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Regional media and transfrontier co-operation

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EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following the **Conference on transfrontier co-operation between regional Media,** held in Berlin, from 15 to 16 October 2004, the Congress Committee on Culture and Education of the Chamber of Regions decided, at its meeting of 15 november 2003 (and confirmed on 30 September 2004 in Saratov), to prepare a report on Regional media, taking into account the debates and results of the Conference. For this purpose, the committee appointed Mr Günther KRUG (Germany, R, SOC) as Rapporteur. Mr Remigio RATTI (Director of RTSI) and Mr Helmut PEISSL (CMFE - Community Media Forum Europe), have contributed to the content of the report. What is more, the Committee, in its meeting of 7th April 2005 in Strasbourg, has accepted to appoint Mr Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ (Belgium, R, SOC) as co-rapporteur of the following report.

Border situations always carry the seed of a multicultural neighbourhood and cultural diversity which are often underestimated values for social live. Cross border media or media cooperation often deals with management of linguistic diversity and there are situations where linguistic minorities may play a major role in building bridges between border regions. Treating the questions of cross border cooperation in the media field consequently also leads to have a look at changing borders in urban situations due to an increasing part of migrant citizens which are mostly not included by the traditional media system.

As a common approach "Diversity reporting" came to be a key word for media working in multicultural situations. Considering a multitude of approaches in national media policy and in editorial guidelines for intercultural programming such as in Sweden or Switzerland or by project set up as Radio Multikulti in Berlin, there seems to stay often a missing link between good minded policy and practical capacities.

We need to understand that regional co-operation should be an natural fact. Indeed, what unites people should be stronger than what divides them.

2. BROADCASTING IN EUROPE:

2.1   Torn between public and private sector

The advent of radio in Europe dates from the 1920s. Although this form of mass media saw the light of day thanks to a discovery by a European, Marconi's wireless telegraph, it was in the United States that it really took off, because the US immediately grasped the immense social (and above all economic) potential of this new means of communication. From the outset, radio developed according to two models. In America the private sector seized the market from the start, and the Public Broadcasting Service made its appearance only in the 1960s. In Europe, on the contrary, the public model, in which the State guarantees broadcasting income by charging a licence fee, established itself from the outset.

When radio was ousted by television as the "family media par excellence" in the 1950s, the organisational model did not change: domination by the private sector in the United States and by the public service in Europe, where the territory of the country continued to be the focal point, in order to guarantee a universal service for the national population, priority being given expressly to the interests and values of the (essentially national) community. Moreover, these aspects were crucial during the years of hostilities, and in the cold war climate that followed the Second World War the temptation to perpetuate this model was great. So the machinery for monitoring and management was entrusted to public bodies in order to guarantee respect for public service principles.

In Europe the boom in multilingual programmes broadcast on short wave during the post-war years was already indicating a growing need for exporting national programmes. So the idea was to promote the image of the country, but also to spread ideological models beyond domestic frontiers.

The very first pan-European programmes were broadcast by stations such as Radio Luxembourg and Radio Monte-Carlo, which turned their programme schedules upside down in order to offer rock "American style", trendy commercial music, bold, full of vitality and with driving rhythms. The traditional public service felt the effects of this, and in many countries on the Old Continent the shock has not yet been absorbed.

The rise of TV was more or less the same, with a gap of a few years. However, leaving out listening on the web, which is still a marginal phenomenon, for the moment, today the radio audience is still practically confined to the geographical territory of each State, whereas the international expansion of television has been meteoric, owing to the development of satellite and cable. In practice, however, this development has benefited only the large media groups, leaving only a few crumbs for regional and local television.

Since frequencies are subject to exaggerated protectionism, it is becoming more and more difficult to pick up programmes from neighbouring States, sometimes even a few kilometres from the frontier.

2.2   Europe, the multicultural reality

On this side of the Atlantic local identities are tending to grow stronger, although politicians are endeavouring to create a common spirit which all the citizens of old Europe can adopt.

