Centar za
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SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND MEDIA IN BIH
-
THE WAY AHEAD TO SECURITY SECTOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

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THE WAY AHEAD TO SECURITY SECTOR *GOOD GOVERNANC*

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List of acronyms

AFBiH   Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina
ARBiH   Army of the Republic of BiH
BiH   Bosnia i Hercegovina
BIRN   Balkan Investigative report Network
BIRN   Balkan Investigative Reporting Network
CRA   Communication Regulatory Agency
CSS   Centre for Security Studies
DRC   Defence Reform Commission
EU   European Union
EUFOR European Union Force to BiH
FOIA   Freedom of Access to Information Act
HVO   Croatian Defence Council
ICTY   International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IREX   International Research and Exchange Board Independent
NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Alliance
OBN   Open Broadcast Network
OHR   Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and
Herzegovina
OSCE   Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBS   Public Broadcasting Service
PfP   Partnership for Peace
SAA   Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SALW   Small Arms and Light Weapons
SFOR   NATO-led Stabilisation Force
SSR   Security Sector Reform
UN   United Nations
USAID   United States Agency for International Development
VRS   Army of the Republica Serpska

INTRODUCTION

> The Security Sector Reform in BiH is proving to be a major challenge to the institutional building process. The forthcoming years will be particularly crucial with regard to the participation of media in the process, as well as representatives of civil society, centres of research and NGOs. According to the model of security sector good governance, their activities are an essential element in order to monitor the changes in the security landscape of the country through effective democratic mechanisms.

The Security Sector Reform (SSR) in BiH is proving to be a major step forward in the institutional building process. Although an ongoing development, it has recently been characterized by some important improvements, especially as far as the adoption of the new Defence Law is concerned.

In order to foster changes towards security sector good governance, the role played by the main civil society sections in monitoring the reform is crucial. Thus, the forthcoming years will be particularly important with regard to the extent to which media, representatives of civil society, centres of research, and NGOs will be able to participate in the process and constantly monitor the changes in the security landscape of the country.

In particular, media play a vital role in providing an essential link between civil society and government. This is even more necessary with regard to security, the supply of this public good being an essential pre-condition to economic and political development. When media are independent, regulated and developed, the effectiveness of the cited role is more likely to come into force. Consequently, the absence of these conditions would seriously impair the possibility for media to function like a «watchdog» with regard to decision-making and policies adopted. On the other hand, the model of good governance of the security sector assumes a wider participation of civil society in the evolution of the security sector. This implies that several efforts have to be undertaken in order to keep the public informed on security issues. Therefore, a full participation of media in the SSR process would contribute to make the international and local institutions in charge of defence and security matters accountable and transparent toward the public.

This report analyses media's coverage of security issues in BiH. Through an assessment of the complex relationship between media and the security sector in the country, the openness of the security sector itself will be taken

into account. The ultimate aim of this study is to evaluate the pace to a good governance of the security sector for BiH.

The report will use two important guidelines for enquiries. On the one hand, the extent to which the security institutions in BiH are accountable, open and responsible to media will be evaluated. The issue will be considered of primary concern since a substantial part of the relation at stake depends on the structure of the security sector. The research will further focus on the extent to which media are open to security institutions and specialized in dealing with security issues, the obstacles to quality journalism and capacity to report on security-related issues being one of the central aspects of media relation to security.

Finally, the report will be partly based on the theoretical model of security governance, which assumes an increasing interaction between media and the state. Although many changes have taken place in the organisation of the security sectors of the most advanced democracies, a full media involvement is far from being reached since the extent of participation is dependent on both structural and contingent limits entailing the model itself[i].

1. SSR, GOVERNANCE AND MEDIA: A THEORETICAL APPROACH

A well-governed security sector is an essential precondition for democratisation and socio-political development. The emerging concept of Security Sector Reform aims at reducing security deficits, while at the same time enhancing the civil supervision over the security sector. The SSR in BiH shows some peculiar elements that turn the public oversight over the security sector into a very sensitive issue. The role of media in dealing with these developments will be a challenging matter in the forthcoming years.

1. The new concept of SSR

The concept of Security Sector Reform (hereby SSR) is gaining importance in the contest of post-conflict or transitional societies. As a mean of parallelism, it is often associated to the security sector good governance.

The basic idea related to both is that a well governed security sector is able to foster democratisation, socio-political development, and stabilisation. In other words, a security sector which remains unreformed might represent a serious threat to the implementation of further changes, thus impairing any stabilization effort[ii].

The first important statement on the matter is a UN Resolution of 1996 according to which new efforts had to be undertaken at the international level «*ensuring that the military remains accountable to the democratically elected civilian government in the context of strengthening the rule of law"*[iii].

NATO, OSCE and the Council of Europe successively promoted the principle. In particular, the OSCE Code of Conduct on Political-Military Aspects of Security emphasized the establishment of a *"democratic political control of the military and paramilitary law and its internal security forces as well as intelligence service and police"*[iv].

These first statements show that the concept of good governance of the security sector is a recent one, developed at the international level only after the disintegration of the Eastern block. From a theoretical point of view, it consists of a combination between the

concept of security and the concept of governance[v].

The promotion of security sector governance initiatives started at the end of the 1990s when some international organisations, especially those working in transitional states, emphasized with regard to Central and

Eastern Europe the concept of civil-military relations. In the previous years, security was mainly conceived as a strictly military affair, which excluded any interference from the public or any external actor. By contrast, security is now referred to a broader set of issues, often including non-military ones.

This explains the increasing importance of establishing a governance of the security sector, open to the participation of different external actors and to the public.

The reason behind this evolution is twofold. Fist of all, after the end of the Cold War and 11 September, the international system shares a broader meaning of security. This is characterized by a strong emphasis on the social, political and economic aspects of security. In this context, the concept of human and individual security is developing as an essential component by gaining even more importance alongside with some non-military aspects[vi].

Secondly, globalisation influenced the distribution of power among institutional actors, international, national and local. Hence, the security sector governance is made up of several interlinked actors, from governments and ministries up to the parliamentarian committees and media. These concurrent actors are responsible for the organisation, management and oversight over the security sector[vii]. With regard to the ultimate objective of the SSR this can be identified as the final supply of security through democratic mechanisms. In particular, the SSR aims at reducing the security deficits faced by a country, while acting at the same time on its democratic deficit. In other words, the objective is twofold: providing security and ensuring a civilian control over the security sector. It has to be noticed that the innovative element of the security sector reform lies especially in the second factor. By creating conditions for both security and oversight of the security sector, it tends to reduce the level of insecurity and add to the system democratic accountability[viii].

The new concept also provides an inclusive approach to reform. In fact, in the past interventions such as police reform, defence reform or judicial reform were conceived as separated and independent each other. It follows that the promotion of such an inclusive approach helps to create a more effective single framework of reforms.

The Western Balkans are usually considered as a prime example of these new developments. In this region, SSR was primarily meant as a way of providing assistance to emerging democracies, failing states, and post-conflict reconstruction[ix]. The reasons why the process has gained so much attention are crucial for the purpose of this paper since they provide a good explanation of media's role in transitional societies.

