

## **Project Title: Promotion of Gender Ethical Journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Note: Majority of negative gender representations referred to in the Media Monitoring Reports given below are identified in „Dnevni avaz“ Media Group, a media with the highest circulation in BiH. It needs to be taken into consideration that non of „Dnevni avaz“ media workers has ever attended any of the events organized within the Project even though they have been invited to attend every event.**

### **Media Monitoring Report for April 2012**

The show "Red Carpet" on Nova TV broadcast a story about supposedly "increased interest" of Croatian girls from the former Yugoslavia to be included in the porn business and making of pornographic movies.

The story was not justified by actual facts, as it was illustrated with a few of the previously known cases. Although the journalist was trying to be critical of the "great interest" for the porn business, the approach was still sensationalistic.

Some of the interviewed people even openly advocated for the expansion of such work, arguing that in times of crisis, young girls easily opt for this "job" because of lack of money. Such journalistic stories are examples of poor treatment of topics and sensationalism via alleged attempts to seriously talk about important issues.

Murder of a young girl in Mostar was a hot topic of the media in BiH, because the killer was a policeman. The public were presented with all relevant data on the grounds that it was a crime "of passion." The newspaper "Dnevni Avaz" published a detailed story about the murder from the perspective of the murdered girl's family.

The reporter skilfully avoided all the pitfalls of sensationalism that can occur while processing this topic and offered a good story with lots of unknown and important details. It is important that the focus of journalistic interest was centred on the personality of the murdered girl in a way that her mother's statement was quoted. The integrity of the victim was protected, and readers are given a well-written and professional story.

"Dnevni list" prepared an interesting story about a Bosnian girl who is competing for the title of Miss Sweden. The article content is not disputable and contains information appropriate for the topic. They published two photos of the girl, one of which was in a bathing suit. The problem of this article is that next to the image of a girl who wants to be Miss Sweden are posted naked pictures of unknown girls, as well as commercials for "hot sex line".

Thus, this young girl has been brought in the wrong context, and the superficial reader might get the impression that the published photographs belong to the same story. Proper editorial

reaction should have been to clearly separate the advertising part of the explicit content from the article, which has nothing to do with "sex hot lines."

An article about a woman who was bitten by dogs is another example of poor use of photos illustrating the story. Images of the unfortunate woman during her medical treatment in a hospital appear in the otherwise well-done article on the increasing number of dangerous stray dogs in Sarajevo.

Photographs illustrate very well the consequences of the attack, but "Dnevni avaz" editors must strive to protect the identity of the victim. It is completely unnecessary to show the victim's face in such cases, even if she consented to be photographed. The consequences of dog bites could have been very well illustrated by close-ups and there was no need to display the entire figure of the middle-aged women, and certainly not her face.

Newspapers "Oslobodjenje" published a very good interview with American expert in women's participation in politics, Stephanie Foster. This is a good example of how important political topics on the role of women in politics can be made in a quality and understandable way.

The interview was informative, educational and interesting, and the reporter asked a few very important questions regarding the role of women in politics.

"Dnevni Avaz" published a very interesting article about a woman, a police officer, who survived a terrorist attack by bomb on the police station in Bugojno. The journalist brought a comprehensive view of the policewoman's thoughts after returning to her duty, including her dissatisfaction with the behaviour of some colleagues. This is a very good example of promoting women in public.

The weekly magazine "Slobodna Bosna" devoted a large space to the alleged spy affair of a Bosnian politician by the present Dutch Princess, Mabel Wisse Smit. The entire article, accompanied by images of the Dutch Royal Family, is only based on the opinion of a former Dutch intelligence officer, who is the author of a book on the same topic, with no attempts to hear both sides.

"Slobodna Bosna" was obviously playing on the card of the topic's appeal to the public, given the involvement of the Dutch Royal Family, making this article, on the alleged woman spy of the Bosnian diplomats during the Dayton peace negotiations, an example of sensationalist journalism. A serious issue as this was dealt without sufficient professionalism and with obvious intent to attract the readers with the "glamorous topic".

Other BiH media had a similar approach to this topic, but some of them (like FACE TV) still tried to get the other side, the Bosnian diplomat Muhamed Sacirbey, who was involved in this issue.