So there is centrifugal development, the direct consequence of Europe's linguistic and cultural divisions, born of its own particular dynamic. To deny the frontiers, which are deeply embedded in the minds of people and only drawn on the map later, is to deny the logic of development of an entire continent. In a world in which globalisation is tending to bring economic and social models closer together, but above all in which peoples will communicate with each other in one language only (English), the need to find a local dimension within a reference group is becoming urgent. Cultural frontiers (which quite often coincide with State frontiers) become lines of transition rather than lines of separation or division. These are the regions from which a joint destiny is developing, stretching eastward from the shores of the Atlantic, seeking new frontiers which will inevitably open up to new cultures and new mentalities.*

2.3   The issue of frontier regions

The relief of Europe is not always conducive to inter-cultural exchanges, especially in mountainous regions. In the past, populations on the two sides did communicate, crossing the passes; at that time goods, travellers and news crossed over via steep paths. Paradoxically it appears that today the tom-toms of communication find it more difficult to make themselves heard on the other side of the mountains. Thus it happens that communities only a few kilometres apart cannot pick up each other's radio and television programmes. This happens again and again along all the European mountain ranges, from the Pyrenees (see the study entitled "Média et territorialité" by Pascal Ricaud, University of Tours, 2002) as far as the new boundaries of the European Community, for example along the frontier between Slovenia and Austria.

This paradox is all the more surprising because it is apparent at a time when everyone is conscious of the extreme necessity for optimising the quality and rate of delivery of information. Thus programmes from distant (sometimes very distant) broadcasters can be picked up on each side of a mountain, but not a neighbour's programmes, though these are intended for regional consumption. This is a permanent feature of radio in particular, whose strength lies in mobility but which requires distribution by radio relay network.

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In order to avoid wasting this great opportunity for coming together and merging identities that frontier areas provide and to promote the formation of the European identity, it is absolutely vital to facilitate mutual access to local and regional electronic media.

Open areas in which neighbours' programmes can be picked up and broadcast must be defined, and this factor must be taken into account in allocating frequencies.

It is also essential to define criteria for frequency allocation (the extent of the territory in which rules of reciprocity apply, the number and classification of authorised broadcasters) of general validity or to adopt case-by-case solutions.

2.4 Transfrontier reception models

- "Overspilling"

In flat open country transfrontier reception raises no particular problem. The signals will dissipate into the neighbouring territory, sometimes as far as several dozen kilometres within the frontiers. Another way of crossing frontiers is to broadcast a programme by satellite or cable. Today geostationary satellites (Eutelsat, Hot Bird, etc.) cover several hundred programmes, both for radio and for television. Depending on user demand, cable services are also constantly increasing and are available to over 90% of households in many countries. Generally speaking, all the public-service radio and television programmes and those of the principal international "networks" can be picked up throughout the continent. In any event this service is limited to fixed receivers. It is therefore suitable for television but penalises a means of communication such as radio, whose strength lies in mobility (it can be listened to in the car, or the set can be moved from one room to another). As regards television, transfrontier broadcasting is also governed by the fact that rights are generally purchased for the national territory only. It follows that the broadcasting of programmes of mass appeal such as sporting events or the TV premieres of films or series have to be jammed outside the territory where the rights have been paid for. It must also be emphasised that cable (and particularly satellite) reception calls for an investment by the user, an investment which is added to the cost of the licence payable in accordance with national legislation.

- "World TV"

BBC World, TV5, Euronews, Eurosport, MTV, Cartoon Network in Europe, but also CNN and other big American channels, to which the big Arab networks should be added today, are all new models of programming and broadcasting aimed at a "globalised" public for which political and even linguistic frontiers are no longer discriminatory criteria for defining a target public. Inevitably only the global dimension is of interest to this type of media. Local information does not interest them and it may be difficult for them to meet the need to know one's neighbour and the need for collaboration in frontier regions.

- "Exported" channels

For some years several of the Luxembourg broadcaster RTL's channels have been targeted directly on exclusively foreign audiences: the Netherlands, France and Switzerland. In the United Kingdom TV3 and Kanal5 have their noses pointed towards the north of the continent, whereas Telemontecarlo looks towards France. SAT1 has opened windows (sometimes solely for advertising) in Switzerland and Austria. There can be no doubt that these models are for

commercial purposes only: they count on local publicity markets more than on information aimed at specific audiences.

2.5   When the frontier is not solely political

Denis de Rougemont used to call on the European citizen to transcend what he called "the scars of history", frontiers drawn over the centuries, battle after battle, frontiers that reflect ideological confrontations, economic interests and cultural barriers. Action at various levels is needed to survive these traumas, wounds in the proper sense of the term: legislative (the new European Constitution is certainly the most worthy example of this), economic (the success of the Euro is evident) and social (for example, the free movement of people). There are also many proposals relating to culture, transport links and information. Europe is increasingly taking the form of a real State-continent, promoting basic principles of freedom and equality which all its citizens acknowledge while maintaining, not to say exaggerating, their own identity. This does not mean obliterating the scars referred to by De Rougemont, still less denying their existence, but using them to full advantage, because they are a real opportunity for coming together, for exchange and for growth in all senses of the term.

