. It was established in 1995, and currently has 25 members. Its activities include representing the professional interests of its members, joint marketing and business initiatives, and staff training.

⁵³ Source: OSCE Mission to Serbia web page, <http://www.osce.org/serbia/78448>

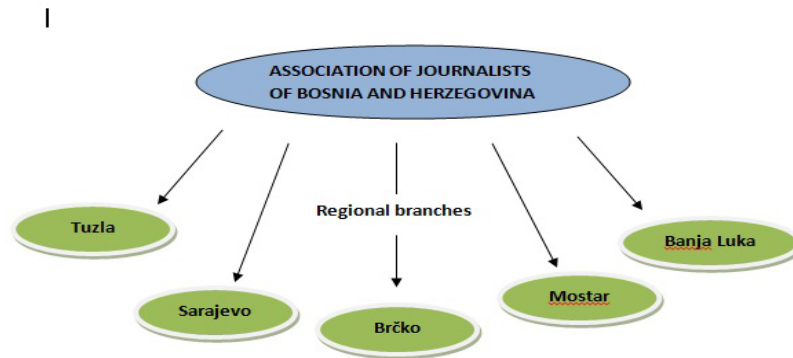
⁵⁴ Source: ANEM web page, available at <http://www.anem.org.rs>

legitimacy in all its units. Journalists from all parts of BiH support it as their own since it promotes commonly agreed upon values and principles and advocates for the rights of journalists on the highest level(s). This state-based association represents a unique front for journalists' struggle against the state and private owners.

3.1.1. Unique organization on the state level

This is a typical and pure type of organization established at the level of the state, with its local branches/departments in the most significant regional centres. This model implies a top-down approach, which means that the structure, policy-and decision-making processes, are strongly centralized. In spite of the fact that local/regional branches (or centres) have a certain kind of authority and self-governance, the final decisions are to be made at the top.

GRAPH 1:
A unique state-based model
with its local branches



It is quite interesting that a similar structure exists in two Sarajevo-based associations-the Association "BH Journalists" and the Association of BiH Journalists.

The Association "BH Journalists" was established in 2004 as the umbrella organization for three founding associations (one from Banja Luka, one from Sarajevo, and one from Mostar), and tends to present all journalists from the state of BiH regardless of their ethnic, national, or territorial belonging. As part of its structure, "BH Journalists" has an opportunity to establish journalist clubs that operate as regional departments. So far, this association has clubs in five cities of BiH-Banja Luka, Bihać, Brčko, Zenica and Doboj.⁵⁵ The Association of BiH Journalists is registered at the level of the state of BiH,⁵⁶ and even though it doesn't have local organizational units, it indicates that its members are professional journalists from all parts of BiH.

The current situation, if we take into account the fact that we have associations for journalists from Republika Srpska and "BH Journalists" that are not accepted by some media and journalists from the RS, is similar to this one. The only missing component is a joint platform or umbrella association that gathers representatives of both associations (from 2004, since they were established, "BH Journalists" played this role).

The most problematic part of this model is that its centralized structure and direct approach toward journalists neglects the constitutional arrangement of the state of BiH. This second problem is very important if we take into account responses from the Association of Journalists of Republika Srpska and the reasons for which the Association of Croat Journalists from BiH was established. For these parties, dissatisfaction and disagreement with the fact that main decisions

⁵⁵ This activity has been supported by "Internews", under its Media Regulation Component. Source: Interview with Borka Rudić, Secretary General of the Association "BH Journalists".

⁵⁶ This association is registered at the Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the decision No. 07-50-1-18/05 (Službeni glasnik BiH br. 32/01 i 42/03).