First, the concept of SSR is clearly an evolving one, subject to changes according to the peculiarities of the country at stake. It can be said that the SSR in the Balkan region differs from all the other reforms because of the

combination between post-conflict stabilisation and post-authoritarian framework. As far as the characteristics of the reform itself are concerned, the key problem refers to the security and democratic deficit, while the peace building and nation building processes can be identified as the main overall objectives of a peculiar post-conflict environment. A third important element deals with the presence of international actors such as OSCE, NATO and EU alongside with international peacekeeping forces[x]. The intervention of these actors mainly targeted fragmented and undeveloped security systems, divided according to ethnic lines. As Marina Caparini maintains, the peculiarities of SSR in the Balkan region depend on its implementation in a post-conflict situation and the gradual transfer of authority from international to local actors[xi].

2.   SSR in BiH

The element that makes BiH a unique example with regard to other transitional democracies deals with the conditions and the challenges for the implementation of the SSR in the country.

Although still an ongoing process, the SSR in BiH has been characterised by several improvements. They regard in particular the final phase of security policy definition, the beginning of the defence policy implementation, the creation of the military doctrine, the reduction of the armed forces, the introduction of the civil service, a better defence budget planning and the creation of a State Border Service[xii].

Nevertheless, the most important step of the overall reform deals with the draft and adoption of the Defence Reform legislation. The signature of the Dayton Agreement found the country to have two different armies, divided according to national and ethnic lines. Each of the two entities making up the country had its own defence, including defence ministries, and consequently its own army. In practise the armies of BiH were three, due to the fact that the army of the Croat-Muslim Federation (FBiH) was made up of a Muslim Army (AFBiH) and a Croat one (HVO). These alongside the Army of the Republika Srpska (AVO) made up the peculiar and fragmented military structure of the country. In addition, there were entity defence systems alongside with entity defence ministries[xiii].

Hence, one of the most relevant challenges over the last years has been the promotion of concrete steps to unify the BiH defence system. Since 2003, when the OHR established a Defence Reform Commission (DRC), two successive reforms have been carried out in BiH[xiv].

1. Achievements of SSR in BiH
▪ Definition of the security policy final phase

- Beginning of the defence policy implementation
- Creation of the military doctrine
- Downsizing of the armed forces
- Introduction of the civil service
- Better Defence Budget planning
- Creation of the State Border Service
- Better cooperation among internal security services

Source: Stefan Imobersteg, DCAF, Geneva, 2003.

In the context of this report, it is important to underline that these developments were necessary in order for BiH to fulfil NATO requirements for a future accession to the PfP.

In particular, the DRC emphasised the importance of creating a Joint State Level Command Structure, alongside with a significant reduction of the armed forces and a state Ministry of Defence[xv].

A narrow reform has been achieved with the adoption of a first law in 2003. However, it can be said that most changes were brought about especially by the second part of the reform adopted in November 2005[xvi].

The core of this second legislative step lies in the adoption of more radical provisions than the previous one[xvii]. The cited provisions concern the functioning of the Ministry of Defence as well as the structure of the Armed Forces of BiH. In particular, the reform provides for the closing down of entities Ministries of Defence and entities armies, the abolishment of general military obligations, the creation of a single State-level defence budget and the full parliamentary oversight over the AFBiH. Moreover, the law establishes three multi-ethnic brigades and three regiments. It can be said that the recent laws provide BiH with an important restructuring of the defence system that never existed before[xviii].

Notwithstanding the evolution described, one has to take into account that the Defence Reform of BiH is an ongoing process that will be subject in the near future to additional adjustments and improvements. Secondly, this reform does not fully create a unique structure of the army, the system of brigades-regiments being a crucial dual element that persists in the BiH Defence system. It is important to underline that although the dual structure is common to other European defence systems, the described system presents some peculiar characteristics, notably the cultural and ethnic role assigned to regiments[xix].

As far as the methodological approach followed in these pages is concerned, it is worth underlining that this report is not intended to give a detailed description of the SSR in BiH. The choice to focus primarily on the defence reform depends on the fact that the steps described above provide a more clear analysis of media reports on defence. In addition, this selective method allows a comprehensive understanding of some crucial internal mechanisms and the role of the international community as well.

2. SSR An assessment of activities

General and cross-sectional activities related to the whole security sector

- norms, codes, standards in all the areas of the SSR
- support to political dialogue between security sector and civilian authorities

Restructuring security institutions

Through support to institutions and normative assistance

- Defense reform
- Police reform
- Intelligence reform
- Reform of border security
- Judicial reform

Strengthening control mechanisms (governance)

- General activities such as the promotion of a national security policy consensus
- Civilian control, promotion of transparency and efficiency
- Parliamentary control, advice to bodies related to security policy, such as parliamentary commissions
- Technical assistance and training

Public control

- Support to academic institutions, research centers, think tanks engaged in security policy
- Promotion of independent national expertise
- Assistance to NGOs
- Training and promotion of independent media

Reconstructing the security sector (post-conflict dimension)

- Armed non-state actors
- Conversion
- Demobilization, disarmament and reintegration
- Small arms and light weapons (SALW)
- Mine action
- Child soldiers
- Integration of women in the security policy and SSR

Source: ISS, Paris, 2005*.*

3. Security sector governance - Main actors

- Authorities in charge of control and management of the armed forces (who is in charge of the monopoly of coercive power), government and its ministries (i.e. ministry of defense and interior)
- Parliament
- Specialized committees
- Justice and law enforcement institutions, judiciary and ministry of justice
- Ombudsman and human right commissions
- **Civil society actors, media, NGOs, research institutions**

Source: ISS, Paris, 2005.

3. The role of media in modern societies

The relationship between media and security is a complicated one, which for nature is not free from tensions. This is particularly true when it comes to military, a sector which is traditionally scarcely open to public control. A more effective role of civil society in security issues is a necessary outcome of the new widening concept of security. In this respect, the recent changes in the perception and the meaning of security make the traditional limited access to security no longer acceptable. Media play an important role in accelerating this process and in keeping the public informed on what security is about in its own country[xx].

The development of free and independent media can be considered as a consolidated principle in any well-functioning democracy.

When media are independent and free, they become a link between political power/government and civil society. In fact, if they have the right to access information and the commitment to accurately report on it, they contribute to keep the public informed, thus facilitating the debate on

political decisions, including the public control over the government. This narrow form of public scrutiny makes the government and the institutions accountable toward the public. At the same time, it reinforces their responsibility to inform media[xxi].

It can be said that when this mechanism is properly working, media play an important dual role. They release information to the public and keep it informed. In this case the media responsibility is not only limited to the information released. They also play an important role in educating the public and allow them to build their own opinion on a specific political issue. On the other hand, media are a precious instrument of the political power. Politicians use media in order to deliver their own political messages. In doing so, media are one of the main mechanisms used by the government to communicate with the citizens[xxii].

According to Marina Caparini (DCAF), "*Along with other civil society actors, such as non-governmental organizations, research institutes and research groups, the media may help to educate citizens on specialised topics such as national security and public scrutiny, enabling deeper policy debates and informed discussion on policy alternatives. The media consequently are both actor and mechanism in holding governments to account"[xxiii].*

In other words, the function of media is not only to report facts but also to modify and affect political decisions. It is true that if not accurately reported, news can negatively modify and affect public opinion views.

A second important point refers to the factors that may influence the functioning of a proper politics-media-civil society interaction. Although the state secrecy over certain crucial political issues has traditionally been a limiting factor in media functioning like a "*watchdog",* the events of 11 September have substantially amplified secrecy rules. Thus, the reasons justifying the reduction of access information increased, especially those based on state secrecy for security reasons. This in turn reduced the journalists' rights to access public information, by erasing the validity of the model of interaction described.