In these circumstances electronic media are of the greatest importance. Moreover, as early as 1989 the Council of Europe had put in hand a "European Convention on Transfrontier Television", which entered into force in May 1993. This Convention goes beyond the "European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities" concluded in Madrid in 1980 and tackles many essential aspects of promoting and regulating the free circulation of television programmes between neighbouring countries. In substance it establishes some common rules on fundamental subjects such as freedom of expression, pornography, violence and racial hatred. It also defines a framework for publicity and sponsorship. The price payable for these undertakings is freedom of reception of neighbouring countries' programmes. However, the Convention has no provision guaranteeing that this principle will be applied fairly, i.e. as far as regions where natural "overspilling" is not possible.

Although, as we have already seen, the application of the principle of free circulation of programmes gives rise to no difficulty in flat open country, in reality various types of problem may arise on the ground: the relief first, but also the defence of frequencies, market issues, etc. Sometimes the reception of programmes from foreign radio and television broadcasters is already tailing off a few kilometres from the frontier. It is not possible to rebroadcast programmes by way of transmitters outside the national territory, unless the competent authorities are asked to allocate a specific frequency, which implies a lengthy bureaucratic and administrative procedure, because it is nothing less than a request for a broadcasting concession. Neither is it possible, from the legal viewpoint, to amplify signals beamed abroad because that would amount to a breach of international treaties on frequency allocation.

2.6   Alternative models

Some communities divided by topography or by national frontiers have devised forms of collaboration enabling them to broadcast their "local" programmes on a larger scale. We will give a few examples.

Radiotelevisione di Capodistria in Slovenia regularly exchanges news programmes with RAI Trieste to meet the needs of Italian and Slovene communities cast to one or other side of the Iron Curtain in the aftermath of the Second World War. The *POP TV* private channel, which is also Slovene, uses the same model for exchanges with Austrian and Hungarian broadcasters. Joint programming and programme exchanges have also become institutionalised between Savoie and Valle d'Aosta, as is the case with some Sardinian, Corsican and Tuscan broadcasters. For its part

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Televisione svizzera di lingua italiana makes news programmes available to private broadcasters under local concessions in the adjacent area in Italy.

Following the example of the Francophone community (CIRTEF, CTF), the *Comunità radiotelevisiva italofona* (www.comunitaitalofona.org) promotes radio and television co-productions and programme exchange. There is another recent initiative that is worth mentioning: *media.alp* ([www.media-alp.at)](www.media-alp.at), an Interreg project that covers topical Austrian, Italian, French and Swiss issues, aiming to create a real international multimedia editorial service.

All these services, made available on the initiative of the radio and television companies themselves, confirm the need for creating communication areas that transcend national frontiers.

2.7   The role of the media and current problems

The role of the media in general, and of electronic media and new media in particular, is to put citizens in the best possible position to understand, experience and enjoy their territoriality, which is now wide open to external opportunities and challenges.

But what is the actual situation and what are the actual degrees of freedom and opportunities for action in transfrontier cooperation involving electronic media? The problem can be seen from two viewpoints: distribution and production. Is the mutual distribution of programmes guaranteed in areas bordering the frontier on both sides? What forms of cooperation, not to say co-production, exist between transfrontier radio and television services?

In practice, distribution in the audiovisual space of a transfrontier region may be hampered by several factors due to the physical configuration of the territory, or by political obstacles, given the fundamentally national nature of broadcasting policy, and commercial and legal obstacles.

Barriers to entry, except in the case of the great international channels, may be much more difficult to overcome in a frontier region and in small countries than in others.

If distribution is hindered, exchange or co-production among transfrontier media often becomes merely a negative element.

Legal issues regarding the payment of dues for programme broadcasting and production may become prohibitive in the case of a local or regional company that wishes to cover the transfrontier space in question in its entirety.

The Council of Europe's European Convention on Transfrontier Television and the EU Television without Frontiers Directive give guarantees for freedom of reception and retransmission and even concern themselves with market distortions and the possibility of unfair competition. Being aimed at States, they tend to be more national in scope, and do not yet provide a legal basis commensurate with the aims of a transfrontier cooperation policy.

