

Monthly tranche as a pressure tool

Local media mostly depend on budget funding, which also affects their (not) dependence, or (not) favoring certain political parties. Financing, including the election of the administration and editorial staff, unfortunately, are the main factors for the influence of key „political players“ in the local community. For example, RTV Zenica, we analyze the influence of the authorities, and in which measure the editor and journalists are free to work. The budget for 2018 is the annual amount of 324,000 KM or EUR 166,154 for the financing of this media service, that is monthly 27,000 KM or EUR 13,850. This budget is the same as in 2017, while in 2016 the amount was slightly higher at the annual level of 384,000 KM or EUR 196,923, which was about 40% of the annual revenue of this public company. After the local elections in 2016 and the arrival of an independent mayor on the head of the city of Zenica, pressures in the form of non-payment monthly tranches affected the replacement of the former director of RTV Zenica and the Supervisory board. And then the mayor selected new employees of this media.

On the question, addressed to several city councilors, about the affection of local media in Zenica / above all RTV Zenica / political parties **prof. dr Spahija Kozlic / SDA /** former journalist, editor-in-chief of the media company, believes that the fall in objectivity in radio and television programs has been evident over the past year.

- I am very sorry about this, because I have educated a considerable number of journalists, both in the journalistic processing of events or topics, as well as in the objectivity and impartiality of the journalistic profession. I'm saying this because on several occasions I was exposed to attacks, threats and pressures, especially by the politicians who at that time had power in Zenica and Zenica-Doboj Canton. **In the programs of RTV Zenica this year promotes and uncritically displays the rule of one man, mayor Fuad Kasumović.**

This view is easily verifiable by the simplest analysis of informative news lately. They start with information about the daily activities of the mayor. These are the most common releases of tertiary news that don't deserve to be on the show, and not at all on the top of news. In this way, this media accuses a man in whose hands is a power not to pay the monthly tranche for the work of this media, and this is sad. On the other hand, the criticism

of the work of the current government in Zenica can not pass. It is also unfortunate that the attacks on Zenica journalists by the mayor of Kasumović remained almost unplanned, and whether the journalists themselves stood up in defense of their colleagues. That was not the case before.

On the other hand, **Mladen Simić / SDP BiH /** party councilor, who in previous years was mainly in opposition, thinks that TV Zenica has been serving SDA for decades.

- Since the arrival of an independent mayor, the situation has changed, Simić believes, and city councilor **Ekrem Tuka / SBB Fahrudin Radončić /** parties that until recently in the coalition with the SDA had a majority in the city council thinks that each political party necessarily has "its own media" and that RTV Zenica has so far been sympathetic to the political party in power in the local community.

- **Since last year, staffing changes are in progress, which will be in favor of other policies which are in power in our local community. Considering, this is a local media that mainly informs citizens about the situation in the city, local communities, work and activities of the city administration, this affection and cooperation is acceptable and logical.** In all media, journalists work professionally their job, regardless of editorial policy and affection to political parties of the media company, said Ekrem Tuka, who was a minister in the Government of Zenica - Dobož Canton, and now city councilor.

Local media are in favor of the current government

In the local elections in 2016, a new political party was appear, called Power center, which won six mandates in the City council Zenica. This party was co-operating with the SDA, which with their votes, had a majority before recently, along with several other parties / SDPBiH, DF and SBB Fahrudin Radončić / formed a new majority that "corresponds" to the independent mayor.

Adnan Šabani / The power of the center / believes that the local media is in favor of the current government, respectively, in those who fund them.

- In our country and in the region (recently there was a protest in Belgrade, the opposition protested in front of the RTS because of "political darkness" we can say that this is quite normal. **The media used for their own promotions and like a tool for achieving political goals. To avoid confusion in the entire region and in the world, we know who is at the federal level**

controlling the media, who is in Republika Srpska, we know who is in print media and where the winds come from, says Šabani.

Budgetary resources in the function of objective information

There are different opinions about the affection of the media to the political parties. On the other hand, there are similar opinions about the need for public spending budget money.

- That must be the case with the money that is paid for RTV Zenica, says prof. dr Spahija Kozlić, expressing doubts about the completely vague financial structure during the Miligram group's engagement for the New Year's Eve.