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**Media Monitoring Report for May 2012**

After the workshops for journalist held within the project, media started analysing the issue of gender ethical journalism more detailed. One article that dealt with the issue used parts of the “Novi put” leaflet that was designed for the purpose of the project.

<http://www.bljesak.info/web/article.aspx?a=cc72cc4a-1334-4b62-bc89-58eee4dcdc57&c=3c3fcd98-f64c-48fc-a8de-6dbe>

One of the most important media topics in BiH was a story about finding of a certain Sienger Betina, a German citizen who was brutally abused by her mother and other family members in a village in the north-west of Bosnia. The media dedicated huge attention to this case. At the beginning journalists acted cautiously, protecting identity of a battered girl, but presenting many embarrassing details about the ways in which Betina was abused.

However, it did not take long, for the unhappy girl’s picture to appear, first on the Internet, and later in other printed media.

Identification of the victim had no justification in this case, because it was not the essence of this problem. As a positive covering of this case, we can point out a story of TV Al Jazeera Balkans, which was very informative and did not deal with unconfirmed information, nor disclosed the visual identity of the victim. Unfortunately, most other media, especially on the Internet and print media did not respect the principle of protection of victims, as was binding by Media Editing Codex and the Press Council Codex.

A murder of a woman and severely wounding of the other in Bihac shook the public in BiH. Media reports about this tragedy were mainly balanced and without sensationalism. All media have pointed to the bizarreness of this cruel act, as women were killed because they were selling strawberries at a lower price than the competition! Although the information about the case and the course of the investigation were appropriate, they missed the opportunity to address this very bizarre phenomenon of violence and its roots.

Dnevni avaz continues with a completely inappropriate way of following the case of Dana Skrba, who is charged with the brutal murder. After writing about alleged pregnancy of the indicted, Avaz reports about her alleged serious illness of intestinal cancer she has been suffering from since earlier. This kind of information, just as in earlier cases, is absolutely irrelevant for the course of investigation. Particularly worries the fact that the information was given to the newspaper by her legal counselor and Deputy Director of Prison in Sarajevo. If journalists violate rules and the Codex by reporting in this way, then professionals should be the ones to criticize it, rather than encouraging it.

Disclosure of information from private life of public and celebrity persons is generally

allowed only if it is of "justified public interest." A story published in Dnevni Avaz certainly cannot be classified into this category. A famous singer announces his divorce, and even claims that he will "celebrate it with friends!" Information is made only on the basis of a telephone conversation between the singers and a journalist, so there is no chance for public to find out what does the "other side" think of this. A photo of his wife kissing the famous singer, as he looks towards the camera, is placed next to the text. This was done in order to create the impression that the singer absolutely controls the situation, and that the women had a subordinate position all along.

Publishing of so called "bizarre news" from the world is a mass phenomenon of the media in BiH, even those that are considered "serious". The editors believe that this information raises circulation and income too. Dnevni list also published a story about two lovers from Kenya who "could not be separated because of black magic." Make no mistake; the text is placed next to the image of the sexual act with the comment "unhappy love couple". It seems that the photo was the basic reason why this news was published, thus placing inappropriate erotic and sexual content under the news segment in the newspaper.

Generally speaking, the treatment of journalists in BiH is very bad, while the position of women - journalists is even more difficult. Two events from Banja Luka support this fact. Dnevni avaz correspondent from this town was attacked in her newsroom and the reason was her reporting. Another, perhaps even worse incident, happened when Republika Srpska President and the leader of the strongest political party there, Milorad Dodik, publicly insulted a BETA woman correspondent at a press conference, ordering her to leave the building. "Get out of here" - said Dodik.

These two events are the best proof of the environment in which the women journalists are working in BiH. A particular problem is that there was no appropriate reaction to these incidents neither by the public, nor by the politicians. In the end it all came down only to the reaction of the BiH journalists' associations, leaving this scandalous behavior of the politicians unpunished.

The case of a woman, who died after falling from a balcony, is another example of inappropriate use of images with news stories. Specifically, next to the correctly written story about the death of the woman were placed two photos that show the face of the deceased at the time of providing her medical assistance. In order to protect the identity of the victim and her family, publication of these photos is totally inappropriate.

