



Roma Media Regional Program 2003/4

**ROMA EMANCIPATION
AND INCLUSION
THROUGH ROMA MEDIA**

**SUPPORT TO ROMA MEDIA IN EE & SEE
AND ROMA MEDIA NETWORKING PROJECTS**

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0. PRESENTATION OF ORGANISATION

Medienhilfe was founded in 1992 as a Swiss based non-governmental and non-profit organization, with the aim to support the independent media and freedom of press in the area of the former Yugoslavia.

Medienhilfe is registered as a tax-exempted organization with the chamber of commerce and financially supported by the Swiss Foreign Ministry, by other European governments, by Swiss and international Foundations, by professional associations and other NGOs as well as by commercial enterprises and private donors.

Medienhilfe is run by a highly professional and dedicated staff from the head office in Zurich, Switzerland and by project coordinators partially based in the respective countries. A board of prominent and competent people from media, science and politics support the work of Medienhilfe through their counseling and advocacy.

Medienhilfe has established permanent contacts and co-operation with a number of independent media organizations. Over 60 media outlets have been supported during the last years, among them 4 networks composed of a number of particular media or infrastructure projects used by several media outlets.

Fields of our activities include the following:

- a) *Strategic and operational assistance to private independent and professional media in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe* with a strong focus on electronic minority media and cross-border media networking and co-productions.
- b) *Assistance and support for specific media productions* relevant for conflict development, social reconstruction and reconciliation, such as minority and diversity reporting, investigative journalism dedicated to fact and truth finding and documentaries addressing the issues of guilt and responsibility to promote reconciliation.
- c) *Direct financial and operational support to independent media organizations in the area of the former Yugoslavia*, which includes Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina (both the Federation of B-H and Serb Republic), Serbia, Montenegro, Kosov@ and Macedonia.
- d) *Research and analytical work*: reports and analyses of media issues in the region as well as a position and a role of media in a broader social context; action research on specific issues related media; reports and analyses of alternative sector (NGOs).
- e) *Strategy and policy papers and counseling on media issues in SEE* for governmental (Swiss, German, Irish) and inter-governmental (EU, Stability Pact) structures as well as for Swiss and international NGOs and foundations.
- f) *Public activities*: a) Bulleting (quarterly); b) Website with a variety of information in regard to media in the region www.medienhilfe.ch ; c) Organizing special meetings with prominent media and NGO representatives from the area and representatives of the Swiss authorities; d) Organizing public events with media and NGO representatives from the area of the former Yugoslavia e) providing expertise in the field of media development in Southeast Europe

Our criteria to choose grantees are as follows:

1. Media who are not owned or controlled by a state or para-state structures;
2. Media whose editorial policy is not controlled or influenced by any political party;
3. Media whose coverage complies with professional criteria and journalist ethics;
4. Media who have engaged against nationalism and have promoted dialogue, understanding and peaceful cohabitation of people with different ethnic and religious background;
5. Media who have been promoting civil society and democratic values;

Medienhilfe is *member of a closer media donors group*, which includes: Open Society Institute (offices in Brussels and Budapest, as well as national offices in each country), Swedish Helsinki Committee, Press Now (Netherlands), Norwegian People's Aid, IREX (USA) and Media Development Loan Fund (Prague).

Medienhilfe is *member of the Media Task Force of the Stability Pact*. In 2000 as member of the pool of the implementing organizations for realization of the emergency support package for independent media in Serbia initiated by the Stability Pact we implemented the funds made available by EDA PA IIIb and the Irish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Medienhilfe is *member of the expert team who drafted a strategy and policy paper for the EC support program for independent media in SEE*. The team included representatives of NGOs, governments (e.g. USA and Denmark), private foundation (OSI), Stability Pact and EC. Our contribution consisted of designing strategies for two among several defined priority fields: 1. minority media and 2. (co-)productions. *The paper served as the basis for designing a strategy paper for support in media field of the Stability Pact, adopted at the meeting of the Media Task Force in Brussels on October 10.*

Medienhilfe receives major funding from the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Minority media projects has made one of the most important components of Medienhilfe's support program. Since 2001 we have been supporting Roma media and program in Romanes on non-Roma media in Serbia, Kosov@ and Macedonia. The support has been carried out in a close cooperation with the OSI-NMP and the respective OSI country offices, mostly having the same grantees, sharing assessments and support strategies.