Various projects planned with the third INTERREG programme launched by the EU show that there is a real necessity for cooperation and for activation of transfrontier media. This situation is even more apparent in the new regions of Central and Eastern Europe.

Good practices and Institutional parties concerned

- **Media pluralism and cultural diversity**: the advent of television without frontiers should not be limited solely to the elimination of obstacles to the internal market for audiovisual services, but should clearly take account of other objectives of general interest such as the pluralism and diversity of the media; this objective is even more important in the regions that have to act as contact frontiers between differing realities;

- **Access to information**: this right of access flows directly from basic human rights: freedom of expression and freedom to acquire information. This access means that the citizen can keep up with major events (including those occurring abroad) on unencrypted television channels;

- **Interoperability**: new technologies and commercial practices by old and new media enable operators to limit access by broadcasters, including public-service broadcasters, and to segment television viewers by categorizing them. Again this is more likely in transfrontier areas. Every effort should be made to implement an open and interoperable digital television market as quickly as possible so as to avoid fresh obstacles developing, give television viewers access to a wide range of content and services and allow them to take advantage of the best quality of television receiver at the lowest possible price;

- **The duty to broadcast**: in the digital environment the "must carry rule" is still a basic tool to allow consumer access to certain programme services of particular importance to society. For this reason the area of application must be extended beyond cable operators by having regard to transfrontier territorialities also. These rules should also be applied to all the channels and services of broadcasters which have been given a public-service function and are under a duty to provide universal coverage;

- **Allocation of frequencies**: in a context of shortage of frequencies and intense competition among users of the spectrum, the uniqueness of the audiovisual sector – especially in the case of broadcasters with a public-service function – must be taken into account in managing the frequency spectrum. Some market-derived methods of managing and determining the value of the spectrum, such as auctioning and the secondary frequency market, are not suited to the unencrypted broadcasting sector.

- **Exceptions to general rules relating to "wrongful" exporting and relocation**: provision should be made, in particular in the case of transfrontier regions, for a right/duty to be able to broadcast/receive programmes from a bordering State or States, if necessary by way of exception to the general rules relating to exporting and relocation. It should be possible for States to negotiate a area (50-80 kilometres in depth?) suitable for this purpose on either side of a national frontier;

- **Encouraging transfrontier exchange and co-production**: it is highly desirable in the present situation to encourage these forms of collaboration in various ways. They should deal with both public and private operators and should take bilateral form, even taking advantage of multilateral models such as those promoted in the context of the EBU or in the (still exceptional) regional transfrontier associations.

The institutional parties concerned by the good practices are:

a) **States**: most of the recommendations relate to legislation or action by States. However, the impetus should come from below, from **regions and local authorities as well as from regional**

associations themselves. In particular, Treaties between States, but in more practical terms, direct negotiations between operators – with the approval of and incentives from the national authorities – would be necessary.

b) **The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (as well as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe)** would be involved in subsequent revisions of at least two Outline Conventions of fundamental importance:

- the **European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Madrid Convention, 21.5.1980)**. This Outline Convention has no specific chapter on the media. A revision of the Convention providing, for example, for the introduction of a mutual promotion area for the distribution of programmes of common interest and an appropriate legal and commercial model, would be an advance towards transcending the frontier distortions resulting from the "scars of history";
- the **European Convention on Transfrontier Television** (under review): this is the basic instrument regulating transfrontier broadcasts; it is in need of adaptation, and not just to the new multimedia context; it should take greater account of cultural diversity, minorities and particular territorial spaces, such as transfrontier regions;

c) **The European Commission**, particularly through the current review of the **Television without Frontiers Directive**. This Directive, increasingly harmonised with the similar Council of Europe Convention, should be decisive in defining a new, innovative territorial practice suited to the context of minority regions and frontier regions in particular.

III.   CROSS BORDER MEDIA : SPECIAL FOCUS ON MULTILINGUAL COMMUNITY RADIOS

In the new information society it is important the role of local cross border projects through multilingual community radios. Simultaneously there are new internal borders appearing in urban settings which raise often comparable questions and which should be taken into account in the search for suitable policy in medial bridging of borders.