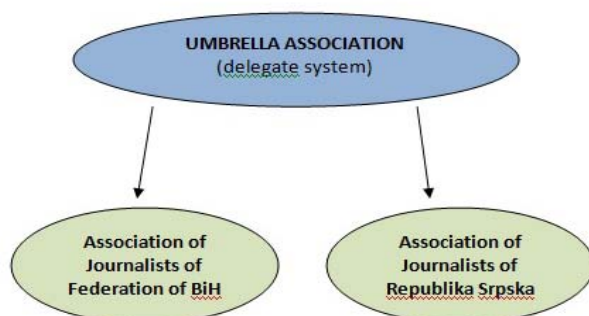
have to be made in Sarajevo⁵⁷ (where the majority are Bosniaks-purely political argumentation) is the main argument and both demand more decentralization. In this regard, it is impossible (mainly due to political conditions) to have a unique organization with popular and direct legitimacy since the ethno-political and consociational model of the state of BiH does not recognize it.

⁵⁷ Source: Interview with Dragan Jerinić, President of the Association of Journalists from Republika Srpska, and with Mirjana Lolić Močević, former member of “BH Journalists”; See also the explanation for the formation of the separate association for journalists of Croat background.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional structure Decision-making process is easy to manage Journalists are represented as professionals, not as members of exclusive groups (ethnic, territorial) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't reflect the structure of the state of BiH Ethnic, national, territorial aspects of BiH identities are not presented (since these are guaranteed under the BiH Constitution) It is hard to decide on its headquarters, since Sarajevo is often accused of being very centralistic and neglecting of other parts of BiH
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development into a strong and competent stakeholder in protecting the rights of journalists Development of a strong advocacy component Attracting mass membership – making its legitimacy even stronger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political situation and struggles for power

3.1.2. Umbrella organization / pan-organization

This model follows the structure (in terms of constitutional arrangements) of the state of BiH. It consists of two entity-based associations and an umbrella association at the state level. The principle of organization is territorial (entities) rather than ethnic. The current situation, if we take into account the fact that we have associations for journalists from Republika Srpska and “BH Journalists” that are not accepted by some media and journalists from the RS, is similar to this one. The only missing component is a joint platform or umbrella association that gathers representatives of both associations (from 2004 to 2010 “BH Journalists” played this role).



GRAPH 2:
An umbrella model with entity-based, founding associations

The umbrella association should be based on the same functioning principles as state-based institutions in BiH-Parliamentary Assembly, Court of BiH and Council of Ministers-which imply a system of delegates (each entity-based association will delegate a certain number of its

members to the assembly of this joint association, and representation will be secured fairly by the principle of rotation). Additionally, this umbrella association is to be based on commonly agreed-upon principles (a code) and the set of priority areas under which activities will be jointly organized.

The territorial principle of organization could be problematic, since the two entities are not designed in a similar way. While the Republika Srpska is unique and almost homogeneous in terms of its ethnic population, the Federation of BiH is much more complex in terms of its territorial structure (cantons) and ethnic representation (Bosniaks are the majority population, and Croats are a minority in these terms-which could be, and in fact it are, the crucial arguments for journalists of Croat origin to have their own association).

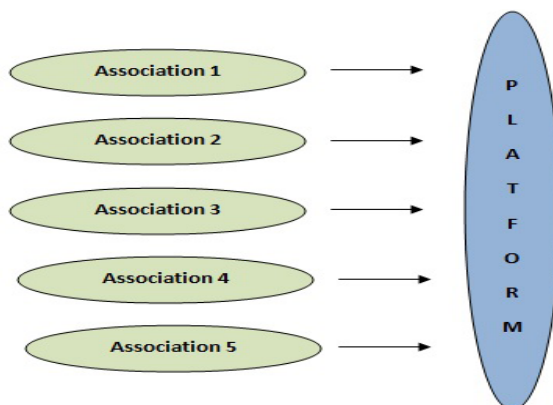
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure will be guaranteed by the BiH Constitution • Common platform and minimum consensus will be established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asymmetry in terms of the internal structure of the two entities • Complex system of delegate representation • Indirect legitimacy of the umbrella association (delegates, not democratic representatives)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development into a strong and competent stakeholder in protecting the rights of journalists • Development of a strong advocacy component • Umbrella association would have the legitimacy to represent common interests of all journalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political situation and struggles for power

3.2. OPTION 2: Models of cooperation (incremental solution)

Based on various experiences, especially when we take into account the Serbian one, there are many possibilities for joint work and cooperation between professional associations of journalists. Within this section, three types will be analysed as well as possibilities for their implementation in BiH. These sub-models are: platform-based cooperation, project-based cooperation, and ad hoc cooperation.