1. INFORMATION ON PROJECT

1.1 Title

**Roma Emancipation and Inclusion through Roma Media
– Support to Roma Media in EE & SEE and Roma Media Networking Projects**

1.2 Countries

EE: Check Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine

SEE: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosov@), Romania

1.3 Time frame

Two-year period: May 2003 – April 2005

1.4 Program components

1. Direct assistance to key media outlets
 - 1.1. Support to local community Roma broadcast media
 - 1.2. Support to program in Romani on non-Roma broadcast media
 - 1.3. Support to Roma news agencies
2. Roma Media Network

1.5 Brief description

Direct assistance to key media outlets

The support program presented here includes direct assistance to a selected number of Roma media, which represent key outlets in Romani language in their respective countries. It focuses on the broadcast media – both radio and TV – as well as on news agencies. Totally around 25 outlets in eight EE and SEE country will be included.

The program has a strong focus on the most important *local community broadcast Roma media*. For the regions with significant Roma population where Roma media do not exist, *the key non-Roma media with program in Romani language* are included. Finally, in the countries where neither of the two exist (e.g. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Romania), initiatives of local Roma communities to establish them should be supported.

Parallel to that, the existing *Roma news agencies* should be strengthened and new agencies should be established where they do not yet exist. This is particularly important for the countries with high percentage of Roma in overall population, like Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and Macedonia.

Assistance will include the following:

- Program development;
- Training – in journalistic skills, management and marketing as well as in use of new media technologies for networking purposes;
- Equipment necessary for media performance that fulfills standard technical requirements.

Roma Media Network

This program component will be carried out in phases, gradually building up of the network. Bearing in mind that most of the grantees have no experience and know-how in networking, as well as the fact of hard competition among Roma outlets for gaining a leading role in program cooperation and networking, each phase will be carried out carefully and with comprehensive preparation. The final result should be a proper functioning three regional sub-networks – radio, television and news agencies – which will be compatible and interlinked.

In the first phase regular contacts and communication among Roma media will be established and a common understanding of the networks' purposes, goals and their missions should be reached. Program exchange (the second phase) will start with background broadcasts, which do not require steady and frequent operational and coordination network activities. After adequate and compatible production equipment as well as a cost effective and efficient networking infrastructure are provided, the stations will perform regular program exchange (the third phase).

2. BACKGROUND

Roma media are important tool for fostering communication within and among Roma communities and providing means for preservation of Roma culture and language. Furthermore, Roma media are more and more getting on importance as tool for emancipation of Roma people, empowerment of their local communities and better inclusion of Roma into societies.

Because of a central place that oral story-telling has had in Roma tradition as well as due to a rather high illiteracy rate among Roma population, especially important role has been played by the broadcast Roma media, both radio and television.

Assessment of support provided for combating the major problems that Roma communities face to in all countries – poverty, living conditions, unemployment, and education – showed that the Roma consider projects carried out on the local community level as the most successful and efficient, and are the most confident with own community structures and leaders (e.g. UNDP assessments). Although no audience survey is done in regard to Roma, practices of Roma media show a particular success of local community broadcast outlets. This certainly has largely to deal with strong inside-community relations and identity.

On the other hand, more stable cooperation among Roma media, both within some particular country and across the country borders, has not emerged so far. While some Roma communities do have contacts and cooperation and some local Roma media exchange information, much is still based on an ad hoc exchange and private contacts. The lack of communication and networking among Roma media is widely seen as the key obstacle for facilitating broader public debate on relevant Roma issues both on the national (country-wide) and international level.

Roma are largely marginalized and even discriminated in all EE and SEE countries. Strong negative stereotypes are widely spread in mainstream societies, with not so rare occurrences of violence against Roma. Roma issues are mostly either under-represented or are covered in openly biased manner in mainstream media. Development of Roma news agencies, who can supply mainstream media with quality features related to Roma issues, can positively influence mainstream media coverage. Results achieved so far in this respect by the Roma Press Agency in Slovakia and the Roma Press center in Hungary are the best confirmation for that. News exchange as well as co-productions between Roma and mainstream media can be effective mean as well.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

3.1 General goals the project will achieve or contribute to

- Strengthening Roma identity through preserving Roma language and culture;
- Empowerment of local Roma communities and thus rise level of emancipation of Roma population;
- Improve conditions for public discussion in regard to status and rights of Roma and rising public awareness regarding this issue as well as the level of openness, understanding and tolerance towards Roma;
- The public knowledge and awareness in regard to Roma are improved and higher standards are applied in solving problems Roma communities are facing;
- Better inclusion of Roma into society, both on local and national level;