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**Project Title: Promotion of Gender Ethical Journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Project Holder: Association “Novi put”**

### **Media Monitoring Report for June 2012**

On June 9, 2012, i.e. after the second workshop of “Novi put” within the Project, that was held in Sarajevo within the Project, the Association of BiH journalists launched an initiative for establishment of an institution of Press Ombudsperson, claiming that BiH journalists were put under pressure whilst performing their job but also exposed to threats quite often.

Using politicians in order to produce media scandals is a phenomenon that is increasingly spreading; with or without reason. This time we would like to point out media reports about the alleged orgies of the former Croatian President, Stjepan Mesic, with girls from Serbia. Almost all media in BiH carried the news from Serbia without an attempt to further explore the topic and without checking its content. To make matters worse, the source of this information refers to the person who takes part in the alleged solicitation of the girls, without any concrete information or evidence.

In addition, the former president of Croatia (who is almost 80!) is shown in the company of two girls – hosts at the tennis tournament, to make the readers believe in this story. The damage has been caused to those girls listed in the story, because they were mentioned as a part of “the high prostitution” without presenting any valid evidence.

A similar example of apparently well-organized prostitution among models and singers once again comes from Belgrade. Without naming those engaged in prostitution, but also without valid proofs, a story has been published to produce a scandal, which, most probably, doesn’t exist.

“I took from him what I wanted” – is a headline in one daily newspaper in which a woman claims to be in a relationship with a much younger man only to have a child.

The identity of the person has not been revealed, but the readers have been informed in details about her previous failed relationships and the need to meet her maternal instincts, “since the time passes”. Through promoting these examples, the media forget the moral side of this story, or morally questionable side of it.

The woman, only given with initials, did not tell what made her to go out in public with such a sensitive story, especially since the alleged father, who is not mentioned even with initials, did not have anything to say, and she argues that she does not want anything from him.

Because of all this, there is a serious doubt that the whole story is fabricated for the purpose of creating “strong commercial story”.

Quite a different example is published in the same newspaper (D.Avaz). This time it deals with a woman, whose identity is disclosed, who is seeking alimony for her daughter, born in the relationship with a French citizen, who was working in the EU Police Mission (EUPM).

The Policeman with French citizenship left BiH, and the person with whom he apparently lived in a marriage, gave birth to his child.

Coverage of this topic is justified given the consent of the person to speak for the newspaper. It is also good that the story is illustrated by a photo in which identity of the child is protected by "blurring" of the face, which is consistent to the Press Code, requiring protection of the rights of children.

Publishing of bizarre news is one of the most common ways to increase reading and viewing of media, whether the news is about a mother who ate her baby's brain, or a woman who is pregnant with her own son.

For analysis of this media approach it does not matter whether or not these information are correct, but the reason why they are published. Editors apparently think that such news bring better circulation.

The political organization of women in BiH public space is generally treated as less important news compared to political actions of their male counterparts. Announcement on forming of "women's alternative government of BiH", was accompanied by only small text and without any attempt to further clarify this issue.

Everything remains only on bare facts, even though this topic is very interesting and important not only for women in BiH.

Women who are engaged in business are not common in BiH. Each example is therefore a particularly valuable and should be given special importance. D. Avaz published a story about Elizabeth Josipovic, a successful businesswoman, who developed the business of manufacturing furniture in Prijedor. This positive example of women in business was treated well and with lots of information.

European championship in football will be remembered by a media scandal in which two cheerleaders of Croatian national team showed their breasts, and allowed an opposing team fan to touch them.

This event has been shown in all media in a completely sensationalist and lascivious manner accompanied by photos of their naked breasts. Some have gone even further by putting the Irish fan in the center of media attention. He is presented as a "legend", while these cheerleaders are treated solely as "bare flesh".

Although they put themselves into this position, the media coverage of this event is an example of reducing women to objects, especially when it comes to nudity and sex.

The news from Mostar on wounding of a young girl by her ex boyfriend is an example of how to handle a sensitive issue without violating the code of journalistic editing. The text on the accident is informative and well made, and since there are minors involved, their identities are protected and their full names are not being disclosed.