3.1   Motivation in Cross border communication

In our today information society nearly everyone can get access to information but there appear new barriers which are not so easy to cross. At the other hand we have to think about what motivation one needs to get interested in cross border information and communication. This might be special topics which are not even treated in the conventional media; this might be aspects which are relevant for every day live - a more serious weather forecast, better local announcements on cultural or educational events - or just the music which is not plaid by the national or regional radios. (Busch 1999, p. 231).
At the other hand we have to take into account the importance of the perspective a media presents when reporting or discussing any issue: Is it primarily to inform the people or rather to motivate discussion on issues at an equal level between citizens at both sides of a national border?
In generally we have to ask what kind of informational surplus value a program delivers for its listeners. Some of the listed experiences shows clearly that a participatory program conception instead of a traditional top-down concept is often much more effective for building up new relationship between separated publics and motivating people to get more involved in democratic live.

3.2   Specific role of linguistic minority communities

National or new minority communities might play a major role for bridging the information and communication gap across traditional or new national borders. This raises also the question on how the use of minority language is fortified or hindered in a local or regional context. (Busch 2004, p. 65ff) There is the danger of a folkloristic use of minority language instead of valorising it as a regional "lingua franca" which can be used both side of the border and represents for its speaker a relevant supplementary knowledge.

3.3   Economical aspects

Advertising markets are traditionally structured in national categories. Cross border media activities at a local or a regional level seems not to fit with this conventional conception. Even more relevant than for radio this might be for print outlets. But there is also the fact that active cross border media communication demands a lot of initial input and involved people needs to be open and sensible for different cultural, social, historical and economic background of future listeners. That fore it seems that the conception of non-profit community radios with open access and participatory programming often fits the best with demanded qualifications.

3.4   Lacks in Cross border information:

   a) **Lack of data on needs and realities of cross border publics**: Scientific research on border crossing publics is nearly not existent due to the fact that audience research is mainly motivated by commercial aspects.
   b) **Lack of appropriate regulations for cross border service areas:** Domestic national interests dominate the frequency and network planning in the FM-Band, still the by far most important carrier of radio programmes (Busch 1999, p. 79).   The many international agreements regulating frequency planning just intend to minimize cross-border interference and not to establish such kind of service areas.
   Increased domestic demand for channels in the FM-band pushed the national regulators to saturate the spectrum sacrificing wanted and unwanted over-spill from neighbouring countries stations.The multiplexing nature (so-called 'Ensemble' of many programs in a common network of transmitters resulting in identical service area, DAB, DBTV) of new digital broadcasting technologies aggravates this issue as cross-border service areas had to be planned for up to 10 radio programs (a problem for any local coverage aspects) and the international planning agreements are still based on strictly national concepts. DRM technology for medium and short wave bands might be more suited for large single channel cross-border service areas and combined Internet-Wireless-LAN approaches might allow custom tailored distribution e.g. for urban areas along national borders (Lindenmaier 2005).

3.5 Case Studies on cross border broadcasting (focus on Community Radios)

Case 1: Radio AGORA a multilingual cross border minority project in Carinthia

Austrian region Carinthia builds with its southern part the bordering region with the Republic of Slovenia. In this border-region lives the Austrian Slovene minority community which are since long time considered as national minority at a constitutional level. Already since the end of 18th century regional politics in Carinthia is latently dominated by an anti-minority and anti-Slovene (former anti-Yugoslavian) discourse. This confrontation was even reinforced with the raise of Jörg Haider (former leader of right wing "Freedom Pary") becoming governor of the region in 1989. Simultaneously this anti-minority and anti-Slovenian discourse was long time supported by most of

regional press outlets. As an initiative of self-defence a group of people coming from minority and majority background founded the association AGORA aiming to set up a multilingual radio station for building communication bridges between minority and majority population but also to build up new communication across the border with Slovene Region Kranj and beyond.

Due to the fact that broadcasting monopoly in Austria 1989 still existed and there was no access for minority to run its own radio AGORA complained at the European Court of Human Right in Strasburg. This case led finally to abolishment of national broadcasting monopoly in 1993 (Informationsverein Lentia 2000 et al. 1993). Finally in 1997 AGORA was granted a licence for setting up regional Radio in Carinthia sharing the airtime with "Radio Korotan" a commercial minority station with a rather ethnocentric conception. AGORA hit the airwaves in October 1998 with a 12 hour program daily. The service area includes about 2/3 of Carinthia and the northern part of Slovenia so that its program can partly be heard even in Ljubljana. Cooperation with independent and public service broadcasters in Slovenia was integral component of the program conception. The wider aim was to build up an area of multilingual civil communication for the Alpe-Adria region.

