First Regional TV News Show – 2nd Season

VICINITIES

EDITOR ZVEZDANA KOVAČ
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A television program broadcast in all countries of the region at about the same time attracted public attention last year, when five pilot shows were aired. This year we stepped up our efforts to 12 episodes, and Top tv from Ljubljana and TV Kosovo from Pristina joined the other television stations that broadcast our shows. The following publication contains all the information about this unique television show – who is in front of and behind the cameras, the television stations that aired our shows, some of the most interesting excerpts, and statements by participants, editors in chief, and media sponsors.

I will say something about my own impressions. As an employee of the CDRSEE, I was excited to observe the preparation and realisation of the first series of Vicinities, which then became a creative challenge when the CDRSEE tasked me with running the project. It was a pleasure to work on the 12 episodes in which many painful subjects were discussed, mostly because people from different countries met and talked at one place. Studio co-host Nenad Šebek and myself, we both have views on every topic that we broached, however we refrained from arguing for them or directing our guests to any particular course. Hearing people from the region who for well-known reasons were not given an opportunity to speak for a long time in countries where their own language is well understood, is a privilege that we were able to offer. And, we
listened to them carefully in return, delighted like viewers across the region. That is the uniqueness of *Vicinities* that I could not resist.

We showed that we could discuss such topics as identity, war crimes, the role of the Church and so on even when our guests had completely opposite views. However, their views on universal values were the same, allaying concerns that civilised dialogue could come under threat.

We closed this year’s cycle with a lively narrative from the region, a discussion on ethnic music. Vlatko Stefanovski, Bilja Krstić, Amira Medunjanin, and Tamara Obrovac together sang “Jovano, Jovanke,” the recording of which we present to you as a gift, with a review of the most prominent statements, along with the book.

“*Vicinities* is, after all, a kind of agora to which we keep returning, to talk and to be heard,” said Balša Brković who gave an introduction with four other journalists and writers. I hope that we will be back to your favourite television channels for many years. That will depend on us as well as you.

Farewell, until we meet again!

_Zvezdana Kovač,_
*Editor in Chief of Vicinities*
Last year at this time, I lauded the mere completion of the first Vicinities series. There were doubts about whether a TV talk show could tackle the difficult issues of reconciliation and compete to be accepted as an alternative in the highly competitive prime time slot. I was so proud of the work and efforts of the staff, the guests and even the viewers, who were willing to give tolerance and understanding a chance.

This year, I look on again with praise, pride and admiration, but this time with my vision focused firmly on the future. I see the impact of this television programme and the important spot it has carved in the psyche of a region. Vicinities, with its second season successfully on the air, is here to stay. Plans for the third season are underway, because the people of the Western Balkans are counting on it. As this book is going to press, five Members of the European Parliament are organising an event to present our TV programme to the European Parliament. Not just the Balkans, but Europe is taking notice of Vicinities.

Vicinities has shown people, in its own vibrant, quirky way, how to listen, hear, discuss, debate and even enjoy. And we are ready for more!

Dr Erhard Busek,  
Chair of the Board of Directors of the CDRSEE
After two successful seasons, “Vicinities” shows how diversity and honest communication can be the driving force for regional cooperation and mutual understanding. The first regional TV talk show dealing with issues affecting the whole region has no hidden agenda, nor does it fall into the trap of yugonostalgia. In its own dynamic and creative way, it just manages to resume ties among neighbouring countries not only on the basis of a still common language but also of shared concerns about living standards, the economic crisis or the new generations. The hope is that such open dialogue outside the usual realm of politics will contribute to the creation of a sense of togetherness and encourage the people from the Balkans to participate in the shaping of their own future.

The steering committee of the European Fund for the Balkans is proud of this unique cross-border initiative, which brings a welcome breath of new air into TV news programmes. We would like to congratulate the teams of the European Fund for the Balkans and of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe for the very inspiring first two series, and we hope to see Vicinities continue and become an open forum of public debate in the countries of the Western Balkans.

Fabrice de Kerchove

Chair of the Steering Committee of the European Fund for the Balkans
In *Vicinities* we discussed war crimes, music, homosexual rights, the European Union, identities, civil society, relationship between Church and state, the near and distant past, violence among youth, the state administration, and with cartoons for a sense of reality in the region.

The idea for *Vicinities* is unique, as well as its realisation and range and way of thinking in our region. It promotes the goals of the European Fund for the Balkans and the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, to achieve reconciliation and democracy in the Balkans and have the countries come closer to membership of the EU.

The past year brought considerable progress for the Western Balkans toward the EU: Croatia became a full member, Montenegro opened negotiations, Serbia received candidate status, and Albania filed a request for membership. Those of us who live in these vicinities know that in spite of the progress, a lot of work remains to be done. That is the main task not only in changing and harmonising laws and regulations to comply with EU standards, but far more than this and beyond, in applying the norms in practice, changing our way of thinking, raising awareness of ourselves and of our obligations, not just our rights. We are still far from that goal.

On the media level, *Vicinities* is a media project, and the situation is, we dare say, worse than in 2012. Non-transparency of ownership, tabloidisation, sensational reporting, a surge in reality programs, a poverty both in program creation and in thinking and reporting. Alas, these are not the growing pains of media in our part of the world but a chronic state of affairs.

With these 12 new episodes, *Vicinities* is no longer just a comet in the media sky but a planet that has placed itself solidly and found its orbit. We tackled tough topics and dilemmas and we had guests from four or five countries in every show, to help in the quest for answers. The European Fund for the Balkans and the CDRSEE are resolved to continue with the show in 2014 and beyond.

*Hedvig Morvai*, the executive director of the EFB

*Nenad Šebek*, the executive director of the CDRSEE
OUR TEAM OF PRODUCERS AND EDITORS

Following the first series of *Vicinities* that was broadcast in 2012 and was widely viewed in countries in the region, the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe and the European Fund for the Balkans embarked on the second season more ambitiously, with support and assistance from the German Foreign Ministry. They invited guests who were reputable and original figures in their milieus. The number of countries that participated and watched the programme increased. Top television from Ljubljana and Television Kosova joined Radio Television Serbia, Croatian Radio Television, Radio Television Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vijesti Television from Podgorica, Television Alsat-M from Skopje, and Radio Television Serb Republic from Banja Luka. The hosts were Zvezdana Kovač, editor in chief, and a long-time radio and television journalist who works for the CDRSEE, and CDRSEE Director Nenad Šebek, a former journalist of Radio Beograd and the BBC. The shows opened and closed with top journalists and satirists from different countries, instead of stand-up comedians. The first six episodes were aired from May to mid-June 2013, and the other six from October to mid-November the same year. Alumni from the European Fund for the Balkans participated actively in the shows, the director was Dragan Elčić and Predrag Kajganić – Pixi was the executive producer.
The CDRSEE is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation based in Thessaloniki, whose mission is to encourage democracy in a pluralist society with European values, a market economy that operates under the rule of law, social responsibility, and reconciliation among peoples. The CDRSEE is the winner of this year’s Human Rights Award by the German Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

At the conclusion of this book, we have included the laudation speech by Mr. Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament, presented at the award ceremony for the CDRSEE.

The EFB was created at the initiative of four European foundations (Robert Bosch Stiftung, The King Baudouin Foundation, Compagnia di San Paolo and the ERSTE Foundation) with the aim of assisting the accession of the Western Balkans to the European Union. As a successor to the International Balkan Commission, the EFB has worked to promote the functioning of state administrations.

The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs has recognised the importance of this project and supported it financially to encourage the development of democratic society in the new Balkan countries formed after the wars. They have helped the realisation of this project, which has since contributed to better mutual understanding and the validation of European values.
ZVEZDANA KOVAČ
is the Editor in Chief of Vicinities. She has worked as a journalist for more than 20 years. She has spent 15 years doing editorial and journalistic work on Montenegrin television RTCG, and three more years as a journalist, then as the editor in chief of TV Info TV. Today she works for the CDASEE. She graduated with a degree in Serbo- Croatian language and Yugoslav literature at Montenegro University. She is fluent in English and Greek.

NENAD ŠEBEK
is the Executive Director of CDASEE. Prior to his current job, he worked in the BBC World Service for 16 years, reporting on the wars in this region and Chechenya, and as a correspondent from the Balkans and from Moscow. He spent his first 10 years working as a journalist at Radio Beograd. He has written for print media, worked on television and taught journalism at The American College of Thessaloniki. He moderates many conferences for the European Union.