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### **Media Monitoring Report for July 2012**

Mutual insults and gossip among journalists is nothing new in BiH. However, such approach of media get even more attention when the subject of media machinations and intrigues are women journalists. "Dnevni Avaz" published an article about a woman editor of the rival daily newspaper "Oslobodjenje", with an interesting title "Megaphone of the Mafia". The text presented very serious accusations against the editor, although the author of this article made no attempt to explain them in details nor document them! In addition, the entire text was written from the perspective of the author and without presenting opinion of the person who is accused of allegedly representing the mafia. This is an example of frivolous journalistic approach, which is especially problematic because the target of the media attack is a woman journalist.

A great public interest in BiH was caused by the "affair" of broadcasting a documentary film about a man who saved local Bosniaks, in the predominantly Croatian city of Ljubuski in Western Herzegovina, from ethnic cleansing. The film had already sparked numerous protests primarily by the local media, who were insulting the author of the film, Svetlana Broz, and the wife of the hero of the film, who died in the meantime, Štefica Galic. Despite protests and threats the film was publicly broadcasted in Ljubuski, but the real problems arose later, when Ms Galic was brutally beaten on the street with insults and threats. The local media from Ljubuski, especially internet portals, largely contributed to creating the atmosphere of public lynch, that published many articles with offensive content in order to discredit the author and the wife of the hero, Nedeljko Galic, to whom the film was dedicated. And while the media in the rest of the country reported about the film with restraint and without any attempt to take sides, local media in Western Herzegovina acted extremely unprofessionally and with the apparent aim to discredit protagonists of this story in any way possible. The case finally came to the attention of OSCE, which means that one could finally speak about how to control internet space in BiH in order to prevent spreading of inflammatory and hate speech, especially against women.

Media coverage of life and work of many self-proclaimed or really successful female models generally boils down to stereotypes and stereotyping, that it is a comfortable and a well-paid job in which there is not much trouble. One daily newspaper gives a story entitled: Rejoicing High Fees, about a little-known model, who announces her huge success in the modeling scene of Turkey. The alleged great success, however, is not explained by any concrete facts, but merely states that the model "expects jobs from famous designers and fashion companies". This text can easily mislead readers, especially young girls who want success at any cost, because it does not offer anything other than final opinions and attitudes. The apparent self-promotion of the little-known model is probably a good move only for her, but journalists are not exempted from liability for presenting the story that suffers from a serious lack of facts.

On a similar trail is a photo-story published by almost all newspapers and media in BiH. It

deals with a famous millionaire from the world of show business caught in the intimate embraces with girls-models considerably younger than him. The story is presented without any attempt to discuss this issue and the only aim of such texts is pure sensationalism. Of course, people are free in choosing their partners, but that does not mean that such examples can be presented without a critical attitude.

Sensationalism at any cost is a major determinant when it comes to stories about famous people - whether it's divorce or some trivial events. Thus, divorce of, allegedly, the richest Bosnian woman, who has recently separated from her husband, a banking expert and millionaire, was given a huge publicity. This divorce is presented as an idyllic event, which raises the question: Why this divorce happened in the first place? The text is an obvious self-promotion of the lady in question, and her appearance in the press is accompanied with a picture of her smiling, probably happy because of division of the common wealth.

Another example are trivialities from the marital life of a famous Croatian singer and one of millionaires from Serbia. The singer was accompanied by cameras while doing "shift as a waitress" in a cafe owned by her husband, presenting a bunch of completely irrelevant family details, which are so trivial that they do not deserve any attention. The aforementioned examples are evidence of the increasing trivialization of the media in BiH who are giving space to irrelevant topics at the expense of really important issues for women.