The experience of the first years shows that especially non-profit community radio stations were the most suitable partners for cross-border cooperation. Most intense exchange could be build up with Radio Student Ljubljana (Slo), Radio Triglav (Jesenice, Slo) and Radio Onde Furlane (Udine, I) but also with public broadcaster RTV Slovenia. First cooperation started with training of AGORA stuff at Radio Student and at RTV Slovenia because of the fact that training for bilingual Slovene-German journalist was not even available in Austria. This first step was followed by weekly exchange of programs and program hosts further on by cross-border call-in programs on regional culture, politics, social life, sport and even weather forecast. Roundtable discussion with participants from both sides of the border went on the air live treating topics like regional cultural life, economical situation, new traffic laws, agriculture or the future EU membership of Slovenia. The general aim of all this programs was to make sure that even speakers of only one of the used languages should be able to follow or participate. This bilingual or multilingual approach brought not only the effect of new cross-border communication but also a new role for members of Slovene minority as experts for linguistic and cultural translators.

Due to this conception several EU-projects has been set up successfully dealing with cultural exchange, children program, literature or establishing new formats for multilingual radio in Europe. The actual economical situation of AGORA is the main point what for meanwhile some of these activities had to be reduced since 2000. Government funding for all non-profit minority or community radios in Austria has been stopped after the political change in 2000 and at the regional level there is no support for AGORA to take part in INTEREG projects. Since 2000 there has been a lot of ideas and written concepts for such projects but the regional government is not willing to support or co-finance neither to support the activities of AGORA in any other form. To survive in this difficult situation AGORA had to join cooperation with public service broadcaster ORF by leaving 3 hours of the most important daily airtime. ORF runs since this march 2004 at his regional channel "Radio Kärnten" a 3 hour show "Servus, Srečno, Ciao" with a cross border aspect. But the approach is completely different as the use of neighbouring languages are reduced to a symbolic level and the shows are centred to tourist or "sunshine" topics and all sorts of events but far from everyday live of the people. (Busch 2004, p. 158/159)

Case 2: "Freier Rundfunk Freistadt - Free Radio Freistadt 107,1 MHz" a community radio at the Austro/Czech border

Exchange between the border regions of Freistadt and Český Krumlov is even 15 years after the fall of the iron curtain very limited. Even the EU-entry of Czech Republic did not considerably change the attitude towards the border situation.

Up till now at both sides only a few people speak the neighbouring language. Conflicts like on the nuclear power plant Temelin dominated long time cross border relations with a climate of mistrust and hostility. This climate was sometimes even reinforced by politicians who used the topic for their propaganda. The region is dominated by agricultural structure and traditional industry with the city of Freistadt building its regional centre. Freistadt presents itself with a very nice service oriented homepage where one may read even on the topic of its partnership with Czech city Kaplice but there is not one single word in Czech language which could be found. (www.freistadt.at 2.3.2005) Traditionally the population at the Austrian side of the border still looks at the Czechs as the "poor neighbours" and it seems that there is little effort made to establish an equal perspective.

In fact a very important role for establishing new and equal cross border relations is carried by local culture associations and networks and also occasionally by people involved in mixed partnerships or families. Some very engaged networks organized by ordinary people were established for regular cross border meetings at local level. People meet to share their ideas and stories and learn an understanding about each others culture, traditions and language. Until now even this small range of new relationships are rarely picked up by the local media to build their stories.

With the radio project "Freier Rundfunk Freistadt (FRF)" www.fro.at/freistadt for the first time a medium wants to establish the bordering situation as a central topic of its activities. The licence was granted already in May 2003 and the regulation authorities argued their decision with the specific non-profit and cross border oriented concept (KommAustria 2003). Due to several economical and political obstacles FRF hit the airwaves only on 2nd February 2005. FRF´s main target is to build up a communication platform for an equal cross border flow of information and to motivate people on both sides to get involved in radio programming. Bilingual and multilingual shows will build an integrative element of the program focusing on topics of everyday live such as regional development or cultural and educational exchange. Daily Journals will be oriented on topics which are relevant for the public at both side of the border. (Freies Radio Freistadt, 2005).

As there is no national funding for community radio in Austria, FRF had to build its economical concept first on local and regional support arguing that this communication platform will have a strong and sustainable impact on the development of the whole region. But there aren't enough financial resources in this region. This should not have been a principal problem as there is also budget from INTERREG and other EU programs. Therefore one of the main challenges of this project is the support and commitment by regional politicians on both sides of the boarder in order to receive funding from all sources. Due to funding guidelines FRF needs an existing compatible project on the other side of the border in the Czech Republic in order for future partnerships to develop.