The study of media in transitional societies suggests that the objective of media as *"watchdog"* in these cases should be less ambitious. The development of local journalism, the difficulties associated with the quality training of journalists, the problems related to free press and limited independence from political pressures make the relation at stake more complicated.

In the South Eastern Europe region, despite all the efforts taken by the international actors in order to promote media and their link to civil society, the situation is still far from the model described. The several attempts by nationalist forces to control media have largely reduced the application of an effective interaction between media and politics. It also decreased the

potential impact of project addressed to media by international actors, which have seldom produced the desiderate impact.

4.   Media and security

If the interaction between media and the state is a challenging one, the one between media and the security sector can be considered as a even more interesting sub-category. Moreover, the relationship has proved to acquire some specific characteristics in the framework of some institutional reforms implemented in transitional societies. As already noticed, being the involvment of media an essential element in any well-governed security sector, only a transparent and effective interaction between the two sectors can grant the implementation of the security sector governance.

Although the recent years have showed an improvements of media relationship to security institutions, it can be said that the interaction between journalists and the security sector is still not free from tensions. One of the most important obstacles in order to have the above-mentioned model applied depends on the several differences between media and security. These are mainly related to different structures and conflicting values[xxiv].

In particular, military institutions, ministries of defence, intelligence agencies and international organisations devoted to security are extensively based on a hierarchical structure, embedded with conservative values. This traditional system contributes to make the security actors particularly close to any form of control coming from outsiders[xxv].

By contrast, journalists demand openness and transparency. Thus, the world of media responds to opposite criteria, notably a high degree of self-regulation and fragmentation. It can be said that journalists investigations over security issues prove to be difficult, since the natural closeness of the security sector presents an obstacle for investigative report on security[xxvi].

The analysis of media structure in BiH provides some additional interesting elements.

The internal funtioning of media and their coverage of security-related issues show the peculiarities of the relationship in the country.

2.   MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN BiH

The current situation in BiH is still far from the theoretical model which has been described (good governance of the security sector). Notwithstanding the improvements that have taken place in BiH over the last years, there are still several obstacles in order for the media to be independent. Therefore, the way to an objective press adopting an independent and bipartisan attitude vis-á-vis the main political parties constitutes a challenge of major concern to the Bosnian journalism.

1.   The functioning of media in BiH

The role of media is crucial to foster a democratic culture based on the public accountability of institutions. In doing so, both electronic and print media contribute to the development of a conscious civil society, able to participate in the decisions undertaken by the political power and judge them autonomously[xxvii].

Although an effective interaction between media, civil society and politics is a pre-condition to any well-governed political system, its role is increasingly important with regard to transitional societies. Since it is likely that the exercise of power is unstructured and the civil society is still weak, in some states media relationship to politics could suffer more intensively. In this context, the politics aiming at rebuilding the social and political system are particularly relevant since they help to create a new field in which media can freely operate[xxviii].

For all these reasons, media restructuring in BiH was an essential target of the post-war reconstruction. The principle of free and independent media stands behind most of the new programmes promoted by the international organizations on the ground[xxix]. The ultimate objective was to build a media system that was freed from any kind of political control. This task was certainly a very sensitive one since the division according to ethnic lines as well as its combination with political lines was conceived as a major obstacle to civil reconstruction. Especially in the context of stronger civil-military relations, media's role has to be targeted as an essential component[xxx].

The organisation of the media market itself imposed the intervention on media soon after the war. In particular, the absence of any clear legislation on the matter was certainly one of the weakest points of the overall media structure. It can be said that in the post-war period the media landscape of BiH was characterized by weak or absent legislation regulating media, non-

functioning market economy and media market, wide form of political control, widespread of intimidation and defamation, and high vulnerability of journalism to economic and political pressure[xxxi].

In this respect, reforms promoted by the International Community included the development of media pluralism by providing funding for new, independent TV and radio stations, alongside with journalists training and protection of inter-entity networks.

Two elements may easily summarize the situation: lack of a legislative framework in the licensing system and persistent obstacles to press freedom. They imposed a broad reform of the media system.

As far as the first point is concerned, while before the war there was mainly a state level media structure, after the war media landscape was characterized by the absence of clear rules that in turn created great uncertainty. For instance, regarding electronic media, the lack of a clear broadcast licensing pushed the political parties to influence the content of the news. Thus, one of the highest priorities dealt with the establishment of a regulatory body at the state level, in charge of issuing the licenses and monitoring the broadcasters' compliance with the established conditions. The RAK (Communication Regulatory Agency) was created in 1998 as a state body regulating the licensing system and promoting through the rule of law the acceptance of new standards for media[xxxii].

However, these developments were only applied to electronic media, leaving aside the problem related to the non-regulation or self-regulation of the print media[xxxiii].

As far as the second element is concerned, the lack of freedom and independence for journalists was the main factor pushing international actors to involve themselves in projects of assistance and reform. In the absence of any specification in the Dayton agreement, an immediate intervention against this deficit was required[xxxiv].

Several international organisations were involved broadly and actively in media reconstruction after the end of the war. In particular, the OHR (Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) were the main actors dealing with the promotion of a broad media reform[xxxv]. For example, until 2000 the OSCE has constantly been monitoring the level of freedom of expression in the country.

It can be said that one of the most important contributes concerning media deals with the adoption of the FOIA (Freedom of Access to Information Act), passed by the State and Entity Parliaments between 2000 and 2001[xxxvi]. In addition, both organisations promoted the establishment of

OBN (Open Broadcast Network), the first independent TV channel funded by the United States in 1996[xxxvii].

Another important contribution regards the practice that aims at establishing Press and Public Offices in charge of dealing with media on a daily basis. While providing permanent links between the press and the international organizations located in Bosnia, they involve media in their activities. This new international standard enhances the capacity to monitor the political situation of the country. Moreover, it provides media with the chance to report on daily political events and compare different sources of information.

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4. Freedom of Access to Information Act (FOIA)

The law was approved in 2001 and provide any person or legal entity with the right to **access all forms of information** held by any public institutions.

The objective is to build a democratic system made up of transparent and accountable institutions.

Its implementation is one of the modules making up the **UGOVOR** programme, promoted by OSCE in order to reinforce local democracy and create effective links between citizens and municipalities.

Source: OSCE Mission to BiH, Ugovor, February 2005.

An analysis of the current assistance provided to media clarifies that over the last years the attention of the international community has shifted to other priorities. For example, the OHR Media Development Department ceased to exist in 2002, a decision that is also explained by the transfer of competences to local powers and the central role played by the RAK.

These changes have clearly led to a decrease in the size and the number of assistance programmes to media. In fact, the research found out that only two wide projects are currently implemented.

The first one is promoted by USAID (United States Agency for International Development), which has allocated $38 million since 1996[xxxviii]. Recently, two important projects related to media freedom have been adopted. While the *Support to Independent Media Project* primarily provides technical and training assistance, a second one, the *Centre for Investigative Journalism* aims at funding a permanent centre that will train journalists on the practice of investigative reports[xxxix].

As far as the second channel of assistance is concerned, the EU focused on supporting the adoption of the BiH Law on Public Broadcasting. In additional, the EU has also provided media with technical assistance, by supplying production equipment alongside with programme making capability and newsgathering. The cited projects were part of the CARDS 2002[xl].

