

Public Service Radio and Television in Croatia - at the Service of the Public or Politics?

Viktorija Car

Introduction

In the pre-internet era, journalists were in charge of publishing information to ensure that the public keeps abreast of current developments. This was especially true for journalists working for public service media who, as part of their professional role, had to be politically independent, unbiased, accountable and trustworthy. In the 21st century, information is instantly published online and shared on social media by public relations officers, social media managers, citizens, bots and trolls while journalists only republish news items. The public is 'overly informed' and can hardly plough through an ocean of online and network reporting, framed information, disinformation, overt propaganda, pseudo information in an overwhelmingly fake online and network reality. In the fake news society of today, a huge crisis is brewing that goes down to the core of journalism as a profession. In light of the oxymoron of 'fake news', what should journalists do?

More than ever before, there is a high need for professional, independent, economically viable, accountable and trustworthy public service media.

In Croatia, during the last thirty years public service radio and television have been up against the perpetual challenge of transition – firstly due to the change from one political system into another, and then due to the constant management and political crises. Against the backdrop of global trends, it seems that Croatian Radio Television (*Hrvatska radiotelevizija*, HRT) has remained ensconced in a bubble of local and in-house problems, without casting a glance at European and global trends and problems. The only constant feature of the media landscape has been the steady deterioration of programme quality, a decrease in public trust and a continual drop in HRT programme ratings.

Instead of focusing on building a media department for the future the premises and technical equipment of HRT have become obsolete, its building is falling

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apart, with hardly any attention on the part of senior management on the quality of working conditions for journalists, editors and other employees. There is no place on the premises for approximately 3 200 employees and associates to eat and drink, no meeting rooms for journalists to exchange ideas and information or to sit and talk in – as a workplace the HRT is not an inviting proposition for the younger generation of journalists. For a long time now, the quality of programming has been a low priority on the management's agenda – an issue considered extraneous, something not to be talked about in public. Instead of doing its best to make the HRT the most professional journalistic environment, the management of the HRT files lawsuits against both its own journalists and against other media. Instead of promoting journalistic freedom and investigative journalism, the HRT has become polluted with an atmosphere of fear, bitterness and displeasure. It has become the place of 'fading discoloured faces'.

History of Croatian Radio Television

The first broadcast of Radio Zagreb hit the air on May 15, 1926. It survived many years under different regimes and different names as today's Croatia has been part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1929) and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929-1941) before becoming the Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945), the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1963), the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963-1991) and finally the Republic of Croatia in 1991. To commemorate the 30th anniversary, of Radio Zagreb, Television Zagreb commenced broadcasting in 1956. At that time, both Radio and Television Zagreb were under the leadership of Yugoslav Radio Television (JRT) – the state broadcasting system. The media market in Yugoslavia was more diverse and freer than in any other communist country of the Eastern European block. It developed within a decentralised paradigm controlled by the Republic but not by the Federal Government.¹ Still, the censorship became legal² and all media in the country acted as propagators of the communist party. The JRT coordinated radio and television broadcasting and programme exchange in each of the six republics, but each republic continued to broadcast

¹ Viktorija Car (2009) *Mythical Structures and Narratives in Croatian TV News*. PhD Dissertation. University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences. Unpublished. pp. 25-26.

² This was in accordance to the Law on preventing the misuse of the freedom of the press. See Mark Thompson (1995) *Kovanje rata – Mediji u Srbiji, Hrvatskoj i Bosni i Hercegovini*. Zagreb: Hrvatski helsinški odbor/Građanska inicijativa za slobodu javne riječi/ARTICLE 19. pp. 10-14.

its own locally produced programme. At the beginning only the primetime TV newscast was produced in the capital Belgrade and transmitted to all TV centres part of JRT. This arrangement lasted until 1968 when Television Zagreb was officially allowed to produce and broadcast its own primetime news for evening broadcasting. To be clear, there was a pluralistic organisation of radio and TV stations in Yugoslavia, but all of them had to support and promote socialist values and communist party interests.³

Since 1991, when Croatia declared independence, the national radio and television market has undergone a very complex transformation from a social, political (socialist, communist and totalitarian) and economic system (planned economy) into a liberal democracy with a free market economy.⁴ Because of the War of Independence (1991-1995) the State retained its monopoly on national electronic media in order to remain in control and retain its ability to frame news content. Therefore, although under the *Croatian Radio Television Act*⁵ the HRT had the status of a public service radio and television broadcaster, it remained firmly under state control, strongly influenced by politicians from the ruling party HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) and the President Franjo Tuđman.⁶ New political elites in Croatia attempted to take control of national media and transform it into a kind of 'pseudo public service media.'⁷ The new government enacted a new law and ensured public funding for the HRT but it retained control over the appointment of senior managers and editors-in-chief. That means it had near total control over the management and programming. This situation lasted until the end of what came to be known as the 'first era' of HDZ rule before the change in government in 2000.