PREDRAG KAČGANIĆ-PIXI
is the Executive Producer of Vicinities. He graduated in 1989 from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, in film and TV production, and earned his master’s degree in 2008. He has worked in almost every major television station in Serbia and on many television projects. He taught television production at the Belgrade Academy of Fine Arts, the Department of Art and Media Production, as an associate professor.

DRAGAN ELČIĆ
is the Director of Vicinities. He was born in Sarajevo in 1959. He is a full-time professor and head of the Department of Television Directing at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade. He has directed more than 250 documentaries and short films and about 600 documentary shows, television reporting and video spots, two television dramas, four television films and seven television series. He also directed around 1,500 live performances (music, entertainment, sports ...).
CHAPTER 1

THE OTHER SIDE OF IDENTITY

What is identity, personal and collective identity, an identity crisis? What causes it and how is it resolved? What is the role of national identity in the surrounding countries – is it possible and necessary for a region to build its identity? To what extent is identity misused, manipulated or used in political horse-trading?

These were the main questions in the first show of the second series of Vicinities, to which Slaviša Orlović (Belgrade), Ivan Lovrenović (Sarajevo), Dragoljub – Duško Vuković (Podgorica) and Đorđe Obradović (Dubrovnik) sought to find answers. Enver Kazaz (Sarajevo) gave a word of introduction.
CHAPTER 1 : THE OTHER SIDE OF IDENTITY

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

ENVER KAZAZ
PROFESSOR AT THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, SARAJEVO

THE FATHERS OF IDENTITY ARE HOLY YET VERY BLOODY

Identity is a very expensive southern Slavic word. Our problems began when it emerged on the social horizon in the 1990s, and initially they were culturological, then they became ideological, political, and alas, military. Many argue that it is so because we are too similar, others believe that our differences are too small, and some say it is because we are almost identical. Identity is not an expensive southern Slavic word just because people killed for it and died over it, but also because it was an object of trade. There is a kind of stock market of identity: One takes a bit of one’s own and of another’s identity, then we serve it to our own with interest and at a high price. Dealing in identity is widespread. We have identity elites who are holy and untouchable. They are at universities, in religious institutions and political parties, and they are also cultural elites. Then we have fathers of identity as well who are holy and very bloody. Fathers of identity like to create heroes of identity, and the heroes – children of someone else’s identity, who produce a few victims.

Fathers of identity like to inspire our minds and our national souls. We are small, but we are proud. We looked up to many others.

We wanted to have it all like great nations do, and then we settled into our ghetto. Today we weed our national territory and mark it with symbols, like lions do in savannahs.

When the identity elites created the identity, they realised they could foist it on the masses. But in the meantime we lost ourselves. Some day we will get to the cave of identity. When we see ourselves in it we will realise that we are in a distant past. Others will be in the future, much younger and freer than us.
CHAPTER 1: THE OTHER SIDE OF IDENTITY

IVAN LOVRENOVIĆ
WRITER, SARAJEVO

WE FOUND PEOPLE SIMILAR TO OURSELVES, BUT WE LOOKED FIRST FOR THOSE WHO WERE DIFFERENT

Long before us, somewhere in the 1930s, George Devereaux founded a discipline that few people know about today; it is called ethnopsychoanalysis. He explained that if a man insisted on national identity too much it suggested that he had a big problem with self-identity.

We found people similar to ourselves, but we looked first for those who were different. And we found people different from ourselves in people who were the most similar to us, which is a paradox. Apart from being a paradox it is the beginning of our miseries, a considerable part of our serious troubles.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CULTURAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES

The difference between national and cultural identities becomes prominent in our reality of its own accord. Often they overlap and become synonymous, but the distinction is important. Why? National identity as a political identity of our communities, groups, and peoples, if you like, is definite and acts distinctively. Our cultural identities are not as plane and distinctive as they would like to be. They are like a rainbow, in which we see the colors separately but not the borderline between them. That is how it is with our cultural identity, in a way. When the two join inappropriately in reality, especially in political practice, then problems arise. People become confused, thus I underline the distinction.

FOREIGNERS UNDERSTOOD ANDRIC BETTER

It is questionable whether we can talk about the construction of the Yugoslav identity. The Yugoslav identity was devised on a political level as a national identity, which is something that we often forget. As Yugoslavs, we were strong nationalists above everything else. The energy of nationalism that was liberating and positive to a certain extent was carried over to these fragmented nationalities and nationalisms that we have had since 1990. That connection was never properly clarified and to do so would be very important.

Speaking of Ivo Andrić – I prefer not to discuss other people, but Ivo Andrić is paradigmatic, perhaps the only one who is paradigmatic. His literary wit and language cannot be placed in any of our national literatures, therefore he belongs to all the literatures of the stokavski dialect. Speaking politically, that would be four countries although that is irrelevant as far as literature is concerned. He does not belong to them by some politi-
cal decree but fundamentally, through his literary and linguistic spirit. That is the only way to understand him; foreigners understood that a long time ago, but we have yet to.

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IS MOVING BACKWARD SPEEDILY**

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a paradox as not only are we late, but we are backsliding speedily. This is because Bosnia and Herzegovina has problems not only with the fragmented ethnic identities and cultures, but a bigger problem with the identity of the state – not the way it operates (which is a disaster), but its self-perception. It has no self-perception; it is perceived internally in different ways. And the problem is not that these perceptions differ, but that they are opposed. As long as that is so, I am afraid that Bosnia and Herzegovina will have little benefit from globalisation and the European course.

**TOO EARLY FOR REGIONAL IDENTITY**

We see two diverse courses in Europe: One would have the question of identity raised and made universal, European, and the other course seeks to have things validated, even an awkward validation of fragmented state and ethnic identities.

Whether we are Europeans or not, we need to have thoughts about ourselves, we need to look each other in the eye and try not to bother one another, even if we cannot be friends just yet. And then we build a new regional identity slowly, gradually, that would foster none of the bad experiences that we fostered in the past 150 years of our modern history. Then, perhaps, we could come to Europe and say, and I speak figuratively: Here we are, a candidate. But not because you are superior and we aspire to emulate you, but because we have made some improvements, we have attained harmony and some happiness.

I believe it is important to set out that today, we are still living in ruins. Unfortunately, we cannot discuss these matters in some optimistic, positive, and productive tone because time will not let us. It is too soon since the cataclysm of the 1990s. Historically, we are in the same time. It is unfortunately too early to consider building a new regional identity.

**DRAGOLJUB – DUŠKO VUKOVIĆ**

INDEPENDENT JOURNALIST, PODGORICA

**TWO IDENTITIES IN MONTENEGRO**

In Montenegro our problem is that we have at least two ethnic identities and therefore an identity crisis.

One is conceptualised in the background of a Serb ethnic identity, so aphoristically it goes something like this (I believe it was
Bishop Amfilohije Radović who said it): If Serbs are heaven’s nation, then Montenegrins are heaven’s lightning. The other ethnic identity seeks to rely on what is part of Montenegro’s authentic national history. Combinations are thus often made and as are efforts to add armature to this structure of ethnic identity to make it stronger – thus two letters were added to the alphabet to make the language different from others in the region.

**WE LIKE TO APPROPRIATE**

The narrative on identity necessarily implies talk of belonging, of appropriating. Thus it is with writers and artists. We then construct what I believe is a problem not only of our region and our delayed nations, but a problem of our current transitional post-modernist ways. It is a civilisation-based problem because the basic paradigm is that our civilisation rests on appropriation.

**NOT EVERYTHING FROM EUROPE IS EMANCIPATING**

Speaking from the aspect of ethnic identity and putting it in the context of European identity, I wish to emphasise that every ethnic identity contains an emancipating quality that should not be rejected, it should not be denied and dismissed at all costs.

Not everything that comes from Europe is emancipating, I mean politically, economically, or culturally. In fact, a lot of what comes from Brussels, and I speak of Brussels metaphorically, is not emancipating, but rather enslaving, compared with some other identitites. So it is important to validate the emancipating potential of an ethnic identity without stigmatising another or creating another problem, making it too destructive.

**WE SHOULD ALL BE CIVIL**

Yet we have a new regional identity and it is barbarism, unfortunately. We all stooped to barbaric ways. Why am I saying this? Because we are moving backward. In this barbarism, in the ruins that Ivan spoke of, some other structures were well connected and helped develop that new identity. Those are mafioso structures. During and after the wars, mobsters collaborated splendidly in the region. What we need to do to build a new identity is to become civil, to go back and do the least we can do, which is to make sure that laws work and that institutions work, because laws and institutions are liberating for us, in some humane and lofty way.