Notwithstanding the main improvements taking place recently at the level of BiH media, the relation between media and ethic remains an unresolved issue. Therefore, it often gains a primary position in the debate concerning the freedom and the quality of media as an issue of major concern. This debate has been promoted by some of the most important centres, associations of journalists and NGOs dealing with media development in BiH[xli].

There are several independent organisations, which specifically deal with media development. They are either external or local.

One of the most important organisations in this field is IREX (International Research and Exchange Board Independent). Since 1998 the organisation is mainly devoted to training journalists and assisting quality journalism. This has recently been made through the so-called *Hague Project,* which supports the journalists' capacity to report on trials, events and decisions of the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia) directly from the Hague[xlii].

Then, a second project on the same matter is implemented by BIRN (Balkan Investigative Reporting network). By focusing on the investigative journalism over the War Crime Chamber of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it aims at training journalists on the coverage of some crucial news. The objective is to enhance public understanding of the process, while providing journalists with the instruments for fair and objective reports[xliii].

Most of these projects involve journalists coming from all over the Balkan region. Hence, the instrument of regional cooperation is considered as a mean to overcome the structural differences persisting among the media systems of the region and make journalists cooperate each other.

The same regional track also characterises the BiH-based organisations, such as the Media Plan Institute and Media Centar, both involved in a wide process targeting the news quality[xliv].

2. The current situation

It has to be noticed that the media landscape substantially improved from several points of view. According to the *2004 Media Sustainability Index* for BiH the current media situation in the country is close to sustainability due to major changes, entailing professionalism, quality, and independence[xlv].

These results can be certainly considered the direct effect of new laws, standards and practices.

However, the research carried out on media also showed that the current system is in need of further changes and improvements, notably in the fields of professionalism and media business environment. Nowadays media in BiH are still in need of further and broader reforms due to the persistence of most of the controversial and unresolved aspects of the first years. The cited point is crucial in order to understand media relationship to security.

In particular, poor business practises alongside with reduced foreign investments, political pressure on media outlets are still the main issues at stake[xlvi]. For instance, most print media define themselves as belonging to a specific political group. Therefore, most of them claim to be addressed to their respective ethnic group. This clearly causes a wide phenomenon of segregation of media according to the national group.

It is important to stress that this dynamic produces a substantial impact on the content and the tone/colour of the news, by affecting their quality. It definitively explains the very particular coverage of some security-related issues.

With regard to print media, it has been maintained that Bosnian journalism would actually consist of two "tribes": independent newspapers vs. strongly politicised ones. Newspapers such as *Slobodna Bosna*, as well as *Dani, Start, Nezavisne Novine, Oslobodjenje,* are example of independent weekly*. RS Glas Srpski, Avaz, Ljiljan, Walter* would belong to the second tribe[xlvii].

A part from this distinction, it can be maintained that the post-war framework is often characterised by weak newspapers, fighting each other, subject to political and financial control and nationalist parties in both entities. One big problem related to BiH media landscape refers to the defamation pleads which brings newspapers to fighting each other[xlviii]. In this case new adjustments took place because of the EU pressure on the adoption of a new structure for the PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) which has recently been reformed.

5. The Media Sustainability Index index is calculated over a certain number of objectives:
- Free speech
- Professional journalism
- Plurality of news sources
- Business management
- Supporting institutions

The index evaluates the system as being almost sustainable.
Similarly, according to *Reporters without Borders BiH World Press Freedom Ranking 2005* BiH is among the top 60 countries (33rd).

Source: IREX, 2004 and *Reporters sans Frontiers*, 2005.

With regard to the print media the current situation still remains unclear. No reform is at stake for the time being. However, pressures from different social and political actors seem to address the necessity to provide the print media with a new regulated structure. These needs are justified by the increasingly proliferation of outlets as well as the dependence of most of them on precise political imperatives and links[xlix].

3.   Effects of segregation

As already mentioned, one of the main structural obstacles limiting media development is their segregation according to ethnic groups[l]. Although this phenomenon applies to both electronic and print media, it is certainly wider with regard to the print media, the lack of regulative measures being stronger in the former one than in the latter.

Further attention should be paid to the effects of the system of segregation. These are strictly related to the organisation of the internal market. In facts, when media are divided according to national lines, the main interest is to encounter the expectations of the respective readers. Thus, one of the most important characteristics of BiH media landscape is the fact that media are not interested in increasing the number of readers. This causes a lack of sane competition. In turn, the effective interaction between different outlets substantially decreases. The cited structure does not encourage the outlets to gain the market through the instrument of well-produced and interesting news. There is eventually no incentive to increase the level and the quality of news.

Hence, the main scope of media is to address news to their own national groups, responding to their demands and satisfying their political attitudes.

This obviously produces some implications that are particularly relevant to our research. In fact, one of the main consequences of this system is a low quality of news. These are often highly coloured in their content and obey to different external pressures, notably the ones coming from the political will. The latter often grants the outlet its survival, and forces it to comply with economic and financial imperatives.

6. Media Landscape in BiH

Main Electronic media	**Main Print media**

Television Stations
BHTV 1
Federation BiH TV (FTV)
Radio-Television of the Republika
Srpska
Pink BiH
Mreza Plus
Open Broadcast Network (OBN)

Daily Newspapers
Dnevni Avaz
Vecernje Novosti
Oslobodenje
Vecernji List
Blic
Glas Srpski
Nezavisne Novine

Radio Stations
Radio of the Federation BiH (Radio
FBiH)
BH Radio 1
RTV BN
Nes Radio
Bosanska Radio Mreza (Boram)
Radio Stari Grad
Radio M

Weekly newspapers
Dani
Slobodna Bosna
Reporter
Ljiljan
Start

Information agencies (7)
Fena
BiH Press
Habena
Srna
Onasa
Sense

Source: IREX, Media Sustainability
Index*, 2004.

3.   MEDIA AND THE SSR IN BiH

Both sectors have been recently reformed as result of the internal process of institutional reconstruction started soon after the war. The opening up of relations with NATO and the EU has further enhanced this restructuring process. Thus, the following years will be crucial with regard to the extent to which the main social actors will be able to monitor the interaction between the two systems. An effective interaction between media and security is a valuable way to a security sector governance.

When dealing with the relation between media and security sector reform in BiH one has to take into account the fact that the country is partly facing what most democracies are experiencing regarding the traditional closeness of the security sector. As already underlined, this element makes difficult the exercise of some forms of public control coming from civil society and media. In this framework, the limited interest of the public in security issues works to some extent as an additional element that Bosnia shares with other countries.

These general features of both security sector and civil society make controversial the implementation of a democratic security sector, a principle that is broadly developing in the recent years, especially regarding the phase of security reform in transitional societies[li].

However, it is necessary to underline that BiH shows some crucial additional peculiar conditions. These clearly make the interaction very particular and interesting. In fact, BiH finds itself in the middle of an ongoing process of security sector reform, associated with a delicate political transition. In addition, the presence of international actors dealing with security further enhances the complicated interaction with local powers. In particular, this happens more often at the level of decision-making and it is even more important if one adds the crucial factor related to the presence of international peace-enforcement troops on the territory of the country. The entire situation is also characterised by a not easy transposition of good practises and international standards on the openness of local security institutions**.**

As far as media are concerned, the weak media landscape contributes to the same extent to the persistent deficit of media-security relations in BiH.

