

Tuning in to Diversity 2010

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Tuning in to Diversity 2010 Conference Budapest, 26 February 2010 – Afternoon session

“Minorities in broadcast media in Central and Eastern Europe” workshop for NGOs and PSBs/mainstream media representatives

Which experiences can be reported in Central and Eastern Europe in the last years? What is working well and what should be improved? The “Roma case”: good and bad practices from broadcast media. *Report by Gabriella Horn (Center for Independent Journalism, Budapest)*

Chair: Brankica Petkovic (Peace Institute, Slovenia)

Presentations: A best practice and a dilemma from the Bulgarian TV

“Together”, weekly TV programme of Bulgarian National Television by Miglena Kazaryan

“Together” is a weekly program, which reflects on the problems, the cultural and ethnical peculiarities of the different traditional minorities in Bulgaria. The different shows are built on documentary principle, which gives an opportunity of the representatives of the different ethno-religious groups to talk about them selves. Accent of the movies is put on the theme for living together of the different communities in Bulgaria.

A referendum proposed by the nationalistic party Ataka to abolish the news in Turkish on Bulgarian public television and then dropped... by Yuliya Manolova (Bulgaria).

The Bulgarian National TV broadcasts a 7 minutes news bulletin in Turkish every day of the week. Many representatives of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria don't speak Bulgarian fluently, so this is a chance for them to learn the news in their mother tongue. A few months ago the right parliament party “Ataka” suggested that there should be a referendum to abolish the news in Turkish. The prime minister supported the idea at first and the topic caused wide political and public debate before it was dropped. A pure example how minority issues sometimes are used for political confrontation. It was also an attempt to provoke certain reaction in the society and also to interfere in the Bulgarian National Television policies.

The focus of this workshop was: which are the developments of integrating minorities in the Central and East European region. Which changes have taken place? What can the media do to improve cooperation between NGOs, minority communities and the media?

“Diversity is not on the agenda” said one of the participants in the workshop, talking about public service broadcasting in the region. It is a politically correct move to start a minority program but only if it actually reacts to the real needs of the given minority and only if it involves minority professionals in the production.

Turkish news bulletin on Bulgarian TV: it is only formally a minority broadcast, because it is mostly nothing but a translation of a mainstream news program, not sensitive to minority issues, thus it does not fulfil its mission, it has very low viewing rates and no impact.

Sometimes the excuse is used that minority journalist lack objectivity, and they are left out of production.

NGOs can help by serving as a watchdog and by making journalists more sensitive to minority issues.

Suggested solutions: trainings are needed for journalists and journalism courses need to be improved in terms of issues related to diversity representation.

A study should be produced to assess the state of affairs(PBS media and minorities) – if there is not one available already.