- It is known that the organizer was RTV Zenica, but it isn't known how much it cost and how that money was collected. In city says that it was ordered public companies and institutions to transfer money to RTV Zenica for cover the costs of this event, said prof. dr Kozlić.

- Financial funds allocated from the city budget for the work RTV Zenica are very small compared to needs, and more funds are needed to modernize equipment, improve working conditions and improve the work of this media company, **said Ekrem Tuka / SBB Fahrudin Radončić / and Mladen Simić /SDP BiH/ thought that budgetary resources must be justified and in the function of objective information.**

We must create a strong media house, if we are talking about RTV Zenica, then surely must be a goal transparency and the desire to create regional television, and at the very least cantonal television. Considering, that it is a public company, it is also logical that the bulk of the budget be allocated to financing this program, thought Adnan Šabani / The Power of the Center /.

As part of this councilor interviewing to make the image of the media service in the local community more complete, there was also a question about the personal observations of the councilors about the programs of this media service in relation to the citizens whose, after all, allocate some of the funds for its financing.

Ekrem Tuka / SBB Fahrudin Radončić / said that in relation to the working conditions and equipment in RTV Zenica, as a citizen, he is satisfied with the program, and that as a city councilor he will advocate that this media house be equipped, modernized and improved, and Mladen Simić / SDP BiH / hopes that the new management and editor will not continue the

practice of the SDA, and that all contents will be in the direction of favoring the mayor and his party. Everyone must have equal chances, otherwise none of the objective, transparent and realistic reporting will be present, Simić believes.

Adnan Šabani / The Power of the Center / I will be extremely honest, I do not watch this TV at all! The reason is very simple, there isn't high quality content and there is nothing that can attract me to watch this program. I hope that the new director Nandino Škrbić will be able to raise the audience and make at least a more attractive television program. Honestly, two televisions I'm watching at home, N1 and AJB, I consider that these media houses report objectively and that the content of their program are good at least informative.

Television Zenica (and Radio Zenica) must make 10 steps in advance in order to reach the competition, increasing their ratings and attracting sponsors considering increasing their marketing revenues. If they succeed in choosing to finance their business without the support of the city then the objectivity of reporting will be more and better quality.

On the other side, **prof. dr Spahija Kozlić** said that as a citizen and a councilor, he is absolutely not satisfied with the reporting RTV Zenica, whether it is the work of the City council, the mayor and the City administration or the media monitoring of events. – **There is try to send the inaccurate picture that Zenica was in the dark and “Middle ages” by 2016, and that at the end of that year “rescuer” and “visionary” come to Zenica, to take away this city in Europe.** This seems to be a media over simplification of the event, creating similar problems (in the form of finger-pointing in the duty guilty) and blocking any criticism. Of course, the facts that we are witnesses deny everyday such sweetness. Nevertheless, I believe that journalists will be able to gain the courage to counter the pressure coming from the mayor's office Fuad Kasumović, said Kozlić.

As much as there is plurality in the City council of Zenica / eight political parties and one representative of national minorities / there are so many different opinions about the tasks and expectations of the local media service. Plurality of councils is not necessary and a guarantee of democracy in decision-making, as the budgetary dependence should not mean space for pressure on the media. But, according to the previous practice that the mayor can at any time, when he does not like reporting, deny the monthly tranche, that pressure is evident. For now, there is no mechanism to protect the medium from distorting funding. This brake becomes also the main

tool for the direct or indirect impact on editorial policy and the affection of the one who has the majority, and who is managing the city budget.

The content of this text is the sole responsibility of author and BH Journalists Association and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union. 

Biography:

Velida Kulenović graduated 1984 on the Faculty of Political Science in Sarajevo. Since she works as a reporter of the Radio of Federation BiH from Zenica. She previously worked as a reporter for Radia Sarajevo, a journalist and host on Radio Velika Kladusa, a journalist at the local radio station in Sanski Most, and in the newspapers "Kladuša novosti" and "Agrokomerc". She is active in non – governmental organizations „Medica“, „Center for legal aid for women Zenica“ i „BH journalists Association“. Through this engagements she participated in creating more different publications.