One of the biggest problems in functioning of media in BiH are also news stories in the "black chronicles" dedicated to trials and police investigations. We note the case of a certain woman, who is a public servant and who was forced to come forward and publicly deny allegations that she was involved in cultivation of marijuana plants, because of the police investigation involving her husband. Not only has she denied any connection, but she also claims that she is actually divorcing her husband, and that she is in "poor relations" with him. The news story was done quite correctly, especially since the person whom they interviewed gave her consent, but this is an evidence of the so-called "pressure of environment and community", so that individuals - especially women, are forced to reveal details about their private lives. Another example is imposition of fines to a former police officer who admitted killing a girl. Unlike the sensationalistic reporting of the murder, the official recognition of guilt and sentencing was done in the vast majority of the media quite correctly. This is a proof that the media can report correctly when they want, but that the pressure of so called "exclusivity" at all costs is very much present.

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### **Media Monitoring Report for August 2012**

There are still only few women in important positions in BiH. This is a consequence of our heritage and prejudices about women in managerial positions. One such case has received big public attention when the inspector in the field of higher education challenged PhD of a young lady economist. Newspaper “Oslobodjenje” has written about it in great details by presenting opinion of the challenged economist. The text is good and based on facts, but on the other hand lacks opinion from the other side, the inspector in question.

Can BiH have a "female government" and who would be in it? This question was initiated by Helsinki Citizens' Assembly with support of the Open Society Fund. Media in BiH gave a lot of attention to this question, giving names of the candidates, as well as other details related to this action. Although it has no effect on the exercise of our authority, such public actions have a huge impact on public opinion, and on the promotion of successful women. In societies such as BiH, which are still predominantly ruled by male, one such action and reporting on it is a proof of openness of BiH media space, but also of the existence of women who could perform the most important functions in the state.

Conveying an article from the German newspaper “Bild”, one BiH daily newspaper published a touching story of a woman raped by a person who kept her imprisoned just to get her pregnant. The article is a true example of how such sensitive cases should be treated by media. The text is illustrated with only neutral photos, while the identity of the victim is protected by published only her name, not a surname. The other details of this story were launched in order to provide information, but not the identity of the victim alone. Unfortunately, this approach is not the practice in BiH media. In similar cases, some of the local media published not only the victim’s identity, but also a photo of the victim, which is absolutely unacceptable and inconsistent with the Code of Media Editing.

Quite the opposite example is noted in the case of Dana Skrba, a woman who is accused of brutally killing a man in Sarajevo. From day one of this case, that shook BiH public, photos of the lady suspect appear in the mass media accompanied by details of her intimate life. “Dnevni avaz” even ran the photo with the woman in handcuffs with headlines "A pregnant woman was transferred to the prison in Tuzla." The newspaper dedicated a whole page with four photos of the suspect, which were published even though the woman herself opposed to it!

This is a proof that the official police and court authorities have to work much harder on the protection of personal integrity of suspects, even when it comes the the most serious crimes such as cruel murders.

Sex scandals that implicate high-ranking politicians are usually very interesting "media commodities", including the case of the former Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi. The case is filling media programs and newspaper columns in BiH, even more because one of the girls

involved in this sex scandal originates from BiH. The article from a newspaper was conveyed in most of the media in BiH, with the obligatory note that the lady who organized the sex parties for Berlusconi originates from BiH. This bizarre detail has thus become more important than the story itself, which involves a lot of money, power, and prostitution. None of those who cited the article attempted to convey the essence of the story, but they were sure to report that the main protagonist was reportedly pregnant with Berlusconi.

Publication of touching intimate confessions of women is always a demanding job, even if the main protagonist of the story agrees to be the subject of public interest. A daughter of a killed war hero complained to a daily newspaper that she could not acquire BiH citizenship because she was born and lives in another country (Croatia). Besides, her mother divorced her father long ago, and was advised to give up current citizenship if she wants to become a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The story, presented in details and with many emotional dilemmas, is a good example of a journalistic reportage about the so-called "little people".

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**Project Holder: Association "Novi put"**

### **Media Monitoring Report for September 2012**

The trial of the younger female person for killing an elder man is still one of the top issues in BiH media. Since the trial began, the media seem to be more interested in details of her private life than the trial itself. BiH media continue to report persistently and with sensationalism on her health conditions and the fact that she is pregnant. Rather than focusing on the case and the facts themselves, most attention has been directed to "attractive information." This just proves once again that for the media in BiH, the scandal is more important than correct reporting.