Changes in the broadcasting media market in Croatia were set in motion by the adoption of the *Law on Telecommunications* (1994), which made provisions for

³ More in Viktorija Car (2009) *Mythical Structures and Narratives in Croatian TV News*. PhD Dissertation. University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences. Unpublished.

⁴ Ivana Andrijašević and Viktorija Car (2013) *How We Survived Digital Television Broadcasting Switchover: The Case of Croatia*. *International Journal of Digital Television* 4 (3): 279-297. pp. 280.

⁵ *Croatian Radio Television Act (HRT Act)*, Official Gazette NN 28/90.

⁶ In the period of HDZ rule 1990-1999, HRT had five general managers, all of whom were influential members of the ruling party and a few of HTV's chief news editors were honorary members of HDZ. Read more in Kraljić Tanja (1998) *Forum 21 i njegov utjecaj na HTV [Forum 21 and its influence on HTV]*. Zagreb: Faculty of Political Science. Graduate thesis, not published.

⁷ Read more in Sandra Bašić Hrvatin (2002) *Serving the State or the Public*. Ljubljana: Peace Institute. pp. 20-26.

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the grant of licences for privately owned radio and television channels at local level. Media privatisation led to media becoming more pluralistic. Nevertheless, due to the poor economy that has taken a hit in the war, the lack of capital and the constrained advertising market, the newly founded private local television channels sought and found protection from local authorities.⁸

At the national level, the HTV retained its monopoly until 1999 when the first private commercial competitor with national coverage Nova TV began broadcasting. Privatisation of the third HTV channel brought a second commercial television competitor – RTL, a company owned by the German corporation RTL Group, which started broadcasting in April 2004.

With a new government in office in 2000 (a centre-left coalition of six parties took power), the political transformation of the HRT began. The first step towards change was the 2001 *HRT Act* that finally placed a ban on politicians becoming members of the *HRT Programme Council*. Since then direct political influence on HRT programming has eased significantly. An analysis of political content in HTV's programming confirmed that HTV was no longer 'a Government propaganda machine as it was in 1999'. Despite this, it was a long way from becoming a genuine and high-quality, public interest media service provider.⁹ Political pressure was now stronger to align Croatian media legislation with EU recommendations and directives, with an emphasis on protecting media pluralism, placing restrictions on the concentration of ownership, and enhancing media independence and journalistic freedom.

In 2003, the new *HRT Act* and the *Electronic Media Act* were adopted. Further changes of the HRT Act were introduced in 2010, strengthening the independence of the public broadcaster. Regrettably, the changes enacted in 2012 provide for the election of a Director-General of the HRT with a majority vote of Parliament, which also elects 9 out of 11 members of the HRT Programme Council and 4 out of 5 members of the HRT Supervisory Board. Many international media organisations responded negatively to these

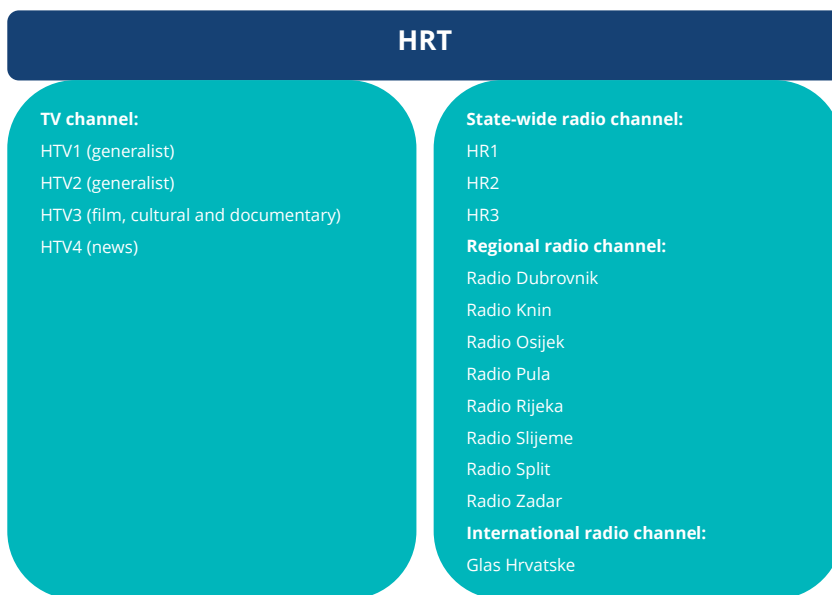
⁸ More in Ivana Andrijašević and Viktorija Car (2013) How We Survived Digital Television Broadcasting Switchover: The Case of Croatia. *International Journal of Digital Television* 4 (3): 279-297.

⁹ Geza Stantić (2003) *Politika u programu HTV-a (Politics in HTV Programming)*. Zagreb: Hrvatski helsinški odbor za ljudska prava. pp. 154.

changes.¹⁰ A handful of minor amendments to the law were introduced in 2016 and 2017 in respect of the licence fee.