3.2.1. Platform-based cooperation (“media coalition”)

This model is similar to the one established in Serbia in which five professional associations agreed on common goals and defined their cooperation as a platform-based (they signed a common Code).



GRAPH 3:
Model of media coalition

This type of cooperation is of a mid- or long-term nature, since all parties signed a joint platform, which is a document that defines general principles of the journalist profession and morally binding steps in preserving and protecting these principles. This sub-model implies that associations with various backgrounds, interests (even ethnic or political ones), aims and organizational capacities, rally together to establish a common platform of cooperation that frames their joint efforts in order to reach a certain goal. This goal can be conceptualized around various aspects of joint work:

- *Strategic aspect*

This aspect means that various and heterogeneous associations could agree on certain aspects of common interest. This usually involves the creation of a common platform, strategy or code that includes commonly accepted principles and goals. A joint professional code is the best example of this. Additionally, in Serbia, the leading associations of journalists agreed to have a common professional code, while another aspect of their joint work within the framework of the media coalition was to draft the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia until 2016.

- *Field or domains of common interests*

Besides common interests and shared values and principles, various associations gathered around a coalition could find a common field of interests or orientation. Not necessarily all, but at least two members of such a coalition could define their common field of interests (this leads us to project-based cooperation, but in the case of a coalition, not only projects but also something more binding, such as a joint platform or code, could frame cooperation). For example, some associations (not necessarily those specialized in the field) could be interested to organize trainings for minority journalists, while others could advocate for a certain set of rights (for example, labour rights), while some would try to empower vulnerable groups in order to make it easier for them to access media content. Therefore, compared to the previous aspect, this one is more specific and not all members of the coalition are expected to take part.

- *Joint action*

Bare establishment of a media coalition and defining its general/common and specific goals are not enough. According to the poll available online on ANEM's web page, in 2011 the Serbian media sector was marked the most by the adoption of the Media Strategy (35%), economic

⁵⁸ Available online, http://www.anem.org.rs/en/ankete/results/24/The%20media%20sector%20in%202011%20.html?message=poll_thank_you, accessed on 10 March 2012.

⁵⁹ ANEM (Association of Independent Electronic Media) Newsletter, No. 21, www.anem.rs/download/files/cms/attach?id=394

decline of the media (30%), pressures and attacks on journalists (15%), while creation of media coalition was in fourth place with only 14% of the votes.⁵⁸ These results clearly show that establishment of a joint framework of cooperation should be followed by adequate and visible activities. These activities could be various: joint action and pressure towards the state, joint statements on various occasions, joint press conferences, or joint field activities of various types.

Another example also comes from Serbia. During 2011, members of the media coalition (ANEM, NUNS, UNS, NDNV and Local Press) organized a series of events in cities across Serbia after the adoption of the Strategy. The purpose was to present to the public solutions provided in the Media Strategy and their consequences for the media sector as a whole. One of these events was organized on 25 November 2011 in the form of a panel discussion in the city of Nis, and it was titled, "Media Strategy – What's Next?".⁵⁹