3.2 Detailed project objectives

- Enable stable operation for the selected Roma media outlets,;
- Stop staff fluctuation and stabilize news desks;
- Provide training, preferably in-house;
- Increase of in-house programming, in particular of information and education broadcasts;
- Rise level of program that serves community needs;
- Improve overall quality of in-house production, both content wise and technically;
- Enrich locally-oriented program with contents related to other Roma communities in the country as well as internationally;
- Strengthen solidarity among Roma media and subsequently their respective Roma communities;
- Initiate and develop program cooperation between Roma media and mainstream media, both through program exchange and co-productions;
- Develop and stabilize news and feature service on Roma issues for mainstream media in the respective countries;
- Make problems Roma are facing with a more prominent public issue and thus improve currently predominately negatively stereotyped image of minorities and facilitate inclusion into society;

3.3. Anticipated results

- Regarding their own long-term development, the Roma media included into this support program will be able to:
 - define their mission that is routing them into their respective local community which they should serve;

- produce higher quality of information and education program and thus better fulfill the goals and objectives;
- exchange information and reports with other Roma media and thus further rise quality of their programming;
- generate more income through sponsoring and to a lesser extent from advertising revenue;
- develop and strengthen their organizational structure and management;
- Speaking about Roma communities, the media supported will:
 - Reach a bigger part of Roma population;
 - Reach bigger share of majority audience as well;
 - Serve as a link connecting local Roma communities within the given countries and internationally;
- By providing content done in more professional manner, Roma media will have better chances for cooperation with mainstream media (co-productions for the broadcasters and news services for the agencies), and thus will be able to make a more significant impact on audience in general.

4. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

First year (May 2003 – April 2004)

Direct assistance to selected Roma media outlets:

1. Assessment of the grantees, especially those with whom Medienhilfe did not work so far, in order to
2. Based on the assessment, the following will be defined:
 - the grantees' mission statements
 - program (re) design in order to meet needs of local Roma communities the best way possible;
 - improvement of structural and organizational aspects;
 - training needs;
 - equipment needs;
3. Providing consultants for training, mostly in-house training;
4. Assisting in program development (changes in existing broadcasts and launching new ones);
5. Providing funds for covering the grantees costs, primarily focusing on production, but when necessary including part of operational costs and equipment as well;
6. Coordination with other donors in order to make sure the support is provided in the most effective way;
7. Monitoring and evaluation of development of each grantee;
8. Assessment of situation in the countries where no Roma exists and exploring possibilities that some existing groups of Roma journalists, in cooperation and with support from local Roma communities and NGOs, establish local community broadcast media;

Roma media network

1. Organizing a seminar in which all Roma media included into this support program will take part. Through various workshops and panels, the following should be achieved:
 - defining cooperation principles and guidelines;
 - formulating a mission statement of the future network(s);
 - choosing appropriate type of networking and defining networks' structures, relations and roles of its members;
2. Starting with program exchange:
 - reviewing of productions together with partners and selecting those to be exchanged;
 - providing funds for translation and subtitling when/if needed;
 - evaluation of results achieved;
 - discussing with partners experiences based on the method of "lessons learnt" and "best practices" and defining measures for improvements;

Second year (May 2004 – April 2005)

Direct assistance to selected Roma media outlets:

1. Further program development of the media included into the support program and improvement of structural and organizational aspects;
2. Providing equipment needed for raising level of production quality as well as for program exchange;
3. Continuing with training in journalist skills;
4. Providing in-house consultancy and training in regard to management and fundraising skills;

Roma media network

1. Organizing two seminars where networking issues will be discussed and defined:
 - defining networks and making them operational;
 - linking radio, TV and news agencies in each country on a national level;
 - linking regional networks of radio, TV and news agencies;
2. Establishing cooperation with mainstream media and starting with program exchange.

5. STRUCTURES OF COOPERATION

Medienhilfe cooperates directly with the local media outlets to be granted. We provide them all other kind of support apart from funding: consulting, moral encouragement, assessment of their projects, inputs for their long-term plans, suggestions for solution of difficulties, contacts to other donors and alike.