When I was younger I was more optimistic than I should have been. Lately, I am afraid, I have adopted pessimistic views about the future because my experience in life, not to mention the experience of our civilisation, gives pessimists more reason to be so than optimists. My wishes for the future are one thing, but I am not too sure we will have many bright moments in our near future.
MYTHS ARE AT THE CORE OF OUR IDENTITIES

Myths are common for all identities, including the Serbian (the founding myth of the state of Kosovo and then its territory, and territory eventually came to be a bigger problem than people), then memories that are shared, cultural memory, history and everything else that divided us from differences that could enrich us.

A problem for the region is that ethnic identity prevailed. One of the reasons is the belated development of nations and states, which modern nations went through a century or two ago. We have two models here, a European civic model and another Eastern European and Asian model. We have a national writer who then sees himself as the father of the nation. If he is a true writer, a real writer, then he should be read in different languages regardless of context. Like rock music, for instance. Bands that put their songs in an ethnic context such as the Riblja Corba are not welcome in the other republics, unlike singers Đorđe Balašević and Zdravko Čolić who fill concert halls from Skopje to Ljubljana. In the battle for Yugoslav legacy, which is partly linked to identity, everyone seeks to adopt the good things but refuses to do away with what is negative.

NOVAK MAKES UP FOR SERBIA’S FAILURES

Today everyone in Serbia probably seeks to identify with Novak Đoković because he is a winner, the first in the world and potentially someone who compensates for Serbia’s failures. On the other hand, people such as Andrić, the only Nobel laureate from the region, or Kusturica, who won the Palme d’Or at Cannes twice – everyone claims them for themselves. However, we should separate the two; one thing is how we identify ourselves and another how other people see us.

Do we belong in Europe? Geographically we do and largely culture-wise as well. So what is the problem? Fragmentation of ethnic groups is very prominent in the Western Balkans. We have ethnic minorities and a diaspora throughout the region. That is the problem, because they are perhaps the most threatened groups on the question of ethnic identity. They could be bridges of cooperation on the one hand, but on the other bridges are invariably trod upon or destroyed; they are ruined.

I point out another problem; some people do not want that kind of identification with the Balkans. For instance, I do not have a problem calling myself a Balkan, although it is a derogatory term suggestive...
of the non-European way, even though de-
mocracy was created in the Balkans, albeit
in Greece.

**WE ARE NOT INCLINED TO COMPROMISES**

Ethnic identities inherently carry high ele-
ments of emotional furor and passion and
they are potentially conflictive. We have
had ethnic identity conflicts that devel-
oped into bloody wars. We were prepared
to sacrifice a lot for ethnic identity, eco-
nomic and other interests. That means that
we did not lean toward reaching a com-
promise, a common denominator. We lied
that we got on well. Let us not lie to each
other any more and let us get on better, let
us communicate and look for integrative
factors, and we know that we have many
of those.

**PRISONERS OF THE PAST**

We have a paradox here; when we view all
the things that we share, we see that we
cannot do without the past and without
our legacy. On the other hand, problems
lie therein because we are prisoners of
the past yet unprepared to face the past. A
problem in the region is that everyone sees
the problem in everyone else. Yet we must
all start by cleaning our own back yards.
That is a presupposition for reconcilia-
tion and for progress, to open prospects for
building a regional identity. Each one of
us will partly retain our identity, but there
will be external incentives and pressure to
perhaps build a new identity.

**ĐORĐE OBRADOVIĆ**

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT
DUBROVNIK UNIVERSITY AND
MOSTAR UNIVERSITY, DUBROVNIK

**WE ALL WANT WHAT WE DO NOT HAVE**

It is a sad reason why Slavs long for iden-
tity, and that is that everyone wants what
they do not have. And there can be none,
because in the space between the Adriatic
and Vladivostok, which is a huge swathe of
land, there never was a single big culture.
In every other area in the world, at least
one big culture developed – the Chinese
has lasted for thousands of years – but not
in this area. That is why nations were late
in developing in these areas, due to histori-
cal circumstances. We need to understand
that the quest for identity is completely
natural; it takes time and it needs tolera-
tion. Like the growing up of a child, it can-
not be of legal age at two. It takes time.

**HISTORY IS DEVISED**

If identity is being imposed from above, it
will be resisted and therefore unsuccess-
ful. History has demonstrated that in many
countries. For instance, Americans can-
not impose a Bosnian identity upon peo-
ple who live in Bosnia and Herzegovina today as it will provoke strong resistance. We need to be very tolerant and respect one another and let each of us have our own identity, which is often devised, because Southern Slavs, actually Slavs in general, do not study history, they devise it. The pyramids being dug in Bosnia to prove the existence of some civilisation, or Slavs in Macedonia putting up monuments to ancient cultures, or Croatia looking for its Iranian origins, and so on. Then out of nowhere, the Bogomils, whose existence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia is questionable. So, history is construed in order to prove something in the present day. People therefore need to be allowed to live out their identities, to grow up in them, which is not easy and will not happen quickly. Nobody should mind the airport in Belgrade being called Nikola Tesla, but somebody does. Nobody should mind that someone considers Tesla an American, someone else a Croatian, or a Serb from Croatia, or a Serb... His greatness is global, that is what is important. Besides, we should not restrict ourselves to our own people. Take Rushdie, for example. No one disputes that he is both a British and Indian writer, but also a writer of the world. So, these belated nations need to be given time.

The EU is not the perfect solution but it is a good one, better than what the Southern Slavic nations have right now. It would relax a crucial question, the one on borders and which ethnic groups or their parts belonged to which country. So it is not the perfect solution, but it is a solution. The EU does not want to speed up the process, so it is questionable when Bosnia and Herzegovina will join, although the best time is today. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina is an experiment of the international community anyway, to show what will take place in New Mexico and Texas when Latin Americans become a majority. People who live in Bosnia and Herzegovina believe that they are living their lives, but actually they are part of an experiment on which they have no influence. No one in the world does, really.

**To some World War Two Has Not Ended Yet**

What is the problem in these countries that all speak similar languages? An extensive survey carried out by students from Zagreb, Dubrovnik, Mostar, Podgorica and Novi Sad showed that 85 per cent of anonymous commentators on Internet portals in the region still live in World War Two. The predominant terms in comments on sports matches, the Eurovision song contest, and others are Ustashas, Chetniks, Partisans, Balijas and the like. So, World War Two has yet to end for many people in the region, not to mention the recent war. Another dreadful term is Western Balkans. It's an international manipulation. They want to show the Balkans as primitive, as not being Europe. This region should be called Southeastern Europe, but people here have accepted the manipulative phrase Western Balkans, just to show that it is no big deal. They should refer to it as Southeastern Europe, because when Du-
brovnik already had a water supply and sewage system, you could still smell Versailles from 30 kilometres away.

We need to let time do its thing, and to let regional and European integration and identity develop from within. Hence people should begin to feel European, and incorporate regional values into their own identities that have yet to be formed.

DEJAN RADIĆ (SARAJEVO): We have been going through an identity crisis in the past 20 or so years that is evident mostly through a network of different identity elements such as religion, nation, territory, language, citizenship, and other phenomena. Our socio-political environment has imposed a preference for some layers of identity over others that have been sidelined or left in the shade.

MILOŠ ĐINDIĆ (BELGRADE): A new topic that emerged today was collective versus individual identities. Collective identities are often forced upon us and politically exploited. In these parts that have a recent history of wars, the abuse goes so far that ethnic identities, being collective identities, assume destructive proportions. In the context of creating a new regional identity, it is important to change the paradigm...
toward individual identity. The identity of a particular person, an individual, regardless of one’s group.

ALEKSANDAR JOVANOVSKI (SKOPJE):
Although a number of favourable assessments and views were heard on the region’s progress in the past 20 years, I remain pessimistic because we are still entrenched, everyone in the region. Our political quasi-elites are abusing the identity of the nation and state and manipulating national identity to stay in power.

VIDEO 1
IDENTITY THEFT
Jovo Nikolić is an unemployed locksmith from Smederevo who is a victim of identity theft. Someone made a copy of his identity card and appointed him manager of two firms; he embezzled millions and incurred debts. Jovo first heard about this when the police called him. He is still unemployed and will apparently spend a long time in the maze of justice.
In Banja Luka, police recorded about 150 cases of identity theft. In Kosovo, hundreds of apartments and properties were sold by forging identities.

