

Freedom of Media

Serbian transcript:

Генерално, опет напомињем, овај, слобода не постоји. Не постоји из милион некаквих разлога. Јер се тачно зна која је РТВ станица под чијом влашћу, у смислу политичке партије, јер у Србији не постоји... Говори се да је на снази демократија. Апсолутно то нема никакве везе са истином, него је партократија. Дакле, у Србији владају партије; странке. Овај радио, ову ТВ станицу контролише, али буквално морам да кажем контролише ова странка, ова странка контролише ову другу, и тако даље. Тако да они немају, медији немају слободу; ако се деси да неко таласа, да неко каже више него што треба, онда су ту претње, онда су ту, не знам... Чак и физички напади.

Пре, мислим да је пре пет или шест година скоро па настрадао један новинар; заправо, он је сниматељ са Б92, мислим да је... Па тако, мислим да је био „Геј прајд“, заправо покушај организовања „Геј прајда“ у Београду. Људи су видели, овај, на камери да пише Б92, на оној налепници, и он је имао поломљену потколеницу, провео је, провео је баш пуно времена у болници. Опоравио се он, ради и данас, али, овај...

У једном моменту су новинари чак предлагали – колики притисци постоје, говорим све у прилог слободи медија – су предлагали да се промени њихов статус у смислу да они постају, да постану службена лица, у смислу да имају те неке бенефите као што има, не знам, овај, неки народни посланик или неки службеник у јавној управи. Па ако се нападне, ако буду претње, аха, е сад ћемо ми, постоји закон, претио си народној власти. Е, сад ћеш видети шта ће бити. А не као, не знам, најобичнији упосленик, да ли он ради на ТВ-у или, не знам, у трафици или како већ.

Наравно тај концепт није успео, новинари су и даље, овај, на мети различитих напада, поготово, овај, политичких партија, јер опет кажем: када се спомене неко у некој афери, аха, сад ћемо ми вама претити, па вам нећемо дозволити да се на вашој РТВ станици рекламира највећи, највећа фирма у Србији, па ће вам онда бити смањени, овај... Смањен буџет, и онда ће упосленици бити незадовољни, и то је један [зачарани] круг.

English translation:

Generally, I say this again, [media] freedom does not exist. It doesn't exist for a million of reasons. Because it is a known fact which radio and television stations are under whose control - I'm referring to political parties, because in Serbia there is no... It is widely thought that we are a democracy. However, that has absolutely nothing to do with the

truth; we are actually a participacy¹. So, different parties rule Serbia. One radio station or a TV station is controlled, but literally controlled, by this party, while the other is controlled by another party, and so on. So they don't, media don't have freedom. If it happens that someone is making noise, saying more than they should, it is responded to with threats, I don't know... And physical confrontation, even.

If I remember this correctly, about five or six years ago² a journalist was hurt; a cameraman from B92, actually. I think it was... I think it was the [LGBT] Pride parade, or the attempt at organizing a Pride parade in Belgrade. People saw that the camera said B92, the sticker on it said B92 that is, and he ended up with a fractured leg among other things; he spent a lot of time in the hospital. He recovered and still works today, but...

At one point journalists even suggested - I'm trying to show the extent of the pressure [on media] and I'm speaking in favor of media freedom - they suggested that their status should change so that they would be given the status of [government] officials in terms of certain benefits which are given to, for example, parliament members or a government employee. So if they were attacked or threatened, then one could protect them under the law as a part of the public government. And then there would be consequences. Which would be better than being just another employee working at a TV station or a general store? Not much of a difference between the two [jobs].

Of course, that idea was rejected, and journalists are still the target of many attacks, mostly by political parties. Like I said earlier: whenever someone is mentioned in the context of a scandal, the reaction is usually "we will now threaten you, and we won't let the largest company in Serbia to advertise on your radio or TV station, and then your... Your budget will be reduced, and employees will be unhappy." This is a vicious cycle.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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¹ Participacy (also known as partitocracy) is a form of government in which a party or several parties have the de facto control over the political process. In a participacy, the individuals such as citizens or individual politicians are irrelevant, and the party itself controls the government and the policies.

² Please note that this footage was filmed in August 2012.