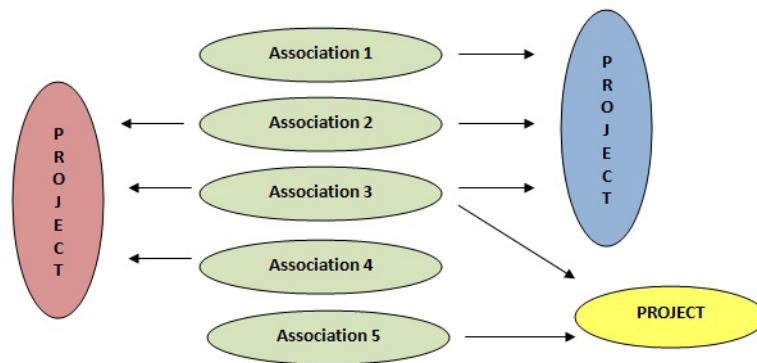
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and coherent platform for cooperation • Joint activity means unquestionable legitimacy and potential for action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong political parallelism and ties with certain political options • Personal animosities among the leadership of associations • Unsustainability of these associations and economic dependence
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for joint funds • Chance to attract journalists to become members of associations • Improvement of professional standards in journalism • Improvement of working conditions of journalists • Becoming a relevant opponent/partner with various stakeholders (state, entities, cantons, donors, owners, international partners) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political situation and struggles for power

3.2.2. Project-based cooperation

In this model, various associations are linked together throughout various projects that are jointly implemented.

They could have, but not necessarily, a joint platform or statements of cooperation. For that reason, this kind of cooperation is pretty weak in the terms of sustainability, solidarity and durability, and it is rather of short or mid-term nature.

It could be transformed into a coalition or some other form of binding cooperation rather than pure project partnership. For example, some associations/organizations could sign a kind of partnership statement that bind both sides to apply for certain projects only in partnership with this organization.



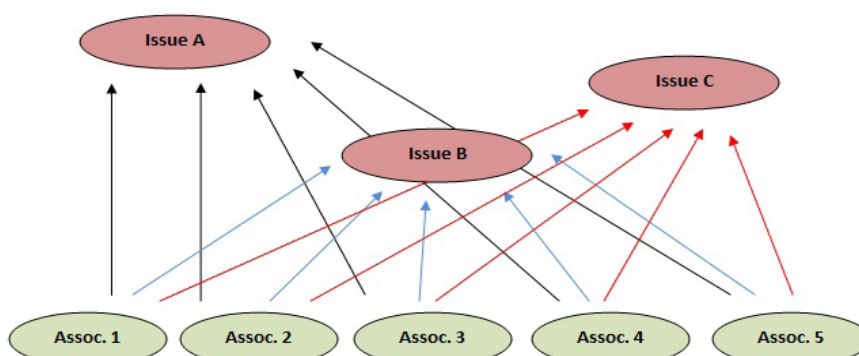
GRAPH 4:
Project-based cooperation

The success and durability of this kind of cooperation would be based mainly on the association's capacity (human, technical, financial, etc.) to manage, lead, and implement projects. As a result of unequal development, some associations would have a better position and much more capacity to foster this kind of cooperation (like Association 3 from the table above), while some would not benefit from this cooperation (Associations 1 and 4). Also, the success will depend on their openness and will to establish project-based partnerships with various associations. Potential animosities among their leaderships could be an especially big obstacle.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations are not bound, but they have a chance to chose with whom to work • Throughout cooperation, associations are able to develop their internal capacities, both human resources and technical infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a sustainable type of cooperation • Various levels of capacities for fundraising and project implementation • Associations consider other associations as competitors rather than as potential partners
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of internal capacities • Fostering cooperation from short or mid-term to long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a sustainable type of cooperation • Donors always have favorite organizations

3.2.3. Ad Hoc cooperation

This type of cooperation is of a short-term and occasional nature. Associations are not bound by any joint platform, document or strategy for cooperation, but rather they act together when it comes to big violations of journalists' rights or some incidental situation when journalists are endangered. This issue-driven cooperation means that associations should react jointly in these situations by issuing joint statements, protesting together, using other means to warn government actors to take active measures in protecting the rights of journalists.