VIDEO 2
“HARD” RUSSIANS
The phenomenon of European identity as a lasting sentiment of fellowship of past, current, and future European generations is perhaps the best illustration of the complex path of building identity. Fellowship of already formed national identities, plus a strong anti-war stance, and efforts to avoid feeling superior over others – this is only one formula for building European identity. Another is to base it on an abstract level of high culture, remote from the daily lives of most people. Many believe that geography defines European identity. However, a survey conducted by Stratsild University asked Russians if they considered themselves Europeans and how often, to which more than a quarter replied never or rarely.
In Croatia, the youngest member of Europe’s family, Croats are anxious because they are aware of everything that they had to go through on the long course to becoming a full member, and yet there are many obligations ahead. People in Slovenia have long since emerged from the stage of uncertainty, but the economic crisis has deepened their Euro-scepticism. Montenegro is widely seen as the next member of the EU and its narrative is solid, mostly because it lacks the potential to make serious trouble in the region or threaten anyone. Serbia, however, was an *enfant terrible* for a long time in the Western Balkans because it had to face economic and political transition simultaneously, as well as proceed with a specific transition that called for a different view of events of the recent past. The guests of the second show of *Vicinities* on the topic “European Union between lament and rhapsody” are Daliborka Uljarević (Podgorica), Vjera Šuman (Dubrovnik), Igor Mekina (Ljubljana), and Maja Bobić (Belgrade). Writer Balša Brković (Podgorica) delivered a word of introduction.
Danilo Kiš wrote this fine sentence: “I’ve noticed that beautiful things, when they happen, are less beautiful than imagined, but the ugly things are much uglier than we had imagined.” Perhaps this psychological mechanism is why laments are invariably more persuasive than rhapsodies. Before a country joins the EU, glorification is pronounced and idealisation is endless in the debates. But when the country is on the other side of the gate, different tones are heard. The relationship with Europe is then evocative of the love that Desanka Maksimović describes, that Europe is beautiful only while we yearn for it, when there is a hint of it. In a way, Europe is akin to those narratives which senior citizens in our parts often feel that they have heard long ago – only the words were different. Instead of Europe, there was, say, communism, or some other term. Perhaps we should recall a great title of Raymond Carver’s, “What we talk about when we talk about love”, and explain what we are talking about when we talk about Europe. I like to recall that Europe’s first modern novel and probably the greatest novel ever, Don Quixote, is a similar story, a difference between utopia and reality, whatever that means. Perhaps being in a state of anticipation is the biggest challenge. My concern is that until we actually start to resemble Europe, all our concepts of Europe will resemble us.
The EU has no magic wand

The story of every country that joined the EU is one of success. Only we should know that the EU is not a magic wand. It certainly offers opportunities, but it does not solve all problems because a lot depends on the member states. For instance, in Slovenia we have a major problem with discrimination, which was rather unpredictable. The situation with corruption is similar. Goran Klemenčič, who heads the commission for fighting corruption in Slovenia, says that Serbia has better legislation than Slovenia, that in Slovenia we need a sledgehammer, but our laws provide us with only a screwdriver.

Slovenia received far more money after becoming an EU member, I believe the figure is around 4.5 billion euros, and that is big money. It should be spent wisely. Once you become a net payer it is hard to draft projects that are good enough to be able to draw this money. If you lack projects, the allocated quota will be unused.

Many improvements, but...

I will give an obvious example, one that any citizen can experience – documents are indeed issued in a few days and there are no queues. I had the opportunity to see what it is like to have a passport issued in Serbia and I was absolutely horrified.

It is similar in other areas, for instance in setting up firms. A lot of effort is put into having things done electronically to speed up the process and reduce bureaucracy. The progress is evident in that area, but a lot of work remains to be done. A big incident broke out last January. An entrepreneur wanted to invest 1.5 million euros in a private brewery to make Bevok beer. He had already bought land and machines in Gornja Gradina. This is what happened: He asked for permits but in order to receive a building permit he needed a special concession for water. People at the ministry told him that could take years. So the man gave up; he went across the border into Austria, met with the mayor, drew the project and in four weeks he was invited to defend the project, to which some objections were made. He had two days to correct them, and the day after he had made these corrections he was issued a building permit. Today the company operates in Austria, the beer label has writing in Slovenian, German and English, and it is exported. Workers from Slovenia work in Austria, because they are cheaper labour. The Internet costs in Austria are higher, though, as well as some other expenses, but altogether the whole process was quicker, simpler, and more efficacious.
WE ARE DIFFERENT NOW

There are many reasons to rejoice over Croatia joining the EU, however I believe that in these early months people are divided, because they are partly anxious. We are not sure what to expect. We had this Euro-scepticism that is probably the reason, because the path to accession was quite long and painful – and then some people believe they will no longer be able to make their own cheese or brandy. The rural population is quite strongly opposed to the EU, whereas young people are naturally happy because it will give them more opportunities for work.

But the fact is that we have begun to behave differently. There is less swindling as every step is monitored and public procurement procedures are mandatory; we cannot do things without regulations. That is actually the beginning of the development a new mind set, which I believe is the most important thing.

The crisis that has been on-going for five years brought on depression. It happened in Greece and then in Spain, so fear and dissatisfaction mounted because one view was, “Let us join the EU and then we will have money, we will have everything.” And then we realised that we must do most of the things ourselves.

Countries such as Croatia will have to work a lot as we are in a major restructuring process that is not over yet. Political elites will be compelled to carry out restructuring – they will simply have to bring order. Perhaps none of us would have needed the EU had we introduced order a long time ago; but obviously we were not capable of doing so.

PEOPLE IN DUBROVNIK REFUSE TO BE WAITERS

Young people migrate and they have migrated all these years. Concerns about workers from Bulgaria and other countries are heard. Specifically, people in Dubrovnik are concerned that waiters from all over the world will presumably come to Dubrovnik to work. And for the last seven or eight years, you can scarcely see a waiter who is a local. But these concerns are of a different nature. We have a problem with legislation, labour legislation. In Croatia labour is expensive and employee fluctuation is low. So, these are some things that we need to work on.

POLITICAL PARTIES ARE ONE’S BEST CONNECTION

Generally, we must all alter our mind set, and that is crucial from our working habits to the way we fight corruption, which is a major problem – not only in the ar-
rest of the former Croatian prime minister but simply in bringing a gift to a doctor. Nobody thinks it strange to give a box of chocolates to a nurse. I believe that the mind set in all the countries is that you get something if you give something, but as a reward. Young generations have learned the technique by which you phone and look for a connection for a job; in fact, you cannot get a job unless your uncle or someone else has fixed it for you. Today jobs are found through parties. Okay, we know that there is corruption in Europe as well, that people have connections everywhere, but in our case it has gone too far.

GOVERNMENT TOO EXPENSIVE AND TOO CUMBERSOME

The government is too expensive, the administration is too big and has grown accustomed to not doing its job. We still have that legacy from socialism, where you get a job in the government administration and all is swell until you retire. That is why administration staff are the first to tell you no, it cannot be done. In Croatia we have not had investments for years, and all of a sudden they have realised it and become frantic. Hah, is it any wonder! Every project has been delayed seven years. First this cannot be done, then that cannot be done. Then with local administrations, everyone has their own idea, even when spatial planning is completed, which used to be a huge problem. There is a fear of foreigners, too, fear of somebody coming and carrying everything away on their shoulders, presumably into that Europe.

MAJA BOBIC
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE EUROPEAN MOVEMENT IN SERBIA, BELGRADE

ENFANT TERRIBLE

Serbia is an enfant terrible in the Western Balkans. It turns out Serbia was at the root of some problems and so naturally the EU pays attention to it in the sense of addressing problems and stabilising the region. Serbia proceeded slowly on a path that is hard, and the process has been going on for 12 or 13 years. It needed to deal with an economic and political transition at the same time, a transition that meant accepting a different view of what had happened in the recent past.

What everyone in Serbia hopes for is the start of talks with the EU. Serbia has candidate status and that is a turning point. The start of talks would indeed have Serbia enter into a thorough process of reforms conducted by Brussels, and a large part of the state administration would be involved in its implementation.

A rather painful process, which is very important historically, has been going on, I believe for some time now. It is important not only for the process of EU integra-
CHAPTER 2: EUROPEAN UNION BETWEEN LAMENT AND RHAPSODY

transformation but also for regional reconciliation and for bringing an end to inherited conflicts and confronting the past. Efforts are being made to normalise so-called relations between Belgrade and Pristina. That means not creating problems for one another on the path to EU integration, in trade, in movement of people and so on. To establish peaceful and proper prerequisites for regional prosperity.