This part of the analysis will then focus on two different points. On the one hand, it will take into account the deficits on the part on media, with their main implications. As already underlined, most of the attention will be

devoted to verify to what extent are media open to the coverage of security issues and what are the main problems occurring when media are treating such news.

On the other hand, the study will focus on the deficit on the part of the security sector, by taking into account the efforts taken at the international level, and combining them with the state of openness of security institutions to journalists.

1.   Two parallel reforms

Both reforms have been required in order for Bosnia to start negotiations with the EU and to prepare its accession to the PfP. In particular, the reform of the media sector, especially as far as the PBS is concerned, was a precondition for the starting up of the SAA process with the EU[lii]. The same externally «imposed» nature of the reform can be easily applied to the SSR. Broadly speaking, the SSR is an essential component of the process of post-war reconstruction.

It has been already underlined that given the broad activities included in the SSR this analysis will primarily focus on the adoption of a new defence law. This choice depends not only on the size of the SSR which would complicate the analysis on media. The reason behind depends also on the interesting mechanisms regarding the adoption of the Defence Law from a media perspective. Moreover, the selection of the topic is also based on the temporal perspective. Being recently adopted, the focus on this reform makes easy the study of civil society stances regarding security. Being also a practical step in the SSR, it also allows a more direct access to the main sources of information and a more updated dialogue with the journalists interviewed.

As already clarified, the absence of a unique system of defence, combined with the existence of an anachronistic pre-war structure for the BiH army, was meant to be one of the main obstacles preventing Bosnia from reinforcing its relations with NATO on equal foot than the other members or partners.

At the end of 2005, the country seems to have overcome, even though after difficult crucial phases of political fights and disagreement, the main obstacles toward the reform of the defence system.

Both reforms ongoing nature is of crucial importance to our analysis since they produce a direct impact on the relation between media and security. Hence, the latter is then subject to changes and adaptations due to the particular nature of both sectors. Secondly, the delicate political and institutional situation in the country also influences its developments.

From a media point of view, although this is not the only factor explaining the development of the interaction, it is important to underline that the constraints to which the whole system is subject deeply influence the coverage of security sector reform in BiH.

2.   Media coverage of security issues in BiH

One of the main conclusions achieved through most of the interviews refers to the issue of media independence. The research showed that the matter is strictly interlinked both to the current media structure and the separation of media according to national groups. In this context, the distribution of power among the nationalist parties also plays an important role.

This report confirms that some forms of political control may influence the process of news selection and news production. In other words, the current polarisation produces an effect on the choice of the most attractive news (selection process) as well as their tone (production process) in order to provide the political actors behind the producers with a representation of their views on newspapers and television.

Political supervision over media not only influences the tone and the colour used in news reports, but also the selection of news itself: this is often guided by wide political imperatives, usually those suggested by the party or the political stances standing behind a certain kind of outlet. The point underlined is a crucial one to be taken into account when analysing the development of media in BiH. In fact, the model described suggests that the more news are politicised, the more is the attention devoted to them, both by the public and by the editors. The reason behind this process is that politicised news, reported with a strong tone, are able to push the debate within the national group, while granting the

survival of the outlet[liii]. In fact, on the one hand, the content and the treatment of certain news may show commitment to the political parties behind the outlet. In doing so, the outlet also grants itself the possibility of continuing to support the political group through the acceptance and the promotion of its views. On the other hand, being the distribution of the outlets deeply divided according to national groups, it is also meant to satisfy the political attitudes of people reading it.

7. The law on PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)

Since October 2005 BiH has a new law on public broadcasting which allows the country to adapt itself to the EU requirements. The law was adopted the 5th of October, the same week of the approval of the Police Reform. The new law on media has been approved without the support of

the Croat parliamentarians, which maintain that this law violates their national interests.

What is new? The tripartite structure (FBiH RTV, Republika Srpska RTV, Public RTV Service of BiH) still exists. According to the new text each group owns its own broadcasting services (radio and television). The new element is the creation of a single corporation for all of them. The new law aims at introducing a more decentralised system, which could represent all the parties of Bosnian society. Its necessity has been clearly mentioned in the EU *Feasibility Study for BiH.*

Source: Mirna Skrbic, TOL, 2005.

It is important to highlight that financial support and survival on the market are two important values which media seek to preserve. They seem to overwhelm the attempts to develop new and professionalized media in BiH. Hence, what is often called "dependence" of media turns in control on media.

The cited organisation and functioning of media market in BiH is crucial in order to understand media's coverage of security issues. It can be noticed that all the controversial aspects of media organisation influence the way security-related issues are treated in the country.

The interviews confirmed that the previous factors act in the following direction. First of all, as far as the politicisation of news is concerned, it can be said that the principle guiding the coverage of security issues is often *"the more the news are politicised, the more they will be covered"*. Applying the following rule to all the BiH media system would not be objective. Moreover, the analysis would lack the recognition of some important positive changes that occurred over the last years. However, one can maintained that the above-mentioned principle is still playing a big role in the behaviours of editors and journalists, notably in the selection of news.

Recently, some specific kinds of news were widely covered by all the Bosnian newspapers. By contrast, some very crucial security issues were attentively underestimated, thus receiving a smaller attention than their importance[liv].

The strength of the cited principle in BiH outlets is clarified by the analysis of media coverage of the recent defence reform. A comparison between the parallel police reform will show some of the deficit in media relation to security.

3.   Reporting on SSR. The coverage of the Defence Reform.

The attention gained on media by the defence reform process can be analysed by following two important lines.

First of all, the essence of the reform has been partly misled by drawing the emphasis on issues linked to particular interests. Political, ethnic and religious stances have been gained the top of the public debate[lv].

One of the elements of major concern is the fact that the focus of the reform process substantially shifted from its essence to some minor political issues. Consequently, the attention of the public has been substantially redirected and the reform itself lost part of its essence at the public level.

It is worth underlining that this analysis does not pretend to evaluate and weight both sectors' responsibilities. Conversely, it aims at identifying the reasons behind the controversial nature of the relation and focuses on the main effects at the level of public involvement. As already underlined, a wrong transmission of information substantially misleading the sense of the reform process has been one of the most relevant impacts. In this respect, due attention should have been paid to what was reform about, what were the main changes it brought about and why it was so important to BiH security. Regarding this point, it can be concluded that the essence of information partly failed to be transmitted through the main information channels down to citizens.

As second important process taking place in this context deals with a general underestimation of the importance of the reform. In fact, if one compares the extent to which the overall Police Reform process was reported by media to the parallel Defence Reform, it is possible to conclude that media did not pay much attention to the former. Newspapers over treated indeed the latter[lvi]. The reasons behind this difference in treatment explain much of the relationship between media and security sector in BiH.

3.1   Factor 1: Politicisation

A first factor that explains the particular coverage of defence reform-related issues in BiH deals with the low level of politicisation of the whole process compared to Police reform. It can be maintained that there are many similarities between the two sectors. In fact, both reforms represent the way through which Bosnia gets closer to the international community. However, the first reform is characterised by a lower level of politicisation. This partially explains the low attention received by media.

As far as politicisation of the news is concerned, much of this principle has been already explained. It is worth adding that the issue is a very sensitive one, especially from the journalists' point of view. Most of the interviews showed that *"Media interest in this field is more periodic, depending on*

what government, its bodies or Ministry of Defence in particular imposes as relevant public question regarding security"[lvii].