GRAPH 5:
Model of Ad Hoc cooperation

As in-depth analysis of their statutes/documents and interviews with the leading personalities have shown, the potential to establish cooperation on this ad hoc basis is possible in the following areas: professionalism and dignity of journalism (16.5%), ethics (9%), working conditions (7.5%), freedom of speech and of the media (7.5%), socio-economic rights (5.7%), attacks on journalists and threats (5.7%), while the rest (28%) includes access to information, regulation and self-regulation, education, hate speech, research, EU integration-related topics and activities, law-making processes, etc.

There were some situations or incidents that deserved reactions from all professional associations, such as: the case of Duska Jurisic, the former editor of FTV news program; the case of journalists of the weekly news magazine *Dani* who were left unprotected after its owner was replaced; the case of the local daily *Tuzlanski list* where the owner decided to suspend the paper when the workers claimed their rights; and the situation where opposition television stations in Banja Luka were not allowed to report freely during the election campaign in 2010. Unfortunately, reactions were rare and even contradictory.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reactions in such situations are indicators and expressions of professional solidarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone always has to be the first to initiate reactions-lack of criteria and problem of suitability (the nature of connections between associations and endangered persons)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This kind of cooperation could be a first step in establishing something more serious, long-term and established on solid ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually such "incidents" are highly politicized and even professionals whose rights are endangered have been considered as belonging to "somebody"

3.3. OPTION 3: Status quo (divided associations, no cooperation)

The current situation in BiH, where associations are divided, inefficient, politically affiliated and even inactive, indicates a strong trend of politicization and de-professionalization of journalism. Political parallelism and ethnic and territorial principles of organization, results in none of these associations (with the partial exception of "BH Journalists") having a publicly recognized and accepted legitimacy to advocate for the rights and freedoms of journalists. Analysis of their registration status, scope and quality of their activities, transparency, autonomy, plurality and legitimacy, showed that only half of those that exist are active, while only two are partially doing what they declaratively support.

Registration - It was difficult to check the formal status of the six associations, but according to available data, only three out of six are formally registered ("BH Journalists", the Association of Journalists of RS, and the Association of BiH Journalists), while the status of the other three is informal or uncertain.

Transparency - As we already mentioned, only three out of six associations have some sort of web page (the Association "BH Journalists", the Association of BiH Journalists, and the



Association of Journalists of RS). In terms of design, content, accuracy and timeliness, these pages look pretty modest and not up-to-date, with many sections under construction. Only "BH Journalists" has some sort of archive of its activities, projects and press releases on the web, together with contact information and useful links. It is clear that more than half of these associations did not reach elementary conditions for normal communication with both their members and with the wider public; consequently, their work seems not to be transparently presented. Due to this fact, it was difficult, even impossible to approach them in order to evaluate the scope and effectiveness, and generally speaking-the reason-for their existence.

Autonomy - All associations are dependent in some sort of way, either economically or politically. Due to the fact that the socio-economic potential of journalists in BiH is weak and membership to these associations is not massive, their primary source of financing (through membership) is limited. Only "BH Journalists" has a list of its members posted on its web page and transparently announced the decision on membership fees (50 KM per year for regular members, 140 KM for honorary members, and 5 KM for students).⁶⁰ On the other hand, within its section for membership, the Association of Journalists of RS only has an online form for new members, neither a list nor the information on rights and duties of being a member of this association.⁶¹ Some associations (for example "BH Journalists") use their NGO status to apply for various projects. While interviewing various stakeholders, it was noted that some associations (primarily the Associations of Journalists of RS and the Association of Croat Journalists from BiH) are closely linked to certain political options and, consequently, dependent on their support and will.

Plurality - In terms of internal plurality or "plurality within" (structure of their membership, the nature of their messages or the type of activities), only "BH Journalists" and the Association of BiH Journalists are plural by default, while all others seem to be exclusive in some sense.