To conclude, HRT has the status of a public entity whose activities, public service delivery mission, financing, management, control and operation are governed by the *HRT Act*. HRT performs public service broadcasting activities and the Croatian government provides for its autonomous and independent financing through a licence fee. The Ministry of Culture, which is in charge of proposing a new law or amendments to existing legislation to the Croatian government, has announced some planned amendments to be enacted in 2019¹¹; including the adoption of a national media strategy. However, it is still unclear whether these changes will have any implications for the *HRT Act*.

Structure of the HRT



¹⁰ Among them was the Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), which stated that “the latest amendments would allow for political interference in the public broadcaster’s management. In SEEMO’s view, this legal solution does not comply with international standards of public broadcasting” <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1206/S00637/croatian-radio-television-law-changes-mean-political-control.htm> (accessed 30 June 2012).

¹¹ At the time this chapter was revised, in the summer of 2019, still there was no further information on this issue.

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As in the majority of European countries, the Croatian media landscape comprises three distinct types of media: public service media, commercial media, and not-for-profit socially motivated media that speak on behalf of different interest groups, organisations, movements, minorities, communities, etc. The media landscape in Croatia is diverse at both local and national level. The public service broadcaster has four TV channels¹² and seven commercial TV channels operate at national level, along with 24 local commercial TV channels.¹³ Public service radio (HR, Hrvatski Radio) has three national channels (HR1, HR2 and HR3)¹⁴ and eight local channels. There are also three radio stations with national coverage (two commercial and one of the Catholic Church), plus 141 local radio stations.¹⁵

As already mentioned in the previous section, the amendments to the HRT Act in 2012 that are still in force have made the majority in Parliament responsible for electing the Director-General of the HRT. The Director-General is elected for a term of five years. He/she has sole power to appoint and dismiss programme editors-in-chief. The Croatian Parliament also elects 9 out of 11 members of the HRT Programme Council and 4 out of 5 members of the HRT Supervisory Board. The election of members of the Programme Council is conducted by the Croatian Parliament on the basis of a public call published and implemented by the Committee on Information, Computerisation and the Media of the Croatian Parliament. A public call invites the institutions, associations and citizens to put forth nominations for members of the HRT Council. Nine members of the HRT Programme Council are elected by Parliament, while two are elected by HRT journalists and other HRT employees actively engaged in the creation of HRT programme content in the manner provided by the *HRT Act* and the *HRT Statute*. The HRT Programme Council represents and protects the public's interest through programme oversight and improving the radio and audio-visual programme, as well as other audio and audio-visual and multimedia services. The four members of the HRT Supervisory Board are appointed and dismissed by the Croatian Parliament by a majority vote of all members based on a public call published and implemented by the Committee on Information,

¹² HTV1 and HTV2 are general programming channels, HTV3 is film, cultural and documentary channel while HTV4 is news channel.

¹³ Website Agency for Electronic Media, <https://www.aem.hr/televizijski-nakladnici> (accessed 26 February 2019).

¹⁴ HR1 is more oriented on news, HR2 is more oriented on music and sport, while HR3 is a cultural radio channel.

¹⁵ Website Agency for Electronic Media, <https://www.aem.hr/radijski-nakladnici> (accessed 26 February 2019).

Computerisation and the Media of the Croatian Parliament, which proposes to the Croatian Parliament the election of members. One member of the HRT Supervisory Board is a representative of employees, appointed and dismissed in accordance with the *HRT Act* and the *Labour Law*. Members of the HRT Supervisory Board elect among themselves a Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board. The members of the HRT Supervisory Board are elected for a term of four years. The HRT Supervisory Board oversees the business operations of the HRT.

HRT's financial model includes income from licence fees payable by every household with a television set or radio or any other device that can receive radio or audio-visual programme. Part of the revenue comes from advertising. Since October 2010, the monthly licence fee is HRK 80 (approx. 11 Euro). Citizens pay the licence fee directly to the HRT and according to the financial statements of the HRT more than 90 percent of citizens liable to pay the licence fee do so regularly. On an annual basis, the HRT receives approximately 160 million Euro from licence fees. That accounts for approximately 85 percent of its total income, with the remaining of 15 percent of revenue being generated from advertisement.¹⁶ During the primetime (6 to 10 p.m.) advertising is limited to four minutes per hour while in the rest of programming is limited to nine minutes per hour.¹⁷

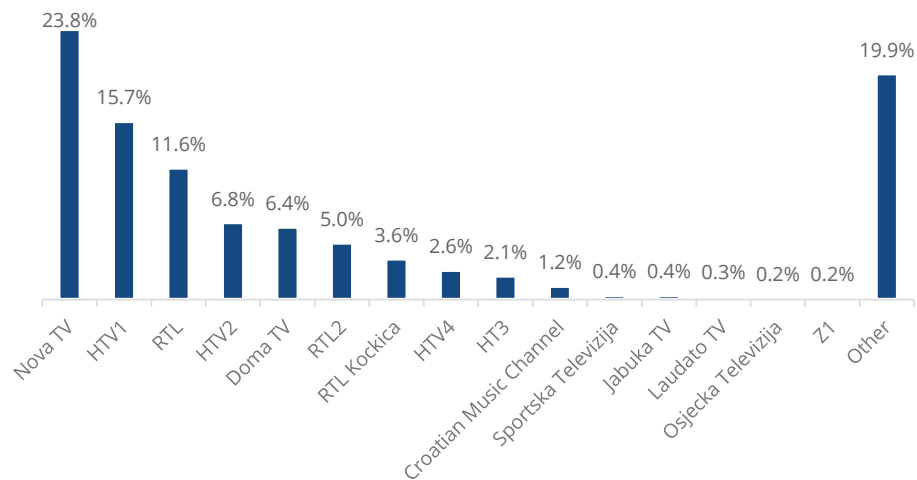
According to data from September 2018 set out in reports on television programmes viewing audiences¹⁸ the commercial television NovaTV had the largest market share, followed by HTV1.