Compared to Defence reform, the Police reform finally adopted in November 2005 has enlightened the political scene in a more extensive way. It has also produced a stronger political fight between the main parties. The negotiation process has proved to be very hard and often was blocked by nationalist stances. The Police reform has thus attracted most of the attention on media outlets. By contrast, although parallel, the Defence reform received less attention. In the next paragraphs an analysis of some other factors to be taken into account will be drawn. Although enlarging the set of explications, they are still partially linked to the politicisation factor.

3.2   Factor 2: Actors involved

The level of participation of international community in both reforms changes. As far the actors participating in the reform are concerned, it can be maintained that many external actors in charge of defence reform were central players in drafting the law. If one looks at the composition of the Defence Reform Commission, the ad hoc body which drafted in July 2005 the two reforms bills, it clearly shows the preponderance of international officers and bodies[lviii]. This has to be considered an important factor that, by reducing the power of local bargaining, also highlights the reform as being an ad hoc external process, more technical and bipartisan.

3.3   Factor 3: Level of national interest and transparency.

A consequence of this element is the fact that when a certain kind of reform is built through a high contribution of international experts, national interests are perceived to be lower than in other cases. Moreover, the structure itself of such a body may to some extent allow the process to be more transparent and objective. By contrast, the Police reform since its inception has been perceived as being a big internal process where local actors were more involved and more actors were fighting each other.

This depended on the fact that the national interest could be highly influenced by the way the reform was implemented.

3.4   Factor 4: Level of national interest and impact on national groups

One could argue that the picture described is not enough in order to understand the different treatment deserved by the two reforms.

If one looks at the dual system of brigades and regiments recently introduced by the new defence laws, it is possible to say that to a certain extent the Defence Reform did affect a wide range of national interests, especially those linked to ethnic identities. In fact, the system itself, while speeding down the path to a unique army, allows the national ceremonial identities to be still included in the BiH new army. Thus, another reason able to confirm the different status of the Defence Reform is the potential impact of the reform itself on BiH groups and peoples.

At the level of public opinion and citizens, a technical reform that aims at changing the structure of the army and the defence institutions is less likely to be perceived as threatening the weight of national identities than other reforms.

Being mainly devoted to resettle the military system of the country, it was not considered as substantially decreasing the national interests at stake. The soldiers, for example, do not have a strong voice in the political system and are not able to influence high-policy decisions. At the same time, parties did not always perceived the reform as having a high potential impact. In other words, a further element that explains the peculiar status of the defence reform is that it was probably not perceived as essentially affecting the main prerogatives of the groups in the process of national reconstruction of BiH.

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8. The New Defence System

Objectives

- Closing down the entities defence ministries
- Unifying the army
- Creating a professional and multiethnic army
- Fulfilling BiH obligations to enter the PfP

New command chain

- **BiH tripartite presidency**

- **Defence Ministry and Joint Command**

- **Operational Command** (three tactical multiethnic brigades located in Banja Luka, Mostar, Tuzla).

- The **three brigades** will be made up of **battalions** aiming at keeping alive the traditions and identities of the previous three parties:
- the Croatian Defense Council (HVO),
- the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH),

- the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS).

Source: *Defence Reform Commission*, Sarajevo, 2005.

4.   The longstanding issues: training the journalists of BiH on security.

The lack of civil expertise in the field of security is considered by the experts of the sector as one of the biggest deficits faced by the security sector of BiH.

The Ministry of Defence of BiH, Nikola Radovanovic, maintains that the lack of security sector experts will impair the positive direction of the security sector reform itself[lix]. On the one hand, the presence of the international community has promoted a positive exchange between locals and international officers. The contacts between civilians and militaries have been continuous in some international organisations. Over the recent years, the process allowed civilians to acquire new practises and skills related to the security sector. Hence, the system of mutual interaction has fostered integration and shared knowledge, to the advantage of local civilian officers[lx].

The media sector experiences the same deficit. Therefore, due attention should be paid to the development of new educational programmes focused on security. As already explained, some training projects addressed to journalists have been implemented in BiH. Notwithstanding these changes, it can be said that the media system needs a sort of division of labour between journalists. In fact, most of the interviews showed that each journalist is mainly covering a wide set of news, often belonging to different fields. The coverage itself is then dependent on the requests of the editors or on the journalists' interest. The impact of this process is very important for the purpose of this report. The research showed that the lack of a sectorial specialisation is an issue of major concern, since it often forces the journalist either to cover news they are not interested in or to cover then without any practical skill in the security field. Hence, the quality of the information provided is negatively affected. An important example is the lack of magazines specialised only in security issues or the lack of analytical reports[lxi].

A second result concerns the few efforts undertaken in order to fill this gap. In fact, the research has showed the lack of correspondence between the existing deficits in trainings and specialisation for journalists and the potential efforts that the main actors operating in the field could undertake. Although the problem is widely perceived either by journalists or by institutional actors as one of the main obstacles to a correct and less poor information on security issues, the awareness has not promoted till the

time being concrete actions for changes. By enquiring on the training on security issues in BiH, the research confirmed the lack of any event promoting the coverage of the SSR addressed specifically to journalists. The situation seems not to be different in the other states of the region where the problem is equally perceived[lxii].

The only positive event was the training session organised by the Novi Sad School of Journalism, entitled "Reporting on Defence. Training Journalists on Security Issues". However, surprisingly, only two Bosnian journalists participated in the training[lxiii].

These results suggest that the system is in need of a more effective development primarily focusing on the specialisation of the journalists through improvements at the educational level.

4.   MEDIA AND INSTITUTIONS

Media's capacity to cover security issues partly depends on the openness of security institutions to external control. Journalists often have to fight either against the scarce availability of information or the lack of a transparent release of information. BiH has been subject to an important evolution in this area, due to the adoption of the Freedom of Access to Information Act and the widespread of crucial international standards in the field. However, the sector still presents some mechanisms that reduce the access to security-related information.

Media-security relation is a dual one, depending to the same extent on both media openness to security and security openness to media. The second part on this report will take into account the extent to which the institutions dealing with security in BiH are open to media control. Consequently, it will be analysed whether journalists have any transparent and full access to information.

As already underlined, the level of openness of the security sector allows the bargaining power exercised by civil society and media to be stronger. The cited model assumes that media reports, carried out through independent analysis based on transparent information are able to exercise a form of control on the actions of the political power[lxiv].

In addition, it is worth remembering that there are other forms of civil control, extensively becoming of primary importance today. One of this is exercised for example by the parliaments over the security institutions[lxv]. However, in order for this system to function according to the above-mentioned principle, an essential condition is to have a clear legal and constitutional framework providing journalists with a legally protected access to information. In this respect, since the adoption of the Freedom of Access to Information Act, BiH is showing important progress. By providing media with the right to investigate on the political process taking place in the country, the law is able to legally grant the openness of institutions to media and a more clear circulation of information. The ultimate aim of such changes is to allow a constructive partnership with civil society, while promoting free and independent media.

However, it can be said that despite these changes, most mechanisms aiming at reducing information still persist in the country. In fact, some of the interviews show that *"Journalist and other citizens have the right to investigate as much as they want according to Freedom of Access to*

Information Act, and institutions as public information keepers, do respect this law but, as mentioned before, they try to give as useless information as they can, to minimize access to information that are meant to public and not to narrowed media interest"[lxvi].

Hence, it seems that despite the changes brought about by a new legal framework, many obstacles still block its full implementation. This report will seek to understand the dynamics behind this process.