Activities - The most frequent and diverse activities publicly promoted and transparently announced, have been conducted by "BH Journalists". Besides organizing seminars and educational events, they also initiated cooperation with other associations from BiH and from the region of Western Balkans. This association implemented various projects, research related to the media freedoms in BiH and professional standards in journalism (for example, jointly with the Press Council of BiH they produced a shadow report on media freedoms in BiH for 2011), public campaigns, etc. "BH Journalists" offers various types of help and service information for its membership, and also provides journalists from BiH an opportunity to call their "Line to Help Journalists" if their rights and freedoms are endangered. This association was the most active when it comes to public statements and reactions in relation to the violation of journalists' rights. The most publicly significant and visible media activity organized by the Association of BiH Journalists was the award ceremony for the best journalists and media in BiH for 2011. Besides service and operational information for its members, this association is not so active in issuing public statements and reactions, or in implementing projects of various types. The Association of Journalists of RS has been activated just recently, for more than one year of its work it was accused of being politically instrumentalized, and it organized two founding events: a conference in the RS where it invited journalists and associations from Serbia, Montenegro and Russia, and round table on hate speech in the media. The association issued public reactions and statements pretty often, and in the last one it was concerned about attacks on journalists from the daily newspaper Press from Banja Luka, and from correspondents of the Sarajevo-based daily *Dnevni avaz*.⁶² It is interesting that UN RS submitted two criminal complaints, one against Andreas Nikolaidis, a writer from Montenegro (who insulted Repub-

⁶⁰ Odluka o članairini [Decision on Membership Fee], available online http://www.bhnovinari.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=196&Itemid=239&lang=bs (accessed on 10 April 2012).

⁶¹ Članstvo [Membership], available online http://novinari.rs.com/?page_id=9 (accessed on 10 April 2012)

⁶² Saopštenje za javnost od 3 maja 2012, <http://novinari.rs.com/?p=174>

⁶³ "Novi predsjednik Udruge hrvatskih novinara u BiH Ljubo Kovač", 10 prosinac 2010, dostupno na <http://www.croportal.ba/vijesti/bih/1098-novi-predsjednik-udruge-hrvatskih-novinara-ljubo-kova>

lika Srpska and its politicians), and the second against journalists and editors of the FTV (for spreading the language of fear and hatred against the RS and its officials). Activities of the other three associations have not been observed for the last few years. Only one activity of the Association of Croat Journalists from BiH that has been found was about its last assembly from December 2010 when new leadership was elected.⁶³

When it comes to the media appearances of these associations, a superficial browse through the online media archive of Informbiro (www.idocline.info) indicates that "BH Journalists" is the most discussed association in regard to media contents. For the period 1991 until today, we found 166 announcements on "BH Journalists", 54 on the Association of Journalists from RS, 43 on the Association of BiH Journalists, and 34 on the Union of BiH Journalists. According to archives, the media reported 26 times on the Independent Association of Journalists of RS, 18 on the Association of Young Journalists from RS, and 15 times on the Association of Croat Journalists from BiH. If we take into account the last three years (2010, 2011, and 2012), "BH Journalists" had 66 appearances, the Association of Journalists of RS 20, while the Association of BiH Journalists and the Association of Croat Journalists had only one appearance.

Legitimacy - None of these associations has full legitimacy, taking into account the entire state of BiH. The reasons are mainly political and instrumental in nature. According to research and responses, the Association "BH Journalists" tries to act as an umbrella organization representing the interests and rights of all professional journalists in BiH, but it has no equally distributed support or legitimacy in all parts of the country. This can be seen by the example of journalists from Republika Srpska and their recent request for their own, entity based association. The reasons for such (dys)functionality of professional associations of journalists can be found in the politicization of their work and the ethno-political pattern in which almost all public institutions in BiH operate. On the other hand, each of these associations has legitimacy, understood in a narrower sense, to represent their own members. The problem related to this is the uncertain number of membership that is exclusively based on estimations without having a proper membership list (with the exception of "BH Journalists"). Another debated issue is related to the nature (or reasons) of their creation, and the majority of respondents to my research said it is legitimate to have associations in which the primary logic of establishment is linked to the entire state ("BH Journalists"), or in which territorial logic is applied (journalists from RS), or one ethnic group (Croat journalists), or one specific group (women).