¹⁶ Financial report is published in the document „Godišnje izvješće o radu Nadzornog odbora HRT-a i provedbi nadzora zakonitosti rada i financijskog poslovanja HRT-a za 2017. godinu“ Zagreb, November 2018, www.hrt.hr (accessed 26 February 2019).

¹⁷ Croatian Radio-Television Act (HRT Act), Official Gazette NN 28/90; NN 35/91 (amendments); NN 33/92 (amendments); NN 43/92; NN 24/96 (amendments); NN 17/01; NN 25/03; NN 137/10; (amendments NN 76/12).

¹⁸ Agency for Electronic Media (2018) www.e-mediji.hr.

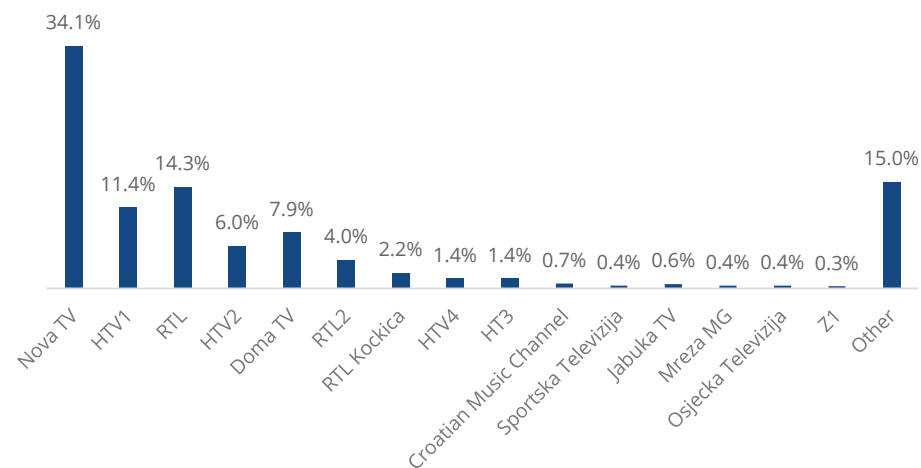
Chart 1. Average daily television viewing audiences in the entire population 4+ in September 2018



Source: Electronic Media Agency, 2018, www.e-mediji.hr

During the primetime, between 7 and 11 p.m. results are even worse for HTV, with both NovaTV and RTL having larger shares.

Chart 2. Average primetime (7 – 11 p.m.) television viewing audiences for the population 4+ in September 2018



Source: Electronic Media Agency, 2018, www.e-mediji.hr

It is important to note that unlike the public broadcasters in many other European transition countries, the HTV held out against commercial competition for a long time, retaining the highest market share until 2009. HTV's primetime newscast *Dnevnik* at 7.30 p.m. used to be the most watched television programme in Croatia over many years.¹⁹ However, since 2005 its popularity has been in continual decline. At the same time, the ratings of the NovaTV primetime newscast, also named *Dnevnik*, have been steadily rising to become the most watched newscast in Croatia in 2010, which it still is. One of the reasons why HTV's *Dnevnik* had been losing viewers was its strong pro-government bias news reporting. NovaTV has a more critical approach, in addition to being more politically balanced and neutral.²⁰ Its newscast is also produced in a style that has more popular appeal. Through news reporting where popular and simplified style of editing is used, commercial television stations, commercial television stations attract an audience segment that would not be otherwise interested in topics relating to local, domestic and international politics. Although simplified for viewers, commercial television newscasts still report important information, contributing to informing the share of the audience with no previous exposure to news.

Data from September 2018 indicates that the top ten most watched TV programmes by the age group of four years and older, include nine programmes broadcast by NovaTV with only one programme broadcast by the HTV (the midday news programme). The *Dnevnik* programme of NovaTV came in fifth in the ranking with a share of 41.58 percent, followed by AMR²¹ with 16.86 percent as the most watched national primetime newscast.²²

Independence of broadcasting

As already mentioned, one of the reasons why HTV has been losing viewers is its staunch pro-government stance. The HRT used to have some programmes where anchors and guests were strongly critical towards government politics

¹⁹ Viktorija Car and Ivana Andrijašević (2012) Mapping Digital Media – Croatia (country report). London: OSF.