GOOD ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Money is really important; though it is not a large amount, it provides significant support from the EU for the transition process and for building institutions. It is an addition to serious budget planning, for development, directed at the process of joining the EU. However, if you lay out your domestic finances badly as well as your strategy and development programs, the money will not be of much help.

Serbia has good absorptive capacity, so the funding that was made available for us was used well. We have a solid administrative structure, the know-how and capacity to make use of the funds. Of course, they are rather small, about 200 million euros a year in grants. As the colleague from Slovenia said, if Serbia were an EU member today, it would be receiving more than 8 billion for the next seven years instead of 1.4 billion, which is a significant difference, but the question is whether we would have the capacity despite our good administration to make use of the funds in the best possible way.

ATTAINING STANDARDS IS COSTLY

The important thing for the region is that we are on the same task right now, that we have this common European vision for all countries that are in the region. On the other hand, this is a process that should help us transform, it is not a process that will take us to paradise.

Membership in the EU is an opportunity and chance to use our resources in the best possible way, human as well as natural resources, everything that is available, and to manage them efficaciously. On the other hand, competition in every field is harsh. One has to be very good to be successful. We are getting support from the EU to adjust and prepare for membership, but attaining some of the standards is really expensive. For instance, regarding the environment, Serbia needs nearly 11 billion euros to comply with EU standards, which is a huge figure – the national budget is smaller than that.

We are not ones who are able to take a big leap forward and emerge from the economic crisis. If matters improve in the EU, then things will be better for us as well.

EU CONCERNS

People in Serbia are mostly concerned that we will become a market for cheap labor to EU members. Another concern is that many people will leave. But people are leaving Serbia in far greater numbers today – people who are educated, into whose education the government invested, people who invested in themselves. They are leaving
far more today than they will once Serbia becomes an EU member. We have the same general concerns that others that joined the union in previous years have had. A lot of concerns have to do with prejudices, and there is general caution with regard to agriculture, rural development, the status of farmers and how much the farmer stands to lose. Loss of identity, language and religion – those are groundless concerns in my opinion, because the EU already has members that are Christian Orthodox and use Cyrillic script. These concerns are the kind that are not discussed, but that give rise to misunderstandings over what it really means to be a member of the EU. There is quite a bit of manipulation in that.

DALIBORKA ULJAREVIĆ
POLITICAL SCIENTIST, PODGORICA

POLITICAL ELITES STILL LIVE IN MYTHICAL TIMES

In a regional context, Montenegro is a good narrative mostly because it has no potential to create a serious problem or threaten anyone else. It should be said that in the past few years Montenegro did rather well and passed certain stages that were predominantly technical. We passed quite a few fine laws, we adopted strategies and action plans, but the important thing for me as a citizen of Montenegro is measurable results, in practice that is. The results are scant and I hope that the process of joining the EU will make our political elites responsible and compel them to demonstrate in practice the commitment to the standards that were incorporated in the legislation. Political elites are the biggest challenge as they still live, I would say, in mythical rather than European times. Traditionally we tend to foster an approach that seeks to bypass institutions as much as possible, and law is observed by finding loopholes.

EUROPE IS OUR SPACE

There is no credible social structure in Montenegro that is opposed to joining the EU, which does not mean that there will not be one in the future. It is not a bad thing for a society to have a substantive and well-argued dialogue on the benefits and possible detriments, as long as it is set on a healthy basis. On the other hand, however, it seems to me that the narrative about the crisis in the EU is becoming a bit of an excuse for slowing down reforms at home. The process of European integration is helping us consolidate institutions and strengthen the nation-building framework, placing it on healthy foundations, without ideologies and mythologies.
We should start thinking that European affairs are domestic affairs and that the EU agenda is part of the standards that are helping us develop a democracy and establish a sustainable economic system. When we complete all this and comply with these standards, we can open a debate on whether the EU is an alternative or not. But right now the narrative seems to be an attempt to slow down some of the reforms. I do not believe that it would be beneficial for the region to consider alternatives that drive us away from our own space, because Europe is our space.

**THE STATE IN LEAGUE WITH PARTIES**

I hope we change our sense of identity as well and become citizens rather than soldiers of differing identities, and that that will help stabilise the region. I hope we realise that we do not live by repeating so many times a day who we are and what our ethnic origins are, or count each other’s ethnic blood cells, but by how much we are willing to put ourselves into building our own country and institutions, how much we are prepared to work and accept certain values and standards.

Apart from these cumbersome administrations, we have a major problem in our politicised administrations. They are not accountable to citizens and they do not work in the public interest (so they are neither speedy nor efficient), but accountable to the people who appointed them, chiefly political parties. That is not a good system. In Montenegro the government has not been replaced for decades; that has become indecent. There is no distinction between partisanship and public interest, and that is something that we must change.
CHAPTER 2: EUROPEAN UNION BETWEEN LAMENT AND RHAPSODY

ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS

DEJAN RADIĆ (SARAJEVO): I believe that after Croatia’s entry into the EU, the process of enlargement and integration will probably cease for a certain period, not only because the EU has learned some lessons from previous rounds of enlargement but also because it is facing a crisis.

TAMARA BRANKOVIĆ (BELGRADE): The EU is a mechanism that is driving us forward and helping us be better, it is a prestigious club of nations that safeguards and fosters these values, one that we chose to join more than a decade ago. Therefore we must change our discourse and understand that we are pursuing reforms mostly for ourselves and that membership will come at one point as a validation of our effort.

ALEKSANDAR JOVANOVSKI (SKOPJE): The Balkans has gained last-minute importance after Croatia joined the EU. The solution to the dispute between Belgrade and Pristina lends a freshness to European processes. The region has a responsibility to become part of the European family, through dialogue and European conduct. Even though there are major issues to resolve, political elites in the region must take their countries to where they belong historically and as a civilisation.

VIDEO 1

NEARLY A BILLION FOR CROATIA

From 2007 to 2013, Croatia received 997 million euros from the EU as pre-accession assistance. Macedonia received 614 million euros for the same period. In the past seven years, the EU transferred to Montenegro 235 million euros, and Bosnia and Herzegovina received 655 million euros for the same period. Serbia received 1.38 billion euros as pre-accession assistance for the same period.

VIDEO 2

AGRICULTURE FARED THE BEST

Only 31,000 Czechs and 160,000 Slovaks looked for jobs in the EU. In the first two years following accession, income increased 11 per cent in the Czech Republic, pensions 14 per cent, and prices rose 4 per cent. Economic growth accelerated and exports rose as high as 17 per cent. Even farmers who faced harsh competition from Poland after joining the EU recorded growth thanks to EU subsidies. Agriculture sustained no losses and earned 250 million euros.
CHAPTER 3

VICINITIES THROUGH CARTOONS

Cartoons by the most well-known cartoonists in the region provide a small history lesson of the region in the past 20 or 30 years. What is caricatured in the region, what inspired cartoons, which cartoons were not drawn but could have been, and were there any restraints? Are cartoons a genre of journalism? Or historical documents? Does a good cartoonist need to live in times of distorted values? These are some of the questions answered by reputable cartoonists: Davor Štambuk (Zagreb), Mirza Ibrahimpašić (Sarajevo), Dragan Popovski (Skopje) and Marko Somborac (Smederevo). A word of introduction by columnist Voja Žanetić (Belgrade).
WORD OF INTRODUCTION

VOJA ŽANETIĆ
SCREENWRITER, COLUMNIST, AND WRITER, BELGRADE

LIFE IS THE SAD PART OF CARTOONS, CARTOONS ARE THE FUNNIER PART OF LIFE

My family and those around me have always been fond of cartoons. In so much that my mom and dad made one that came to life nine months later. For those reasons and due to my surroundings, I have contemplated cartoons and life for years, and I have concluded that He did not create the world but made a drawing for a cartoon. And for years He has been making additions to this cartoon, at least in my life. I suppose He wants to laugh, though I doubt He has a sense of humour. He draws a television and then adds reality programs to it; He draws Angelina Jolie and adds a bunch of children and Brad Pitt, He draws people who lose elections and then adds the winners, He draws love and sex and adds marriage, He draws the joy of working and adds the boss, fellow workers, wages, and working hours.