Two famous female celebrities in BiH, have asked the police to examine whether they were beaten and abused, in what was supposed to be a "routine police control." An extensive article published in the newspaper is well processed and contain plenty of well grounded information. Everything is substantiated with images of alleged traces of abuse that these women sustained. This is a good example of high-quality text, which is made with an abundance of information and well-placed topic.

Great public and media attention in Mostar and BiH has been brought to the story of the alleged sex in a public place in the city park in Mostar. The theme is mostly covered in the media in a spectacular way, and illustrated with secretly captured photos, which allegedly show the couple during the sexual act. But the picture does not only fail to provide any evidence, but is essentially problematic, the content of which does not correspond to the facts. The identity of the "lovers" is somewhat protected with "smokescreen faces", but everything else seems fake and sensationalistic. Most of the comments were pretty sexist and call for sanctions. Media and journalists missed the opportunity to analyze this story as a social phenomenon, and have turned to just grabbing headlines and texts with no real content.

The emergence of women in the context of business success is still a rare theme in the Balkans media. Evening Gazette - BiH Edition, tells a story about two women who have achieved a lot in a very demanding "male job". Specifically, it's about two women who had a key contribution in finding oil at a site in Croatia. The story is very affirmative, and shows

how a woman can perform the traditional "men's jobs" equally successful.

In the month of September municipal elections were held in BiH. Generally speaking, the media have devoted little attention to women candidates. One of the reasons is probably a bad election campaign, and prejudices about women politicians.

However, one should point out the article published in a newspaper on the call of the Helsinki Parliament of Citizens of Banja Luka to vote for women. The text presented both good and bad examples of women's involvement in politics, and is substantiated with why the impact of women in political events should be even higher.

In the last few years, crime is becoming an increasing problem in BiH. Dnevni Avaz reported on a case of an old woman who had a heart attack after the armed robbery. The old woman was robbed in her own apartment and then beaten. This tragic story is well covered with a number of interesting and important details. The text is illustrated with appropriate photographs. These kinds of texts are evidence of how the themes of tragedies can be reported with quality and without sensationalism.

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## **Media Monitoring Report for October 2012**

Attitude towards women - journalists in BiH is still very problematic. Besides having difficulty to break through to the editor's positions, women in the media are subjects to stronger attacks by politicians. One such case is an example of a journalist Ljiljana Kovacevic from Banja Luka, who has been criticized and insulted by notorious President of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik for a long time. On this occasion, BiH media conveyed a press release, issued by the Association of BiH Journalists, who stood by the reporter, and decided to notify international officials on this issue. This kind of professional solidarity is a good example of how united journalists in BiH can resist these attacks on freedom of expression.

In an effort to be interesting and popular at any cost, many BiH media turn to reporting in a scandalous way. A daily newspaper from BiH, analyzed, on the front page, falls of women politicians from around the world. Besides being totally bizarre, this topic is insulting to women, because it analyzes only "awkward moments" of women, and not men politicians. Such public falls certainly occurred among male colleagues, but this story is obviously not so "attractive".

Sexual affairs among politicians and young women from entertainment industry (film and fashion) are always well-attended topics. Vecernje novine (BiH edition) devoted a whole page to the sex scandal in faraway China, which involved one of the state moguls, who allegedly paid "millions fees" for sex with famous actresses and models. The text was apparently transferred from the foreign media, and it's very interesting that it is illustrated with a big photo of the actress reportedly involved in the scandal and only a small photo of the accused politician. The treatment of those involved in the affair is totally disproportional, and the whole text is based on only one source.

Presenting the work of nongovernmental organizations of the civil society in BiH, especially those dealing with women's issues, has always been welcome in the media. A visit of an American activist of civil society to BiH was a good opportunity to talk about the state of women's rights in BiH. It was repeated that "women in BiH, as well as in other transitional countries, were neglected and discriminated against in many areas."

The media in BiH, as well as in the region of former Yugoslavia, demonstrated a big interest on the fate of a woman, who refused cancer treatment with powerful drugs in order to become a mother. The case ended up with a tragic death of the young mother and a rare example of personal sacrifice for a new life.