²⁰ Viktorija Car (2010) O čemu i kako nas informiraju? (What About and How Do They Inform Us?) – Content analysis of primetime newscasts on HTV, NovaTV and RTL. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska.

²¹ AMR is abbreviation for “average minute ratings” and is related to percentage of viewers who were really watching TV at that particular time.

²² Agency for Electronic Media (2018) www.e-mediji.hr.

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(for example the talk show 'Latinica'). However, this period ended ten years ago. For a long time since then, the HRT has not supported any investigative journalism in its programme scheme. Instead, news programmes consistently tow the government line, using programmes to promote government ideology (liberal or conservative, depending on the government in office at any given time). Furthermore, whenever there is a political scandal or case of corruption, the HRT never takes the initiative to report it, only taking up the story after other media have done so.

This strong relationship with the government of the day was forged with the amendments to the *HRT Act* in 2012. This is due to the fact the Director-General of the media is elected by a majority vote of Members of Parliament and so are the majority of members of the Programme Council and the Supervisory Board. When the changes to the law were introduced in 2012, a social democratic government was in power while in the autumn of 2015 and in 2016 a Christian-Democrat-Patriotic coalition was in power. With the change in government, the management of the HRT changed as well, repeating the tried and tested method of immediately demoting managers and editors appointed during the term of the previous government and appointing new editors who are ideologically in line with new government policy to edit news programmes and anchor political talk shows. This first happened in 2012 and was repeated in 2016.

Furthermore, it has become commonplace not to have 'for and against' guests in the studio, leaving room for one-sided 'debates' only. This unprofessional approach comes with a price tag, precipitating the relentless plummeting of HRT ratings.

Adaptation to digital age

The analogue switch-off in Croatia commenced in January 2010 and it was completed by the end of the same year. In Croatia, which has a population of approximately 4.2 million and 1.5 million households²³, in January 2010, when the regional switch-off decreased to under, 60 percent of households received television signal via terrestrial analogue television.²⁴ The process of

²³ Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2011) Census 2011, www.dzs.hr (accessed 26 February 2019).

²⁴ Viktorija Car and Ivana Andrijašević (2013) How We Survived Digital Television Broadcasting Switchover: The Case of Croatia. *International Journal of Digital Television* 4 (3): 279-297. pp. 281-2.

digital transition did not significantly alter the domination of terrestrial signal reception. The reason may be that buying a digital receiver and connecting it to an existing TV set was the least expensive solution. Citizens received subsidies for buying digital receivers, without any other state support being provided for HRT digitalisation. The HRT was nevertheless privileged in comparison to commercial competitors because its specialised channels HRT3 and HRT4 were automatically allocated MUX B multiplex frequencies under the *HRT Act* (Article 50) while all new specialty commercial channels (DomaTV, RTL2, Sport television and two cable channels, Kapital Network and CMC) had to go to public tender in order to receive multiplex frequencies.²⁵

Citizens benefited from HTV digitalisation as two new specialty TV channels (HRT3 for films, culture and documentaries and HRT4 for news broadcasts) were introduced in addition to the general content TV channels (HRT1 and HRT2).

The HRT website (originally launched in August 1995) received a major overhaul in 2015 to improve its visual identity. In addition to news and information, [Hrt.hr](#) streams all HRT radio channels and offers some video-on-demand content. The mobile platform application HRTi was launched in autumn 2015. It is a multimedia service for listening and watching HRT radio and TV programmes live and on demand. A large proportion of HRT-produced programming is available on demand. HRT's radio and TV programmes are very active on social networks and have a prominent presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The process of programme digitalisation has helped the HRT radio and TV channels become more easily available to a significantly larger audience (via HRTi app, web streaming and social networks). However, it is not possible to ascertain if this has helped increase their influence and boost engagement with their audiences because no data is available about viewing and listening audiences or other kinds of active use of online and mobile platforms.

Current discussion in the country concerning the public service media

Two transformational changes affecting public service media in Croatia are under way. The first one started in the early 1990s. It continues to persist and involves cleansing programme content of ideological bias related to socialism

²⁵ Viktorija Car and Ivana Andrijašević (2012) *Mapping Digital Media – Croatia* (country report). London: OSF.

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and communism and imbuing it with fresh ideological content related to current government ideas and values. The second one, notably programme changes aiming to boost the ability to compete with commercial media, dates back to 1999 when the first commercial television obtained nationwide licence. This process intensified in 2004 when RTL was granted a nationwide licence. This promoted the HRT to change its programming in order to include trivial entertainment shows (e.g. talent competitions, soap operas, reality shows), with product placement becoming highly visible in the programmes. Public opinion is divided on this move. While there are groups of concerned citizens who are very critical about such commercialisation and trivialisation of programme content, larger segments of the audience either like or are indifferent to this development.