As far as I am concerned, life is a kind of well-drawn cartoon, and cartoonists are people who are close to God, but unlike Him, they draw funny things, whereas He draws neither funny nor witty cartoons. Life is the sad part of cartoons and cartoons are the funnier part of life.
CHAPTER 3: VICINITIES THROUGH CARTOONS

DAVOR ŠTAMBUK
Cartoonist, Zagreb

SEX IS LIKE POLITICS

Sexy cartoons are not far from political cartoons because someone is always doing someone, which goes for politics as well. I made my cartoon career in France. I began by drawing those cartoons when taboos of civil society started to collapse, when the sexual revolution broke out. I was young and I confess I was a volunteer in that sexual revolution from the first day. So, then I began to express myself through cartoons. I had many problems in the beginning. When we look at France we see only Paris. Paris has quite a different view of public morality than the provinces. Provinces are conservative, so the office received hundreds of letters, telling me to deal with my sexual problems within my own four walls.

My first wife who was French brought me to France. I did not speak French back then, so we communicated in English. I like to say it was a beautiful English language because we kept saying “I love you” to each other all day. So I could not understand French politics. To be honest, I was not really interested in politics. So, those early days compelled me to draw cartoons in a very different way and to devote myself entirely to visual gags, because I could not write either. So, I remained faithful to cartoons without words. Who knows how many thousands and thousands I published, because my contract required five drawings a week in France’s biggest tabloid.

PEOPLE HAVE LITTLE REASON TO LAUGH

I saw little humour erupting in the past 20 or so years, although humour could certainly soften much of the hatred that mounted in these parts. To be honest, I found few such cartoonists in Croatia, none who encouraged the hatred and none who sought to soften it.

People have little reason to laugh; when you are struggling to bring food to the table, laughter is not on your mind. Whether it is because of the censorship of the former system that was carried over into the new system, that cartoonists are gelded today, I cannot tell. But there are definitely no sharp cartoons.
CHAPTER 3: VICINITIES THROUGH CARTOONS

MIRZA F. IBRAHIMPAŠIĆ
CARTOONIST, SARAJEVO

JOKES ARE A PROTEST AGAINST THE HARSH REALITY

People in Bosnia make jokes about a reality that is very cruel, almost morbid, and they do it often, almost every day. I believe that people need to respond to a current and harsh reality in a joking and ironic way. It is a kind of resistance, I believe, a kind of anaesthetic against a reality that they cannot influence. People feel helpless and hurt in these turbulent times that are hard throughout the region, and they feel threatened and need to do something. But a person who is not in a party, who has no status, no power, has neither the financial means nor social status, can do little. So people rebel and feel the need to do something. That is so everywhere and with all people.

Cartoons are an attempt to scream, to say something, to do something, to express a stance. Oftentimes people are not lucky, but I have been lucky in that I have found people in media who share my views. It does not happen otherwise, not in Bosnia.

You cannot have your cartoon published in a medium that thinks differently than you. Many people accuse me of betraying my people, something like that. Criticism is universal, criticism targets phenomena that are immoral or dishonest. Often I criticise religion, so I am high up on the list of Islamophobes. But it means little to me because I am a freelancer.

Cartoons have been sarcastic and brutal since the war and not as funny, from what I have observed. That is because of the reality. Reality is such that cartoons cannot be different; they mirror reality. The brutality of politics and society against the citizen, the individual, that prompts these cartoons. They are rather more a critical response to the country’s political and economic circumstances than an attempt to be funny. The question is whether politicians have any awareness at all, apart from promoting their own interests and betterment. Trying to change public awareness and awaken the awareness to assume a critical stance toward the establishment, toward the politics that has oppressed and harassed them so much and reduced them to a beggarly existence – there is a purpose in that, at least to try.

I AM THE BEST BECAUSE I AM THE ONLY ONE, UNFORTUNATELY

Often I say jokingly that I am the best cartoonist in Bosnia and Herzegovina because I am the only one. Cartoons certainly cannot provide a living; no one does cartoons anymore. There are a couple of men who do other jobs in the press and are paid for
that work, and they draw cartoons on the side. When they retire, there will be no one. That is the trend. Sometimes publications provide a nice fee that pays for my cigarettes, but I cannot make a living from it, so I guess that is why no one is in the profession. We used to have seven or eight comic periodicals that I remember – there was Kerempuh, Cicak, Jez, Veseli Svet, and so on. Veseli Svet used to be a book that had nearly 100 pages of funny cartoons. They were all shut down; there is nothing any more.

When we talk about past times and the dictatorship of the proletariat, as it was generally called, we had more press freedom than today. I must emphasise that I received a call from the newsroom of the Community Party newspaper, the Komunist, and was asked to do a cartoon for them, a critical cartoon, of course, against my own party. Today we cannot imagine drawing cartoons of ourselves. You cannot imagine it in Macedonia. And I believe it is the same elsewhere in the region.

**BREAK ALL MIRRORS IN THE GOVERNMENTS**

The first thing that we need to do, and I have said this several times, is to break all mirrors in the government because politicos do not see themselves in the mirrors any more. When they assume power they see Napoleon, Voltaire, maybe John Wayne.

The general opinion is that cartoons are funny. I say this again, but they are funny only if they make fun of those who aspire to rule over us. It is all the same whether politicos or singers are on the stage, sucking in our energy as we applaud. They see themselves as a divinity on that stage. But no one wonders when we go to a concert, whether we bought the ticket to see our idol or paid our idol to sing. It is quite a different position. Whether he is on the stage or in politics, whatever his position, as long as he is paid to sing or work for us or carry out that reform or take us into the EU or wherever, that is how he needs to act. We have a word in Macedonia, it
is “prostrun”, and it means straight. He must stand before me, stand straight before us and brief us on what he did and for what he was summoned. Generally, cartoons deal with people in power; the opposition are their own cartoon. There are no cartoons in Macedonia any more. Not because politicians so decreed, but newspaper bosses are smart enough not to publish what should not be published.

**MAKING A CARTOON OUT OF SKOPJE**

When I say I live in Skopje, I might as well say I live in a cartoon. New generations have created a cartoon out of the Skopje that once was and the city that we tried to build after the earthquake, and I mean architecture and urbanism for which we had help from world-renowned authorities such as Kenzo Tange and Borovski. They mixed neoclassicism with baroque and they did it in the 21st century, mind you. Hundreds of monuments, most of them with men on horses. They did not ride horses, which is all the sadder. People do not care about Cyril and Methodius, they are boring guys who wrote something, they made the entire Slavic world literate, but that is ancient stuff and boring. But when a man holds a sword and sits on a horse, that is momentous. That is what makes Skopje a cartoon.

**MARKO SOMBORAC**

*CARTOONIST, SMEDEREVO*

**POLITICIANS ARE OUR BIGGEST RIVALS**

What is really the point: We have state-owned media so one can hardly draw anything against the state, then tycoon-owned media owned so one can hardly draw the tycoon, and then the media where I work, one owned by a foreign publisher who cares only about being widely read, so hit it ... When I started, politicians, tycoons and government officials, I was told, used to call my newsroom and ask, “Why did he do it this way, why that way?” But they were kind enough not to tell me about it so I could work in peace. I have not been sacked, and after a while they gave up.

In Serbia, politicians are the stars and heroes of everything that goes on, so if a person is in the cartoon profession, he would naturally draw them. It is hard to think up something witty and funny every day, something funnier than what politicians actually do, so they are our biggest rivals.

Sometimes I get invited to places and some of these politicians are there, so we meet. I have no particular wish to meet any poli-
tician, but I would not mind meeting Berlusconi or Obama. But I have no particular desire to otherwise.

We are all saying that cartoonists have to compete with the actions of politicians, yet sometimes it is hard to distort their actions, the things that come to their minds...

**THE DISAPPOINTED DO NOT PROTEST**

This is a bit of an exaggeration but if the bread tax is raised in France, two million people take to the streets, if they cancel the 16th salary in Greece, five million people protest. In Serbia we have shortages of milk, oil, people are not paid, yet Serbs say, “Oh, well...” This is a small illustration of our mind set, considering that things have not improved much since October 5. People are disappointed, so they do not protest.

**ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS**

**ADNAN OVČINA (SARAJEVO):** I believe that every form of caricature is a form of art, whether we speak of political, social, or sexual cartoons, precisely because it represents a social reality in an innovative and witty way and helps people understand the complex reality of their lives. The main reason why I believe that cartoon is art is that it connects people regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation, so they view and experience the cartoon in the same way.