TABLE 3:
Comparative analysis of the current state of activities of professional journalist associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Association	Registration	Transparency (web)	Autonomy	Plurality	Activities	Legitimacy
The Association "BH Journalists"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Association of Journalists of RS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Association of Croat Journalists from BiH						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Association of BiH Journalists	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Association of Young Journalists of RS						
The Network of Women Journalists						



The analysis of the current situation indicates severe divisions among professional journalist associations. Associations are organized along entity or ethnic lines without a common platform for cooperation or joint activities in the field. Political parallelism and clientelistic affiliations are the rule rather than the exception in everyday practice. Membership of these associations is small, ethnically divided, and as result the associations are not independent or sustainable-they depend either on donations or governmental financial support.

In spite of the fact that “BH Journalists” was established in 2004, as result of the mutual consensus and agreement on basic and commonly accepted principles, it didn’t succeed in fulfilling the full scope of its mission. Financial affair, “sarajevo-based approach”, personal issues and animosities towards the leadership of this association, are among the most mentioned reasons for their discreditation and unsuccess. Some respondents illustrated this Sarajevo-based approach by the titles of their conferences (“They did not succeed in, for example, giving neutral and accepted titles of press conferences that would not cause controversies in the entities. Titles such as the ‘Anniversary of the attack on ...’ have always been part of the public provocations in BiH because the civil war in Bosnia has no historical consensus as to the causes, consequences, roles ...”). ... Often the Association spoke out publicly in support of political positions, rather than dealing with professional issues⁶⁴. On the other hand, journalists from the RS supported this umbrella association when it criticized the leading media from the Federation, *Dnevni Avaz* and FTV, while the same criteria for the leading media in RS (for example, *Nezavisne* and RTRS) have not been considered as acceptable or professional.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Interview with Dr Tatjana Duronjić, Faculty of Political Sciences, Banja Luka

⁶⁵ Interview with Kenand Efendić, Editor in Chief of the web portal www.radiosarajevo.ba.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation that regulates freedom of association is very liberal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small number of journalists who are members of these associations
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on their missions and declarative goals all associations have a lot in common Potential cooperation could attract donors to support it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political and economic situation Political and financial dependence

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Journalism is a profession that should be liberated from any political, ethnic, religious, or other similar influence. Professional associations of journalists in any country should be established as result of the free will of its members with the aim to defend and promote their rights, and, if we speak in more general terms, to promote professional standards and ethics in the media.

Taking into account the situation in BiH and the failures to establish one unique, legitimate, strong and coherent association at the state level-mainly due to the political situation and to the fact that journalism as profession in this country is not free and independent but rather

politically affiliated-some small steps could be taken in order to improve the current situation. It is evident that radical changes to the current situation are not possible under the present political constellation and strong influence of political parallelism.

Therefore, these small steps should be taken in several fields, but three fields seem to be the most important: standards and principles of the profession, the domain of legislation, and the practical domain.

Recommendations in the field of standards and principles of the profession

On a declarative level, in the sense of principles and missions promoted by associations of journalists in BiH, associations are quite similar and share the same principles. This could be a good basis for establishing cooperation. Additionally, the main associations are members of the International Federation of Journalists, and therefore they should apply the principles contained in the IFJ Constitution. According to this document, the most important principles according to which the freedoms and rights of journalists have been established are freedom of information, freedom of media, independence, professionalism, high standards, education, social and working conditions, cooperation, editorial democracy, etc.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ IFJ Constitution, as agreed by the IFJ Congress, Moscow, 28 May - 1 June, 2007.

In that regard, advocating the principles and standards of professional journalism, and the protection of the rights of journalists should be the ultimate goal of these joint activities. This goal would overcome the current state of division and the narrow focus of certain associations. My research shows that respondents recognized, in the field of practice, the following areas to be the most important: professionalism and dignity of journalism (16.5%), ethics (9%) working conditions (7.5%), freedom of speech and of the media (7.5%), socio-economic rights (5.7%), attacks on journalists and threats (5.7%), while the rest (28%) includes access to information, regulation and self-regulation, education, hate speech, research, EU integration-related topics and activities, law-making processes, etc.