Public debates tend to focus on the first issue of imbuing programming with ideological content related to current government ideas and values. Since 2016, conservative values have been receiving increasing coverage on HRT programmes in line with current government ideology. For example, at the beginning of 2019 there was a talk show on HRT4 that was simultaneously broadcast on the radio. On the programme abortion was debated and both guests in the studio were against it. One-sided reporting is not consistent with professional journalism and tends to frame topics in a manner that divides the audience, channelling it into a 'we' and 'them' discourse. The 'we' camp is that of the supporters of a proposition and 'them' is the camp of others, non-supporters, the message being that 'we' should be against 'them'. By broadcasting such programmes, the HRT becomes a tool for social divisions.

In addition to these reasons for the decline in HRT programme quality, at the end of 2018 yet another issue came up and triggered a heated public debate. At the end of December 2018, the senior management of the HRT made strong allegations against their own journalists and other media outlets, as well as the Croatian Journalists Association (Hrvatsko novinarsko društvo, HND). The story had begun in September 2018 when HTV journalist Hrvoje Zovko was elected HND President and spoke up about censorship of the HRT. He was fired immediately and senior HRT managers justified this with alleged threats against and a physical assault of the Editor-in-Chief of HRT News Service.²⁶ This dispute is currently in court.

²⁶ Hnd.hr (2018) HRT to Withdraw Claims Targeting HND and its Representatives as Soon as Possible, 29 December, <https://www.hnd.hr/eng/hrt-to-withdraw-claims-targeting-hnd-cja-and-its-representatives-as-soon-as-possible> (accessed 26 February 2019). HINA (2019) "Zovko je dobio otkaz jer je prijetio i nasrnuo na urednicu". 24sata.hr, 4 March, <https://www.24sata.hr/news/zovko-je-dobio-otkaz-je-prijetio-i-nasrnuo-na-urednicu-617397> (accessed 20 March 2019).

This sparked a protest organised by journalists in Zagreb in March 2019, which took place outside of the HND building, under the motto 'You took the media, we will not give you journalism'. A large number of editors and journalist from different print and online media and the HRT²⁷ attended. At St. Marco square, in front of the Government building, protestors asked the Government to protect journalistic freedom and, among other things, for the HRT to drop 35 lawsuits filed against journalists and media outlets. The Croatian Journalists Association (HND) published on their webpage a live ticker on the number of lawsuits.²⁸

Conclusions and recommendations

The challenges of the never-ending transition of PSM in Croatia are largely attributable to the management crisis and especially the difficulties in achieving political independence. There is a general climate of the HRT lacking bright prospects and of professional journalistic standards no longer being upheld. Altogether, it leads to a crisis in HRT identity as public service media on account of the loss of public trust. In order to earn the trust of citizens, public service media must constantly enhance its independence, credibility, programme quality and diversity, respecting social plurality and the rights of minorities to speak up for their interests. This obligation derives from the public funding of the HRT.

Further, global media trends also affect the Croatian media landscape: media services and products are being increasingly commodified on a global scale; media content is increasingly commercialised; digitalisation and new technologies engendered new audience practices; social media competition is large and multifaceted; traditional linear delivery of programmes is either not recognised or eschewed by younger generations.

The Minister of Culture has announced that Croatia will finally, for the first time ever, produce a media strategy – a document that will set out the vision for the development of the media landscape in Croatia. Such strategy is urgently needed. To reiterate, it should emphasise the role of public service media but equally question its current position and role. The latter should be redefined as 20th century definitions no longer apply in a digitally mobile and

²⁷ Goran Borković (2019) Prosvjed koji je ujedinio novinare. Hnd.hr, 2 March, <https://www.hnd.hr/prosvjed-koji-je-ujedinio-novinare> (accessed 20 March 2019).

²⁸ Croatian Journalists Association, www.hnd.hr.

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networked society. The role of journalism and journalists must be emphasised and solutions found to return professional journalism to journalists. Trends like 'citizen journalism' and 'fake news' have caused enormous damage to journalism. This is so because if any citizen can be a journalist and news can indeed be fake, then nothing of what we were taught about journalism in the 20th century is valid any longer.

Considering the current situation of the HRT, a thorough programme analysis is required, following a public discussion on the future of PSM in Croatia. This analysis should consider the role of small independent not-for-profit media and the possibility of integrating them into the system of public financing. The system for electing senior managers and editors-in-chief should also be discussed to guard against political influence as it is obvious that parliamentary democracy in Croatia is not sufficiently mature to secure the political independence of public service media.

Having achieved this, including a change in management, the thorough process of HRT renewal may start with continuous education of present and future journalists and editors, deeply focused on professional journalistic standards and ethics. The HRT should really become the heart and the nucleus of professional, accountable and trustworthy journalism in Croatia.