Being a part of closer donors group, making sure there is no double-funding of projects and having opportunities to go for matching funds in order to cover the grantees' needs. Apart of the OSI-NMP, we closely cooperate with the OSI Foundations in the countries where we work, with IREX, Norwegian's People Aid (NPA), the Swedish Helsinki Committee (SHC), Press Now and the MDLF. Besides shared funding, we regularly exchange assessments and reports; update information on media situation; exchange projects and occasionally perform

joint visits to our partners. Medienhilfe Project Manager for Macedonia is based in Skopje and has served, together with the local OSI person in charge of media program, as coordinator for the International Media Fund, an informal coordination for support to projects in Macedonia of the abovementioned organizations. Matching funds with the local OSI Foundations are possible in almost all countries. The SHC started in this year to support Roma media in Macedonia, NPA, MDLF and Press Now are considering continuation of support to Roma media in Serbia, while IREX will continue providing support in Serbia and Bulgaria.

Bearing in mind that the funds made available by the OSI-NMP and the Swiss MFA are insufficient to cover this comprehensive support program, Medienhilfe and OSI-NMP will look for strategic partners for matching of funds or joint funding. Here we most of all think of European Commission, who has in the last years extensively funded Roma projects in the new member-states of the EU as well as the candidate countries in the SEE. Furthermore, readiness for bilateral support will be explored among MFAs of particular countries, such as Sweden, Germany, Denmark and the UK.

6. PROCEDURE

The projects supported within this program will be realized during the years 2003 and 2004. Final project evaluation will be carried out and the final report, including finances, will be submitted till the end of March 2005.

Project realization is carried out in compliance with obligations defined in the contracts with the granted local media organizations and the international partner organizations. The grantees are obliged to send regular narrative progress reports and financial reports and submit final evaluation report after completing the project. Any eventual change of contractual obligations in project realization which is not previously agreed, causes consequences in stopping temporarily further support, till the matter is resolved by an agreement of all parties involved (OSI-NMP, Medienhilfe and a grantee). About such eventual cases, OSI-NMP will be immediately informed and consulted about measures to be taken. Medienhilfe performs project monitoring and evaluation, based on procedure and criteria elaborated in the chapter 7 of this application (evaluation).

8. EVALUATION

Continued project monitoring and evaluation make an important part of the project realization. Final evaluation report is made available after a project completion. Accordingly, reports related to the grants requested within this application for the year 2003 will be provided **latest till April 30, 2004**, while those related to the year 2004 will be provided till **latest April 30, 2005**.

Monitoring activities to be implemented are as follows:

- Regular project visits by the *Medienhilfe* project managers (twice per year; in Macedonia permanent field presence provided) as well as visits of the program director/executive director when needed;
- Reviewing a content of the grantees' production through media monitoring and direct production copies;

- Detailed reviewing of the bookkeeping and financial reports of the grantees in order to check whether the grants are properly used;
- Adjusting the grantees budgets in cases of major unexpected changes.

Project **evaluation** is also continuously carried out and comprises the following:

- Regular narrative and financial progress reports as well as final evaluation report from the grantees (self-evaluation);
- In-depth discussions based on evaluation scheme and indicators with journalists and editors, editor-in-chief, and management;
- Exchange of monitoring and evaluation results with other donors supporting the grantees;
- Providing in-depth analyses of situation of the respective Roma communities as well as of major Roma-related issues in the respective countries and in the whole region;
- Evaluation of the grantees in context of their role within their respective communities;
- Compiling narrative progress reports as well as a final evaluation report.

The final extensive internal evaluation will be provided together with the final report and will examine the project activities, outputs, outcomes, objectives, indicators and goals.

Criteria for evaluation include the following:

- Reports provided by the monitoring;
- The extent to which the grantees manage to maintain the same or further improve an amount of in-house information, current affairs and education production in their overall program;
- Trends in a level of quality of in-house production;
- Trends in activities related to program exchange and cooperation (number of joint projects, scope of joint activities, etc.);
- Type of editorial concept (changes in program scheme, new broadcasts);
- Level of self-supportiveness (management results, marketing income, sponsoring, community support);
- Social impacts (share of the targeted Roma audience within the respective community as well as audience in general within the area of coverage), information source for other media, production resource for other media, community responsiveness as well as resonance in public discussion of issues opened by the, etc.)

9. CONCLUSION

After realization and evaluation of projects granted and the complete support program, Medienhilfe will estimate need for continuation of support. Next phases of support, containing precise elaboration of a type, purpose and level of support, will be delivered together with a final evaluation report.