1.   The level of openness of national institutions to journalists

A first important point to stress concerns the role played by some local institutions devoted to security, especially the BiH Ministry of Defence.

First, the concrete experience of a journalist reporting on security issues clarifies that there seem to be a precise role of the Government, Ministries and Bodies in charge of security-related issues in restricting the access to information.

The local institutions of BiH are essential players in the overall reform process since, despite the presence of the international community, they are considered by journalists as the first source of information for their work. At the same time, media address them as keepers of the monopoly of information. Thus, they are responsible for releasing the information and inform the public through media. They also function/shall function as promoters of the standardization on the BiH path to EU integration[lxvii].

The interviews clarified that one of the biggest obstacles faced by journalists when investigating on security issues is the proliferation of sources of information. This is mainly addressed as depending on the transitional moment, characterised by many security agencies, ministries and not yet reformed army. This is clearly due to the complexity of a situation when a new law has been adopted but not implemented yet.

A second point raised during the interviews concerns the issue of transparency. Some journalists maintained for example that *"no matter how journalist is skilled to investigate, ministries or other government bodies, even with legally appointed press officers, do not give a complete approach to information, and make answers too formal and general with no precise detail, often not giving relevant persons to be interviewed, which gives an impression of reluctance to public exposure"[lxviii].*

Hence, an additional factor preventing journalists from accessing information is the sensitive political process, still embedded with old attitudes. The issues is strongly related to a political mentality which, partly inherited through the communist period, would consider security issues as a state secret, not subject to any form of public control by the public.

With regard to this point, the opinion of a journalist is very interesting. When asked about the issue he replied: *"To my opinion, if willing to investigate, media face the wall of non-cooperation in the institutions that is almost invisible…it is a hide, don't show strategy"[lxix]*.

The importance of this transitional moment obliges the analyst to focus also on the role played by international organisations dealing with security located with their headquarters in BiH. The extent to which they participated in media reform, especially during the first years, and the level of their involvement in the security of the country is a crucial step in the study of media-security relations.

2.   Media and international organisations

This report has clarified that one of the primary objectives of the SSR in BiH is the establishment of a civilian control over the armed forces as well as a wider public accountability of security institutions, especially the Ministry of Defence.

Over the last years, this objective has been actively promoted by the international community through the impositions of new standards regarding the openness of the local security institutions. The main principle at the basis of these developments is the idea that the country could not be entirely secure and enjoy the impact in terms of social and political development of security if the public is not full aware of what is security about and what are the local institutions doing in order to provide this essential public good.

Therefore, the international community, especially NATO, has forced the internal security agencies to adapt themselves to the new standards of openness to the public. This has mainly been brought about by the fulfilment of the requirements for BiH to enter the Partnership for Peace[lxx].

In fact, nowadays the BiH Ministry of Defence, for example, is more open to the contact to media and the public in general and this can be considered an important effect of the international monitoring of the SSR in the country.

Therefore, the new important change consists of a wider media access to information than before. As already underlined, this result is also due to an important interaction between locals and international staff which makes the decisions over security increasingly transparent[lxxi]. Notwithstanding these important improvements, the way to a well-governed security sector in BiH is still characterised by several obstacles and controversial aspects.

On the one hand, besides the imposition of the cited standards, it has to be underlined that the international community often imposes by itself a minimum restriction of information. The reason is twofold. Fist of all, the

security international organisations obey to their own secrecy, which automatically filters the information. Secondly, the information is often reduced in order to preserve the process of reform from any politicisation and avoid a public misled through the manipulation of the information by the more politicised local powers.

By summarizing this crucial issue, it can be said that a new framework of relations has been established between the international organisations devoted to security in BiH and media. This new framework is based on the widespread of best practises and new international standards that in addition produced openness on the side of national authorities toward media. This framework supports democracy in the country and makes less difficult any attempt to create a political control on media.

The crucial point this report would like to underline is that from a practical perspective the present situation has a second pervasive impact on media consisting in the control exercised by the international community upon the media outlets. In fact, the relation between media and the international organisations in BiH has proved to be a very imbalanced one. On the one hand, media remain weak and often deprived of assistance. On the other hand, the international presence is strong and may use its power to use media in order to deliver its own message. The unavoidable result is that while the international organisations are pushing media to adapt to new practises, media are provided with daily contacts with international organizations often having the objective of deliver a message over the organisation's own activities. Therefore, being every organization interested in promoting its own views and having the wider coverage possible on the media outlets, the current risk is to create a dangerous dependence affecting media capacity for autonomous survival[lxxii].

In the context of poor media outlets, especially if journalists are not trained in security issues, this process affects media's power to criticise international organizations and to develop their own autonomous view. The cited dilemma clearly creates a vacuum where media are not fully independent and are left without their own autonomy.

3. The practise of Press Offices as example

Nowadays BiH media have daily contacts with the Press and Public Office of the main international organisations.

Interviews carried out with some spokespersons showed that the main difficulties in dealing with media concern the segregation of the outlets according to national groups. This is considered to affect the content of press releases.

For example, OSCE produces one single message that could be accepted by all the groups without creating misunderstandings in the interpretation of

a news or declaration. *"We produce a uniform and general message which then reaches the media, electronic and written ones"*[lxxiii]. This is produced in a way that can be accepted by all the national groups.

In additional, most of the meetings showed that following the press release usually there is no feedback on the information provided. The organisation does not check how is the news interpreted and reported. In fact, despite the positive practice introduced by the Press and Public Offices, there is a persistent scarce involvement of the international organisations in media reports. This is a very common element in the relation between media and the international organisations, unless the organisation itself perceives that the outlet wrongly reported the message delivered. This happens especially if this might contribute to promote a negative view about the organisation at stake. In all these cases, it is likely that the organisation will react in order to defend its own activities or officers. In other cases, once the message has been released the feedback is almost unlikely[lxxiv].

This process needs to be linked to the controversial aspects of the Public and Press Offices. The positive aspects of new standards have already been listed. In the framework of this report is worth underlining that the Press and Public Offices remains the most effective way to promote the own organisations' values and activities in the country. This influences the relation with media. In fact, although there are ad hoc and daily meetings between media and spokespersons, the former only gets the information the organisation wants to widespread.

As already underlined, one of the consequences is that the relation between media and the main international organisations suffers of the lack of an effective exchange. A second impact concerns the citizens. Since media often report the information released in a reduced content, it is obvious that then the public opinion gets only one single image of the organisation. To conclude, on the one hand there is a partial information which is sometimes modified by journalists for the reasons listed above. On the other hand, there is also partial information transmitted by the Public Office.

An important example is the EUFOR takeover of NATO peace-enforcement mission (SFOR) in December 2004. The information over this important step was quite weak in the country, especially in the transitional period. The result was that journalists often address the spokespersons of EUFOR or their officers as they were still addressing to NATO personnel. The misled is important since it summarizes all the deficits in media-security relations described in this report[lxxv].

This example also helps to clarify a last point regarding the differences between EUFOR media approach and the NATO one. The interviews showed that EUFOR relations to media are stronger, due to more flexibility of the command structure. From a hierarchical point of view, EUFOR only

responds to Brussels. Being the decisional chain at the level of the public offices not particularly complex, the command is Sarajevo is provided with a relative autonomy of decision, especially as regards the release of statements. This internal structure allows more contact to media and also contributes to develop trustee behaviour from the media side. By contrast, NATO hierarchical structure is proving to be more complex and by leaving less autonomy to the command in Sarajevo, explains the less constant contacts with media[lxxvi].