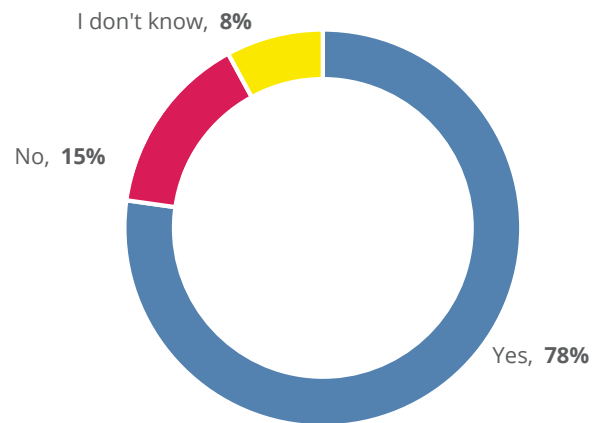


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Car was the founding Editor-in-Chief of the Media Studies journal (2010-2017). She is also a founding Chief-Coordinator of the regional conference Media Accountability (2010-2018). She was member of the HRT Programme Council (2011-2012).

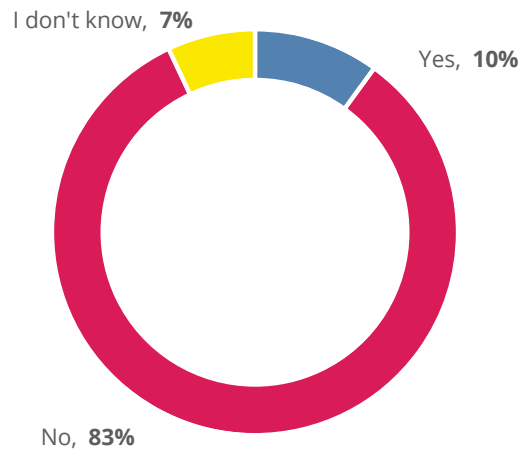
Opinion Poll Croatia

Chart 1: Are Public Service Media (PSM) important for democracy in your country? (Base: Total Croatian sample, in percent)



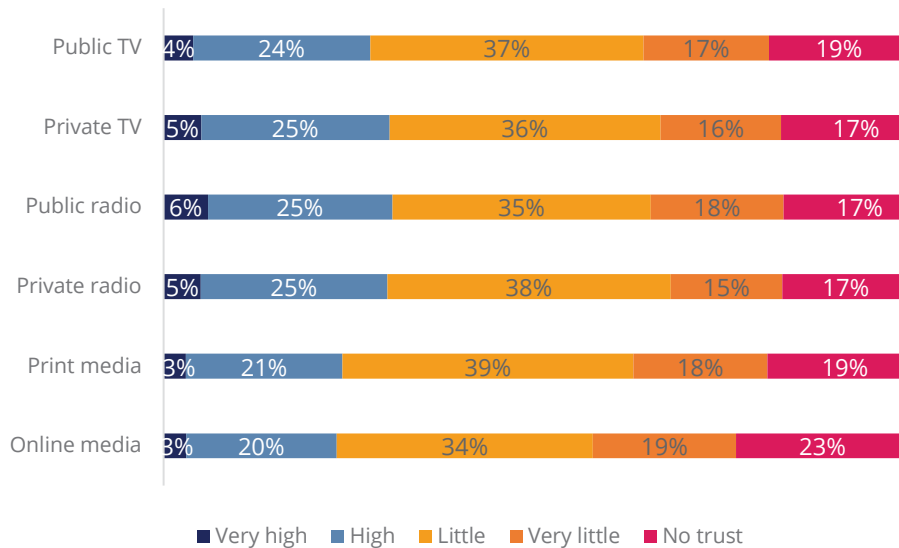
In keeping with Bulgaria, Croatians have greater appreciation of the importance of PSM for democracy than the citizens of other countries in the region – 78 percent (see Chart 1) as compared to 68 percent of total regional sample.

Chart 2: In your opinion, are PSM free from political influence in your country? (Base: Total Croatian sample, in percent)



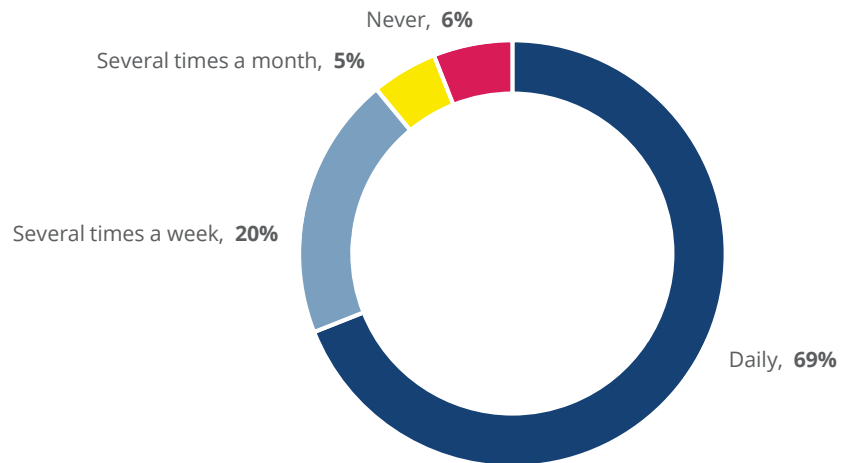
As compared to the rest of the region, less people believe that public service media are free from political influence. 8 out of 10 Croats believe that PSM are influenced by the political powers (see Chart 2). There is no significant difference concerning gender, age or education for this question.