Media coverage of this case is generally appropriate and without sensationalism. All media have conveyed the most important parts of the story and pictures of the mother with a child in

the hospital, which has further sensitized the public.

A murder of a nurse from Switzerland, originating from the region of former Yugoslavia, was one of the top news stories in BiH. The media have reported about this crime professionally with plenty of facts from the investigation. The story is illustrated with appropriate photos of the woman, the crime scene and personal belongings of the victim. Additional media interest was caused by the fact that the identity of the victim was unknown for nearly two months. Her lover was charged with her death.

Positive articles in the media about the so-called "ordinary people" are still not exactly a regular occurrence in the BiH media. Therefore an article about a Bosnia woman, who aroused the interest of the American media due to her culinary skills, gives us an enormous joy.

Specifically, she accidentally came into the focus of the American media, preparing traditional Bosnian dishes. Success is noteworthy, especially since the story on one ordinary woman from a small country in Europe appeared in the American media in a positive context.

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## **Media Monitoring Report for November 2012**

The media landscape in BiH was shaken by the affair when the state television lady reporter was accused of, no less than, deliberately endangering the health of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, during the interview, which was aired live on television! The Minister left the studio himself, after having said he didn't feel well and then went to the hospital. This was the reason for Dnevni Avaz to accuse, on its front page, the lady journalist, Antonija Avram and FTV, of causing the medical problems to the Minister. In addition, the reporter was exposed to insults that she didn't know her job, and that she lied by asking questions to the Minister. Furthermore, a story of the alleged assassination attempt was invented, because the Minister "might have taken something suspicious to drink before the TV show." It should be stated that, after all of the fuss, nothing happened to the Minister, as he left the hospital without consequences.

Position of Roma women is the worst in BiH compared to all other countries of the Former Yugoslavia. NGO representatives gave this assessment to Sarajevo newspaper Oslobodjenje. The president of the Association of Roma women from Tuzla said that Roma's position in Macedonia is far better than in BiH.

It is claimed that the Roma women position in BiH is "twice harder than other women's position" and that they themselves have to fight for their place in society, as there is no help from the state.

Roma women in BiH are barely visible and left to their own devices - according to this report. This is a good example of the media pointing out the real problems of minority ethnic groups of women.

Dnevni list from Mostar writes about the problem of very young girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy and marriage. It is claimed that in the past year over 70 girls from Republika Srpska (part of Bosnia and Herzegovina), just slightly elder than 16 years of age, left schools to get married. The age limit for marriage in BiH is 16 years with consent of both parents and the Centre for Social Work. However, this legal provision did not lessen the problem, because

25 cases of girls who gave birth before reaching 15 years of age, have been reported in RS in a single year.

UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Rashida Manjoo, visited BiH in order to "gather as much information about this problem as possible". She stressed the great importance of the justice system in combating and preventing violence against women, and that a large part of the problem occurred in families. The issue of giving mild sentences to perpetrators of these crimes was indicated during her meeting with representatives of women's associations. It was stated that most of the protective measures were not in the direct interest of the victims, but their goal was to change the offenders' behaviour through treatments, while no effective protective environment for women was secured.

Women's participation in politics, especially in high positions, is still very rare in BiH, and each appointment of women to a more important function is of great value. However, the greatest public interest has been aroused with the appointment of the new Mayor of Visoko, a town in central Bosnia. She is claimed to be the first Mayor in Europe, which is dressed in accordance with Islamic rules. The Mayor Amra Babic was visited, after being appointed to that position, by the U.S. Ambassador to BiH Patrick Moon. He expressed their satisfaction with the growing number of women in politics in BiH and said: "A lot has been done to increase the percentage of women in politics compared to previous elections, but it is very far from the percentage that should be in place".

The problem of raped women during the war in BiH is still a kind of taboo. According to the data from the relevant sources, it is estimated that in BiH, during the war, were raped between 20 000 and 50 000 women. This raised the question of compensation for raped women by the international association of Amnesty International. Director of this organization for Europe and Central Asia said that the authorities in Republika Srpska must admit that these rapes were committed during the war, and that the public discussion on this issue must take place. "It would allow victims to tell their stories and then to seek justice" – consider the people from this international organization.

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