**SRĐAN HERCIGONJA (BELGRADE):** Before the 1990s, cartoons were used as an excellent way to protest against the ruling establishment. Since the 1990s, cartoons have ceased being a means of expression. If you take a look at today’s guests, you will observe that they are all over the age of 50, which speaks volumes about young generations failing to make a mark and use cartoons adequately to protest against the government. Young people today prefer to merge into the establishment rather than oppose it.
CHAPTER 4

VIOLENCE AMONG AND AGAINST YOUNG PEOPLE

Why do we have an increase in violence in the region and how do we deal with it? Wars and conflicts in this part of the world and the consequences on young people. Wars as a form of physical and psychological aggression against young people. The authority cult as aggressiveness against young people and a model of behavior at the same time. Have young people in the region become replicas of their parents? Our guests from the region who will discuss these issues in the fourth episode of *Vicinities* are: Tanja Vujović (Podgorica), Belul Beqaj (Pristina), Jasna Barjaktarević (Sarajevo) and Jan Škoberne (Ljubljana). A word of introduction by columnist Voja Žanetić (Belgrade).
I am a peace-loving man and therefore opposed to violence – in fact so much that I would beat anyone who is violent. I would not really, as it would probably be somebody stronger than me. The problem with violence is that people are aggressive against people who are opposed to violence and who have neither the power nor strength to defend themselves. The problem with violence is not in its methods, but in its victims. Therefore, I would treat violence in such a way as to have aggressors perpetrate violence against aggressors. For instance, in soccer, the fans and players in the stadium are in completely wrong positions. I would put the 22,000 lads who like to fight in the field and the 22 rich guys who run after the ball in the stands along with other nice people. What a show that would be and how good the terrace chants would sound! The best way to fight violence is to pit violence against violence. In that case, I would do the following: I would organise a competition in violence, between those who like to perpetrate violence and those who perpetrate violence. In the quarterfinals, we would have mafia bosses fighting North Korean leaders, fan club leaders against hooligans from the block, and Breivik against Al-Qaeda. After the quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals, the winner would go to jail and starts training for the next competition.

Violence is a problem only if we have a problem with it. Once violence has a problem with us, it is no longer our problem.
There is an increase in violence because we have a problem defining what violence is and what it is not. Not every aggressive behaviour can be classified as violence. Also, sometimes we do not describe a certain type of behaviour as aggressive because there is no actual classification. We have the same problem with mobbing. We tolerate it as we do violence, because we do not know where the boundaries are and consider it normal behaviour in these parts. We let our parents and our bosses practice it. So our children grow up in a neurotic conflict, which is learned. Violence and aggression are learned – no one is born aggressive. Thus, tolerance for violence spreads; it is passed on. If I see it in my surroundings and if I grow up in an aggressive family, that becomes my way of communicating with people.

AGGRESSION AS A MASK FOR ANXIETY

In this region, violence is more common among younger and older men than among women, because our culture expects virility. Men and boys grow up thinking that they must be brave, responsible and look after others. They are given tasks that they can barely deal with. When they are 8, 9, or 10 years old, they must not cry, they must not be afraid and they must not fall in love. A man who cries is not accepted by those around him – by his father first and foremost. Meeting these demands creates inner struggles in boys. We always see pathology as a reason for aggressiveness, never fear. But very often these boys and young men are afraid, and because fear is not socially acceptable, they mask it with aggressiveness.

On the other hand, a father’s role is crucial. Some fathers are passive-aggressive and their language is ironic, cynical, and sarcastic so as to toughen up their boys. But, the boys are always hearing criticism and objections, and are being controlled. Their psyche and identity narrows and at some point it will burst. The Balkans is a land of blood and honey, and if you are not “a man” you will be excluded from society.

DELINQUENCY STARTS AT SCHOOL

For us, the problem of delinquent behaviour starts at school. Why? Because we have rigid curricula with many stereotypes, and educators who demand straight A students and fixed knowledge. These educators are unable to see creativity in boys or girls who dislike math or history but are
good at drawing. No. Our education system has many stereotypes that single out what we have learned. Other children have evaluation systems at that time, from the first grade, and if they don’t respond well or if they fail, they join the other side. Aggressive behaviour starts in primary school only because we are unable to give our full attention to every individual student. We cannot deal with violence globally. But we can start individually in school. Schools can change the way we evaluate each child, and we should start from there.

**MOST HATRED IS PROJECTED**

An analysis of protests in the region over the past 20 years would show that they were mostly orchestrated processes, and that we were often collateral damage. Someone voices an idea, and young people pick it up and exploit it in their rebelliousness. We have a problem in that we explain situations aggressively and revolutionarily. That is why we keep relapsing into hate speech against nations or ethnic identities or even ourselves. Future generations must discard this; that part of intimate identity must remain part of family upbringing, not street behaviour which is what it is.

We do not get to know one another, exchange experiences, or feel empathy and altruism in our ethnically clean and confined environment. There would be far less aggressiveness if we traveled more, exchanged experiences and met new people, because most hatred is projected in theory. It is historically based on something from the past, not the future.

**THERAPISTS HAVE BECOME ACCEPTABLE**

Recognising quality in each person is very important. There are not too many of us, so every country in the region can organise social services, psychologists, and teachers to work separately, because that is what we need. Yet we are doing poorly in all of these segments, specifically in the region. Why? Because we need good organisational management to find a solution for every family. We often blame our past and economic circumstances, yet the same applies to other parts of the world. So, what is the difference? It is in the way each family tackles its problems.

We are talking about violence among minors and in primary schools. Families that are in contact with schools and social workers can establish good communication with schools or that can be developed through good communication with parents. Therapists and psychologists have become more acceptable these days. People seek help in finding ways to deal with their problems.

**CHILDREN SEEK HELP FOR THEIR PARENTS**

When 10-year-olds can no longer bear neurotic conflicts at home, they turn to virtual communication and virtual friends, and assume cyber roles. This is where cyber violence begins. However, kids often turn to psychologists as well and seek help for their parents. They are often socially and intellectually more mature than their parents. They want to help their parents, and
that is why they come for help. But we need to change our way of thinking that there is always someone above. We have to take the first step and identify the main problem, which is to build our children’s self-confidence and self-esteem. Kids build their own identity and self-esteem when they are among peers. If you give a child an appropriate role, he will pass it on and be able to help people around him. Children are much more mature and intelligent than we care to admit. We only have to recognise that and give those young people a chance to help us.

JAN ŠKOBERNE
POLITICAL SCIENTIST, LJUBLJANA

NOT AN ALARMING SITUATION
The situation is not alarming, in my opinion. We observe the violence, but not an increase, as you said, which is why we are putting more effort into curbing it. Naturally, if we speak of the political connotation, of political violence, protests and so on, these things normally occur in every generation, and every generation faces a new form of violence and then works to prevent it. Therefore I would not call the situation alarming, but it is a good thing that we are working on these issues.

LACK OF PROSPECTS BREEDS VIOLENCE
Slovenia had a clear future before joining the EU. It introduced the euro, implemented reforms, and so on. Today the course is not so clear; the prospects for young people are not clear. For the first time, we failed to record growth; we recorded a drop. That is when violence broke out the first time. There was an attack on the Slovenian Parliament when young people demanded answers from the people who should be accountable to them, to set a platform for education, jobs, securing apartments and so on. Poor prospects spur violence, and that has become a bigger problem than the crisis. Violence begins earlier, and its political aspect among youth will be present.

VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS
This is a shocking topic in Slovenia, and there is a lot of discussion about students being physically violent or mentally abusive toward their teachers. In any case, it must not be tolerated. Nowadays, with our damaged system of values, both parents and students abuse teachers psychologically. Students go to school to get an A, not for the sake of knowledge or to be part of a process that they respect and need for their future. We have a discrepancy between the teacher and student. The student has no respect for the teacher, yet he wants good
grades and respect. That relationship is a bigger problem for us now, as is the question of how to balance values and respect.

**YOUNG PEOPLE ARE UNDER PRESSURE**

We are trying to reduce the pressure on young people nowadays. That is a policy in the EU, for instance. The EU is funding projects to develop competence in young people. They say, you should be a leader, you are creative, you can become an active citizen and so on. But along with school and family life and a lack of prospects, this adds pressure that young people cannot handle. In a way, the role of society and nongovernmental organisations is to help them in this regard, and set a platform for them so that they can process information and the possibilities offered to them and make a choice. If I am good at drawing but full of frustration from society and my family or some other influence, I would have someone to guide me toward developing something positive.