Case 3:CROSS RADIO: cross-bordering radio project in the area of Former Yugoslavian

During the nineties communication and interchange among cultural and arts scenes of ex-Yugoslav republics became one of the victims of armed conflicts in The Balkans. The connections were broken, information blocked and production was being obstructed. What once seemed to be homogenous cultural scene of Yugoslavian regions was now broken to pieces with new national and language borders. This development had strong impact on the relation of minority majority population and the status of used languages. (Busch 2004, p. 198)

Cross Radio project was one of the first initiatives for re-building bridges of communication and cooperation in radio and cultural fields. In February 2001 a group of radio activists from Radio B92/Belgrade, Radio Student/Zagreb and Radio Student/Ljubljana came up with an idea of radio programme exchange on regular weekly basis. Each radio produced a 20 minutes long feature about current activities and happenings in local cultural scene (focus was on new, young, independent cultural production) and shipped material on recorded mini-discs to other two stations with help of public transport operators. Each radio station then broadcasted all three productions in one 1-hour Cross Radio programme time. After few months of positive experience in this project, new radio stations were invited to join the project – the idea was to cover all scenes of all ex-Yugoslav regions – and internet became a media for exchanging programme files. At this moment Cross Radio project integrates action of 12 radio stations – 5 from Serbia, 2 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2 from Slovenia, 1 from Kosovo, 1 from Macedonia and 1 from Switzerland (produced by members of Bosnian community in Zurich). Cross Radio celebrates 4 years of continuous action, 186 shows were produced and broadcasted so far.

One of the most important aspects of Cross Radio is its multi-lingual principle. Each radio crew produces their part in their own language (except the Pristina crew who is using English language), so the listeners are challenged to renew (or learn anew) their knowledge of similarities and differences among Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian and Slovenian language. In some parts this is still quite a problematic issue, as in Kosovo for example, Serbian language is practically banned from everyday life. Even though this practice faces some problems regarding understanding of certain parts of radio show in certain areas, but Cross Radio members states that multi-lingual principle is of an extreme importance for promoting the cultural and lingual diversity of ex-Yugoslav regions – especially among younger listeners.

Cross Radio project covers a geo-cultural area which was not only aggressively disintegrated but also now faces more and more new problems in cross-border activities due to different geo-political situation in the new countries that were formed in the area. As Slovenia already joined EU and the other ex-Yugoslav countries find themselves at different stages of approaching EU membership, new obstacles in cultural cooperation and interchange have emerged. Danger that further disintegration and alienation of once connected scenes would take place, makes Cross Radio activities of extreme importance as its activities are not limited only to informing the audience, but also move forward towards active preserving and renewing links, contacts, their intermediation to interested individuals and institutions, and also organizing events which bring together artists from different ex- Yugoslav areas. (Cross Radio festivals were organized in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zrenjanin and Novi Sad so far).

Cross Radio functions within a very loose, informal framework, without any solid institutional and financial basis. The major linking force that keeps the project going on for such a long time is the enthusiasm of individuals involved in the project. Every team / radio station has to find funds for the production of their part of the project and a lot of voluntary work is invested. The project itself didn't have any common funding – that is until recently, when the project got funds from UNESCO for limited period of 8 months.
Cross Radio is now facing the challenge how to form a more solid framework for functioning and coordination of activities, but in the other way not to lose its flexibility and enthusiasm due to institutionalising.

At this very moment Cross Radio – already present on internet with the website www.crossradio.org - explores the possibilities to start operating also as net-radio, which should be an important upgrade of the project and enable further dissemination of its idea and its contents.

