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**Sustainable media management in national minority languages in Serbia
Case study: The press in Romanian language**

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Summary

Key words: minority, sustainability, media, democracy, transition

This study aims to follow a very sensitive segment in the field of the rights of national minorities in Serbia, namely, the field of the press, respectively the sustainable management of the press in the languages of the national minorities in Serbia. Broadly speaking, this research seeks the answer to the question of whether the ethnic communities, and above all the Romanian one, manage to have access to the press in their mother tongue, in an atmosphere of permanent social tensions caused by the wars on the territory of the former SFRY, sanctions, bombings and as a consequence of an unstable political situation.

The transition from an authoritarian system to a democratic type of political government in the Republic of Serbia has determined the national minorities to practice new forms of association and action, so they face many new organizational and program challenges.

Through the production of their own media contents, national minorities have the opportunity to oppose the media discourses of the majority culture and fight for their own identity and also for their (self) presentation in the media space of Serbia. Therefore, the contents in the languages of the national minorities, as well as the activity of the minority public information media, contribute to the diversity of the program and to the pluralism of the media, as important premises for the development of the civil and democratic society. In the case of Serbia, the support and development of the minority media is the key factor for its accession to the European Union.

In this thesis I will present and analyze the way and level of representation of national minorities in the media and what is the representation of the minority mass media on the media scene of Serbia, focusing on the Autonomous Province of Voivodina, a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional region of Serbia, where an important community of Romanians live. If and to what extent the sustainability of the minority media is possible in an unstable socio-political situation of a country, which is in a permanent transition between the EU and Russia, I will describe in 9 chapters, structured in such a way that it can gradually explain the entire conjuncture of existence and development of the minority media in Serbia, including the one in Romanian language.

Chapter 1, *Mass media and national minorities in Serbia - theoretical aspects*, gives a wide-ranging introduction to the international aspects of national minorities' access to mass media, starting from 1990, which is considered to be the year of the introduction of the multi-party system in Serbia and the supposed parliamentary democracy. However, the 1990s were also the hardest and most difficult years for the national minorities, considering the growth of Serbian nationalism, a fact that inevitably reflected on the minority media as well.

Chapter 2 presents some theories of management, more precisely, of the sustainable management. Thus, it is intended for the segment that will precede the theoretical part of this thesis related to the rights of national minorities, introducing the financial and organizational segment.

Chapter 3, *Theories on the interaction between mass media and Serbian society* comes to explain several specific characteristics for minority media in Serbia. The chapter also addresses the issue of ensuring the financial resources, necessary for the proper functioning of the media in minority languages. At the same time, the chapter addresses the topic of civil society media as the only way of independent informing.

Public service and online media in Serbia are overlapping poles of informing in national minority languages. Both are relevant for the exchange of information in this domain. The possibility of mass media generating social changes as well as a broad description of the problem that concerns informing in the languages of national minorities are topics that will be addressed in the fourth chapter of this study.

A lot of laws and rules regulate the right of national minorities in Serbia to be informed. Despite the turbulent periods in Serbia's recent history, the very existence of laws has somewhat protected the maintenance of the press in national minority languages. The complex of legal provisions that regulate the right of national minorities in Serbia to be informed, provided the framework necessary to maintain the press in their languages, and this topic I will address in Chapter 5, *The framework of minority policy in Serbia - basic rights*.

Shortly after the democratic changes in 2000, minority self-governments, called National Councils of National Minorities, brought the necessary stability for the minority population in terms of culture, education, the right to use their own language and script, including the press. The importance of these Councils is very high when it comes to personnel policy in the Romanian-language mass media, especially if you consider the fact that in 2004, the Romanian National Council became the founder of the Press and Publishing House "Libertatea". I will refer to their functioning in chapter 6, *The position and role of national councils of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia*.

Chapter 7, *The press in the languages of national minorities and the process of accession to the EU* addresses the subject of the obligations assumed by the Serbian authorities in the process of opening the chapters of accession to the European Union. Certainly, the rights in the field of the press would have been drastically reduced, if Serbia had chosen a different path than the one of European integration. However, the European Commission Reports show that Serbia is not facing yet the challenges of keeping up with the EU states in the field of information.

Certainly, this doctoral thesis would not have been complete if I had not taken into account *the bilateral relations between Serbia and Romania*, in chapter 8. Even if there is the opinion that the relations between the two countries are very good, there are also some subjects where the Romanian and Serbian officials disagree. I am primarily referring to the community of Romanians living in Eastern Serbia (Timoc).

The Romanian-language television and radio broadcasts from Radio-Television of Voivodina are the best example of realization of the information rights of the Romanian minority in Serbia. Along with the Press and Publishing House "Libertatea" (which I dealt with in my dissertation), these programs are the only forms of permanent information in the Romanian language. A few periodicals that appear temporarily in the civil sector don't change in any way the finding that Radio-Television of Voivodina is also the most complex form of broadcast and informing for the Romanian national minority in Serbia, this being the subject of the analysis in this doctoral research. Thus, the last chapter analyzes some relevant segments for both the TV and radio programs of this institution. The concrete purpose of my research is to make an assessment of the existing situation and to find solutions that can improve the actual situation, based on the data obtained.