Recommendations in the domain of legislation/regulation

In spite of the fact that professional associations are in the "same basket" as other NGOs and that, according to law, only three founders are needed for establishment, they should have a special or privileged position. This doesn't mean that laws should be changed in order to make it harder to establish an association of journalists, but journalists – founders of such an association – should internally decide on certain criteria and procedures that each newly founded association should pass in order to become legitimate and relevant.

Recommendations in the practical domain

Joint activities, based either on an ad hoc basis or on some platform-based cooperation, would increase the credibility of each of these associations among journalists and among other actors from the society of BiH (governments, owners, donors, international community). Also, it would attract more journalists to become members, and consequently increase the legitimacy of these associations to advocate on behalf of the journalist community in BiH.

In a practical sense, associations should jointly advocate for those groups or rights that are the most vulnerable or endangered and that are related to working conditions, the quality of



contracts and protection that derives from the contracts, social contributions, and pressures from the side of owners, editors, politicians and various businessmen.

Recommendations for activities/target groups

All associations should make a list of their members available on their web pages, since the legitimacy of each association should actually result from their membership and not from territorial, ethnic or any other principle or prefix in their names.

Association membership should be established on an individual basis (individual journalists), while the logic of collective membership (media or other founding associations) should be of secondary importance.

New methods in communicating with potential members should be applied, including online/web platforms, news groups and social networks.

When we discuss the possible target groups of these associations, their activities could be classified in following way:

- Own members: Professional associations should act as a service to their members. They should provide services such as allowances for travel, legal aid, solidarity and the like.
- Journalist community: In relation to this target group, associations need to promote professional standards. They have to establish criteria for membership, a code of conduct, court of honor to ensure compliance with code standards, hearings in the case of code violations, as well as awards for best papers.
- Public, state and business sector: These groups need to protect the interests of the profession: to promote the smooth operation of journalism, freedom of speech, access to information, to protect of labor rights, to propose legislative solutions, etc.

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Appendix 1

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Borić, Faruk, Federal News Agency (FENA), director.

Duronjić, Tatjana, Faculty of Political Sciences, Banja Luka, BiH, professor

Džihana, Amer, Internews, Sarajevo, BiH, media expert.

Efendić, Kenan, Radiosarajevo.ba, Sarajevo, BiH, editor-in-chief.

Gruhonjić, Dinko, Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina, Serbia, president.

Jerinić, Dragan, Association of Journalists of Republika Srpska, president.

Jusić, Tarik, Analitika, co-director and media expert.

Kontić, Boro, Mediacenter, Sarajevo, BiH, director.

Lolić-Močević, Mira, Radio-television of Republika Srpska, Banja Luka, BiH, former program director.

Obradović, Vukašin, Independent Association of Journalists, Serbia, president.

Panjeta Almir, Slobodna Bosna, klix.ba, and free lance journalists.

Rudić, Borka, Association BH Journalists, Sarajevo, BiH, secretary general.

Tešanović, Nataša, ATV Banja Luka, BiH, general manager.

Topić Tanja, Friedrich Eber Stiftung, Banja Luka, media and political analyst.

Turčilo, Lejla, Faculty of Political Sciences, Sarajevo, BiH, professor.

Udovičić, Radenko, Mediaplan Institute, Sarajevo, BiH, program director.

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A "Policy Development Fellowship Program" has been launched by the Open Society Fund BiH in early 2004 with the aim to improve BiH policy research and dialogue and to contribute to the development of a sound policy-making culture based on informative and empirically grounded policy options. The program provides an opportunity for selected fellows to collaborate with the Open Society Fund in conducting policy research and writing a policy study with the support of mentors and trainers during the whole process. Eighty one fellowships have been granted since the starting of the Program.