Case 4: BABELINGO - Crossing the border of language communities in urban context

With the raise of migrant societies especially in Europe's cities or capitals new borders of communication appears. We can't any more talk about a national public even within single cities there is a progressing process of segmentation of publics which poses the question to find new ways of integration and bridging between separated audience groups. Communicational needs of new linguistic minority groups are rarely supplied by National public service broadcasters and not at all by commercial stations. This common experience made an increasing number of community radio stations in Austria, Germany and Switzerland when they recognized the broad demand for airtime deposed by up to 20 different language groups as it shows the example of Radio LoRa in Zürich. But there is also a principal difference between the approach of stations as Berlins SFB 4 / Radio Multikulti with his top-down organisation and the model of bottom-up community based stations. (Busch 2004, p. 153 – 162) Having a cloth look at the function of all this community language programs it turns out that they contribute a lot for of communication within these communities and helps them "feeling at home". But this is just a first step on the way to abolish obstacles on the way to a serious integration and prevent exclusion. Still there is the danger of new borders being built up between the single minority communities or between minorities and the mainstream societies. In consequence of recognizing this problem a number of editors and program makers started to work on a conception for community integrating programming. Redaction teams should be motivated to get in contact with other language community teams and work on bi- or multilingual formats for addressing their shows not only toward their own community but to other groups and towards the mainstream audiences.

To build up a platform for ongoing discussion and exchange on this problem the working group BABELINGO has been established in 2002 (www.babalingo.net). Up to now a series of workshops has been held on "intercultural radio", building bridges" or "DOs and DON´Ts for multilingual programming" in cooperation with the centre for intercultural studies – CIS in Vienna (www.cis.or.at). A very important aspect was to combine experiences from multicultural media in the Balkan region especially of Ex-Yugoslavia with experiences in Western Europe. This activities lead meanwhile to the project Inter.Media for producing a handbook including guidelines and training material on intercultural media work. Inter.Media is supported by the European Union within the framework of Sokrates / Grundtvig program.

Some guidelines which turned out till now which are more or less relevant for national border or "new urban border" situations:

  a) **Language awareness** – special program element should have a focus on the fact that there is no pure language or culture, examples should be give from everyday live.
  b) **Language learning** – redaction teams must be trained on use of neighbouring languages to be able to spread the positive spirit of multilingual competences
  c) **Symbolic language presence** – Even in situation of not understanding the neighbouring language the audience should get the idea of its presence of normality.
  d) **Forms of Translation** – Direct translation might be useful for precise transport of information but dialog between languages, reframing or turn-taking are more suitable forms of for producing attractive flow of communication.

e) **Space for experiments** – especially for younger audiences the role of experimental use of different languages plays a very attractive role. There should be also space for language-art including audio-theatre.

f) **Training and scientific background work** – Special support should be given to all kind of training in the field of language competences, speaking exercise, and intercultural management. But there is also a large field of scientific work which should be intensively treated.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the important role the national public service broadcasters play for delivering high quality programmes for all national audiences in the field of cross border radio activities the conception of multilingual non-profit community radios seems to fit much more to specific needs and challenges in local or regional settings for building active communication bridges across the borders and getting involved the concerned population. In the OSCE-Report on "Media in Multilingual Societies" Nena Skopljanac (Skopljanac, 2003) shows up the importance of civil non-profit media build up by local NGOs based on multilingual or cross border communication as a complementary element besides national public service broadcasting. Especially Community Radio is an extreme flexible media easy to set up and to be run not only by professionals but with rather low costs. As a consequence of their specific functions and activities non-profit civic media should be considerate as supplementary elements to national public service broadcasters for supplying public service in specific situations to local publics.

A crucial point for building cross border communication is the way in which the different languages are used and which image of the neighbours the media transports. Language used should be recognized at an equal level of image and value, folkloristic use of minority language leads just to other forms of discrimination hindering any other efforts to set up positive climate.

Local communication and media activities can rarely be seen as a potential field for commercial activity but as a challenge for local culture work and politics. A successfully established cross border communication area might be considered as one of the preconditions for economical success of former marginalized regions.

Concerned local and regional authorities should support all kind of cultural and social initiatives undertaken in the perspective of bridging communication gaps due to border situations and stressing multiple regional identities and diversities. The involvement of local people should be one of the criteria for discussing local agendas.

At the Council of Europe 7th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy held 10th – 11th March in Kiev one more time the importance of a plural media landscape also in local areas was stressed out by several speakers. National and transnational media concentration leads to disappearance of local media outlets. As reported by Prof. Bagdikian this development can be observed in the United States to its most extends (Bagdikian 2005). From more than 60 companies some 30 years ago today only a handful of owners control the whole media landscape closing down all unprofitabel local outlets. Due to the resulting lack of local communication municipal or regional authorities start cooperation with NGOs to rebuild local media on a not-for-profit basis. Karol Jakubowicz, the president of CDMC stressed the importance of cooperation between political authorities and NGOs for future media and communication policy but also the need of a divers media system including public service, commercial media and civic or community media (Jakubowicz 2005).

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