These important results confirm that the channels through which information passes from the releaser to public opinion through the role of media are subject to a complicated chain, entailing different factors that cannot be evaluate through a unidirectional approach.

4.   Public interest in security issues: the strength of small projects

Another crucial factor refers to the level of public involvement in security related-issues. Traditionally, the public is not much informed about security. This often depends on the scarce interest toward high-policy decisions and procedures related to the defence system. In particular, this kind of issues has proved to be less attractive to the common citizen than other governmental or political issues. The system is also perceived like being apt only to specialists[lxxvii].

On the other hand, the new concept of security developed over the last years changed the meaning and the content of the word "security". As explained, security comprises nowadays a broader meaning and often entails the field of human and individual security which is by nature of primary concern to civil society. If generally speaking it possible to admit that citizens feel closer to security concerns than in the past, it is also true that the extent of civil society/media involvement in the security still remains low.

The above-mentioned attitude works like a major obstacle against the implementation of security sector governance, being the civil society control over security institutions one of the main conditions for the development of a democratic security sector[lxxviii].

A central point is that the path to a good governance of the security sector implies a broader mechanism of control and supervision over the security sector which can be built only if civil society is participating in the reform of a security system. Thus, media play a crucial role in keeping the public informed and also create the mechanism through which it can be accurately informed. Moreover, media retain an important responsibility in enhancing civil society interest in security issues.

This report has already described the experience of journalists in dealing with security issues in BiH. It has also proved that the main obstacle lies at the level of high-decisions making over security. By contrast, the research confirmed that when the projects on security are built in a way as to enhance civil participation, they obtain good success, both from the side of civil society and media.

In this context the impact of some projects on individual security implemented by the Centre for Security Studies in Sarajevo help to better focus on the issue at stake. In particular, the recent project in the schools has attracted a wide media attention and involved at the same extent citizens and families[lxxix]. The experience with journalists during the final phase of the project shows that the more an initiative is close to citizens, schools, universities, the more it raises public attention, included media's one. This positive result is mainly due to the efforts undertaken in order to explain citizens the practical implications of security in a simple and concrete way.

This important achievement helps to understand a weak point at the level of security institution. This deals with the capacity to make security close to citizens by increasing the channels of communication with the public on a practical level. The mentioned example shall function as an important guideline for further activities at the NGOs level and raise the awareness of the institutions over the deficits in the media-civil society-security relation.

CONCLUSION

THE WAY AHEAD. The relation between media and security in BiH is dependent on the level of openness of some important political mechanisms to external control. To the same extent, media structure, lack of specific competence, financial and political constraints, low quality of reports are additional factors negatively affecting the relation. An assesment of the deficits in media-security interaction suggests that the way to a good governance in BiH will depend on the cooperative efforts undertaken by the main actors in order to foster concrete changes in the current situation.

The question answered in this report was twofold: 1- To what extent are the security institutions accountable, open and responsible to media in BiH? 2- To what extent are media open to security institutions, specialized in dealing with security issues?

The research shows that the level of openness of the political process is a crucial factor in the success of the implementation of a transparent and public security sector reform. This can increase the bargaining power of civil society, and media.

A substantial part of the relation depends on the structure of security institutions, often scarcely open to some forms of external control. Therefore, the step ahead is to increase the openness of these institutions to civil society organisations and media.

On the other hand, the results confirmed that media's attitudes towards high-policy decisions also play a major role. Our research showed that media coverage of security news in BiH is deeply influenced by the journalists' interests towards security sector and their understanding of some complicated developments. Moreover, several constraints, such as the lack of professional competence in covering security issues, the organisation of the media market in the country and the level of politicisation of the news, also proved to be essential factors in slowing down the relation between media and security sector in BiH.

The research also confirmed that key factors in order for the security sector to be well governed are: a functioning and stable security environment and clear provisions allowing a system of control. This can be exercised by civil society's different sections and has several forms of participation (through different channels)[lxxx]. Moreover, the involvement has to be sustainable in order for transparency and accountability to be full integrated in the

process. Thus, this would reduce the secrecy in the relationship between media and security.

In addition, this report has confirmed the importance of increasing the widespread of media reports, independent analyses and information, publications, training courses and seminars. By contributing to increase the amount of experts in security issues and SSR, they constitute an important value and increase the capacity to exercise influence on policies and decisions.

Guidelines: The reform of journalism in covering security issues.

The important results achieved by the research encourage the CSS to sustain a process of increasing dialogue between the security sector and media. This is even more important if related to the forthcoming years when the new Defence Law will be implemented. This process will require an accurate activity of constant and objective supervision by all the main actors of BiH civil society. An effective media reform is also necessary in order to create an open and objective journalism in the country.

The process shall involve security organisations. It will also require a reinforcement of the relationship with media, especially at the highest decision-making level, where the limited access to information has proved to be higher. The reinforcement of the small projects on security will be considered of crucial importance. In fact, the previous experience has clearly showed that such programmes are able to deeply involve public opinion and to attract simultaneously media attention. Due to their relevance in making security closer to citizens than before, the dialogue between these organisations, civil society and media is strongly encouraged.

The same applies to national and local institutions in charge of reform. The study of SSR in BiH has clarified the importance of having a transparent interaction between local and international authorities. Given the gradual transfer of power to local authorities, the forthcoming years will require the national authorities to take into consideration a more open dialogue with media and wider programmes promoting media development and journalism training. This action should be simultaneous to the activities promoted by the different centres and NGOs dealing with media. Only a synergy of action between institutions, media and non-governmental organisations will provide Bosnian civil society with the power of quality journalism and turn media into a valid instrument of information about security.

9. Deficits in media-security relations

INSTITUTIONS (local and internationals)

- Partly closed sources of information (ministries, agencies, military, etc.)
- Highly politicised reform process
- Influence/control of international organisation on media
- Lack of full implementation of the legal framework for freedom to access information
- Lack of current programmes of assistance to media
- Political/economic influence on the media
- No feedback on information released

Additional factors

- Old way of thinking and sticking to the old kind of hierarchy
- Highly sensitive process of transition/reforms in unstable political environment

MEDIA

- Still weak media scene
- Uneducated media personnel
- Low quality of reports
- Political/financial media dependence
- Lack of full understanding of the legal framework for freedom to access information

Additional factors

- Bad technical conditions in the media houses
- Superficial coverage due to lack of a strategy in the media

10. The guidelines for the future

MEDIA

- Broad rethinking of the journalism role
- Restructuring process targeting the quality of news
- Internal process of qualification and specialisation according to sectors
- More active participation in training programmes and seminars
- Establishing a more effective link with the main NGOs acting on the territory of BiH

SECURITY SECTOR

- More effective dialogue with media
- More channels allowing public scrutiny
- A more effective role for the Press and Public Offices
- A clear shift from politicisation to accountability
- Making effective the legal framework allowing public scrutiny and investigative report
- Promoting civil society action plans involving media over security

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

- More extensive participation in security-related issues
- More active role for the schools focusing on journalism
- Periodical organisation of training and seminars for journalists on security issues
- Implementation of small local projects on security allowing a wider participation of journalists, schools, independent organisation and international organisations
- A wider presence on the whole territory and the promotion of networks between them, overcoming segregation and competitions and promoting a common understanding of BiH security

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