Chart 3: How much trust do you have in following media? (Base: Total Croatian sample, in percent)



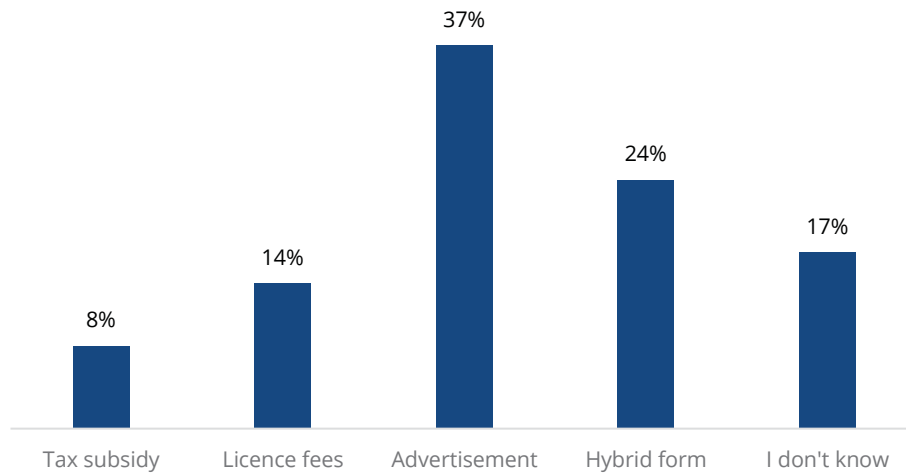
Croatia is among the countries in the region where citizens use media with reservations and do not place as much trust in them as the citizens of other countries in the region. Although PSM are believed to be under political influence, they are more trusted than print or online media. However, private broadcasters enjoy greater trust from respondents (see Chart 3). Public TV enjoys the greatest trust among citizens aged 18-29 years and over 64 years – both with 32 percent trust – and among those with primary education.

Chart 4: How often do you use the services of Public Service Media (PSM)?
(Base: Total Croatian sample, in percent)



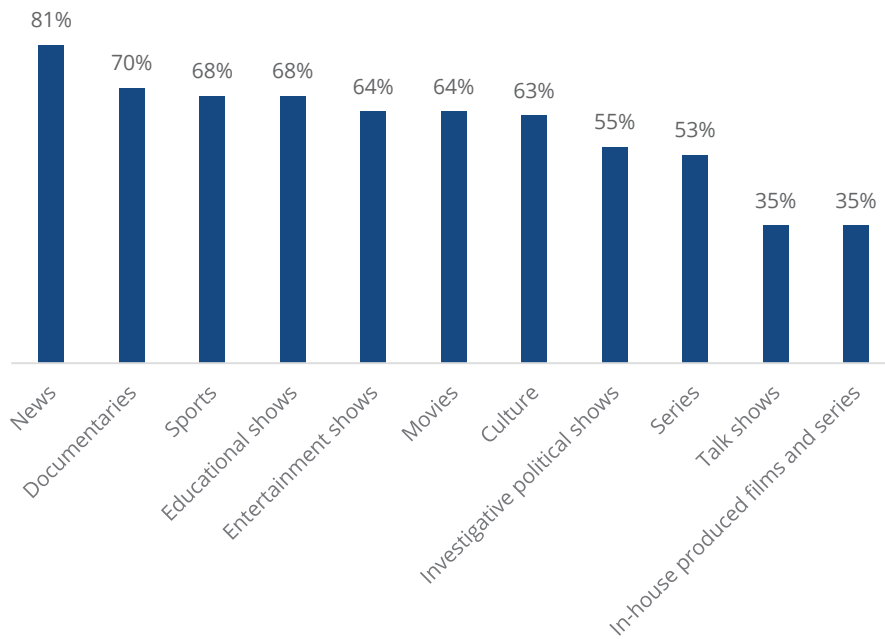
As compared to the region, Croatians together with Bulgarians use PSM most frequently. 69 percent of respondents use PSM on a daily basis (see Chart 4). The biggest difference among Croatian citizens is based on age – the respondents aged 18-29 years who use PSM daily (43 percent) is significantly lower than those in the age group 64+ years (90 percent).

Chart 5: What type of funding do you prefer for PSM? (Base: Total Croatian sample, in percent)



Most Croatian citizens believe that PSM should be funded from advertising, followed by a hybrid model. The current form of funding through licence fees is supported only by 14 percent of respondents. Tax subsidies are the least popular form of financing (8 percent).

Chart 6: What kind of content should PSM present? (Base: Total Croatian sample, in percent, multiple answers possible)



In terms of content, the expectations of Croatian citizens from PSM are higher than those of the citizens of other countries in the region. They expect to a higher degree than others to see news, sport programmes, documentaries, investigative political programmes and movies (see Chart 6). Except for the gender-based difference regarding sport content – 77 percent of men and only 60 percent women – there are no other significant differences among Croatians.