**RIGHT TO VOTE AT 15**

We will not solve problems with a new law or more rigid laws. We need laws that we will observe, and observe at all levels. Young people who staged a rally in Maribor and demanded the resignation of its corrupt mayor, who were the core of a revolutionary policy that merely asked for a government of law – we forced them into the street because they could not get answers to their questions in the government. Change is demanded as is respect for government of law, but by contradicting that government of law. This is a major problem.

I believe that young people must become involved as soon as possible in all processes of building and managing society. They need to be allowed to vote at 15, or perhaps earlier. If people can vote at 98, they can certainly vote at that young age. Young people need to have their voices heard in the system. They need to make decisions and to create. We need to have faith and allow a 15-year-old to say, I believe this new group, I am not going to believe these people who have come out of the war, who are responsible for independence or whatever. That platform is over – the possibility and the trust. Secondly, we must talk with young people about every relevant question, what they eat at school and so on, not on a daily basis, but at least once a year, for the process to be an ongoing one, and not orchestrated and dictated, and to have a more direct democracy. Our working long hours today is pressure without prospects, and young people feel that they are working for someone else, not themselves, so their way out is through violence.
VIOLENCE IS GROWING, FIGURES ARE INACCURATE

In Montenegro, violence among youth is an increasingly frequent and widespread socio-pathological phenomenon. We cannot discuss the actual proportions because different relevant institutions are keeping separate records. Since there is no single record, the phenomenon is not monitored from one direction, so we cannot give accurate figures, but the figure for 2012 is 540 registered minor delinquents, according to the Statistics Bureau. The figure is big and alarming, considering the number of adolescents in Montenegro. Many of the charges that were filed did not end with trials, and many cases were not reported, so this is just the tip of the iceberg.

AGGRESSORS ARE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

I recall a murder case in which a 16-year-old boy killed his father while he was sleeping. The boy had been abused by his parents for years. Therefore, violence is not only present among young people; we have parent violence against children, which produces the violence among young people. I carried out a survey on 270 underage delinquents, which showed very strong family violence. And violence in families produces violence among youth. Therein lies the origin of it, I would say. Eighty per cent of those underage delinquents see themselves as victims of family violence.

ARMED ADOLESCENTS

Today, weapons are available for young adults in our families. A survey showed that every fifth household in Montenegro has a fire weapon. Children carry weapons to school. Why is that? Mostly because it gives them a feeling of power and security. The patriarchal models of behaviour in our region demand that we treat weapons as a precious possession. Weapons are inherited by men who relate to them in a strictly traditional way, and they are accessible to young men. In adolescence, peer validation is very important. Young people often use fire weapons or become victims. How did weapons end up in our homes? Wars in the vicinity and the 1990s that we have mentioned are only the beginning of a chain that has left serious consequences.

EVERYTHING ORIGINATES IN THE FAMILY

I believe that the problem originates in the family. Families are in a severe crisis today; contents of family life have been reduced and there is overall existential insecurity. Parents are struggling to make ends meet and devoting neither time, nor giving love
 CHAPTER 4 : VIOLENCE AMONG AND AGAINST YOUNG PEOPLE

or emotional support, to their children. Children feel neglected, which creates a feeling of dissatisfaction among them. The anger causes aggressive behaviour toward the outside world, among peers. That is one reason. Then we have very wealthy families who meet all the needs of their children. Yet these young people are jaded and bored, their existence is meaningless, and out of ennui or arrogance or indifference, they find a way out in antisocial behaviour. So no wonder the starting age for violence is falling.

BELUL BEQAJ
POLITICAL SCIENTIST, PRISTINA

WE LIVE IN HATE COUNTRIES

Young people in Kosovo as everywhere else are not predestined for violence or aggressiveness. But unfortunately, we live in abnormal circumstances – we had 21 bomb attacks and an unidentified assault in northern Mitrovica from January through October. Children were among the casualties. The reasons for these attacks were mostly political, of course. Another case is indicative, I suppose, of trauma among locals in Mitrovica. It was a recent basketball game, and the fans of Mitrovica and Pristina had a fight. Then the fight spread among the players. The situation in Kosovo is more or less the consequence of a legacy. We should paraphrase Andrić who said that in hate countries people who know not how to hate are hated the most. Hatred is passed on from generation to generation. Ethnic-related clashes in Kosovo have had an enormous effect on youth. We cannot change the cause overnight. Because of the conflicts in the past 20 years, circumstances are glum as the government has no youth policy.

POLITICIANS LOOKING AFTER THEIR OWN FUTURE

I believe that we should address another problem of an ethical nature. Why am I saying this? I focus on Kosovo, because the situation is alarming. With the erosion of ethical values, I will be respected only if, as an Albanian, I hate a Serb, and vice versa. We have sunk so low, the value system is completely ruined and unless we make an about-face and begin to show love and respect, we will have force and violence. Politics means launching a social campaign to resolve these contradictions, for instance these ethical ones. But, politics is not working on that, rather to ensure its own future. So as long as that is so, anti-values will flourish, and that breeds hate instead of love and respect.

VALUES ARE JUDGED BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE NONE

My daughter tells me: Ok, I will get straight As, but will that ensure a bright future?
Will I be able to find a job since 50 per cent of economically able citizens in Kosovo do not have one? She is convinced that her only future is in pursuing the path that was created by the people responsible for this policy.

I think the utter collapse of the system of morality brought on the political crisis. Unfortunately, we in Kosovo are behind everyone else when it comes to consolidation of the state. Until we develop a government of law, as long as we have a ruined system and a political elite operates within war frameworks and a war mentality, I am not optimistic about our emerging from this situation soon, because values are judged by those who have none. People who carried knives with impunity are probably going to carry around bombs tomorrow. That shows absence of government of law.

**IT IS NOT GOOD TO LIVE UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE PAST**

Let us be realistic, we have a reproduction of war elites in these parts. I am not saying this without a reason, that for all these years, warriors waged politics. Their attitude toward the future must be radically re-examined, because it is not good for us to be under the pressure of the past, as we have so far. Or else, we must find alternatives that are worthy of the future.

I see a big danger in that the system creates obstacles for people instead of creating the conditions to assist them. The government, the system, and the institutions should be in the service of law and the needs and demands of youth. Alas, for whom are the institutions of the system working?

Someone proposed that young people be allowed to vote at age 15. We had elections in Kosovo and the American ambassador said that an “industrial theft took place.” Let us be realistic, what are we to gain by including the young, if we continue to rig the vote? How are we to develop democracy on those grounds? How is the state to function? How are young people to secure their rights when they know in advance that they are doomed to being deprived of their rights and discriminated against?

**ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS**

ADNAN OVČINA (SARAJEVO): When we speak of violence, prevention is crucial. Above all, media should have a big role in preventing violence. I am referring mostly to television because educational and entertainment shows on television are out-dated and should be adjusted to the needs and affinities and interests of young people. Social networks are next in importance, because young people spend a lot of time there, and third comes all institutions, including school as the major institution where young people spends most of their time. Youth organisations and sports clubs should have greater presence on social
networks and communicate with young people directly and indirectly.

EVICA KUČ (BELGRADE): Today we have a hyper-production of violence in media, and I believe glorification of crime in all countries in the region is one of the biggest problems and the first thing we need to change if we want to curb violence among and against young people. I agree with other participants about the causes of violence and the strong role families play in preventing violence among and against youth.

VIDEO 1

TWO LOADED GUNS IN THE CLASSROOM

Most of our problems were with former students. They would come to the school-yard and cause trouble by abusing students and teachers. Many fights broke out. I would find all kinds of stuff, from narcotics to guns. Once I found two loaded guns in a classroom. The professor was writing on the board, his back turned to them, and students were having fun aiming it at the back of his head. (A statement by Milorad Grujić, a middle school police officer)

VIDEO 2

VICTIMS OFTEN BECOME AGGRESSORS

In Serbia, every fifth child is physically abused and about a quarter of all children suffer emotional and mental violence. Sixty-four per cent of teachers believe that the cause of violence among youth lies in the family. In Croatia, 33 per cent of violence is kicking someone out of a game or ignoring them, whereas a quarter of acts of violence are everyday threats. A survey conducted by UNICEF shows that 19 per cent of children suffered severe injury during acts of violence, and among the aggressors, 33 per cent were boys and 17 per cent girls. Students who were victims of violence often resort to aggressiveness themselves and later become aggressors.

VIDEO 3

HORRIFIC EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE

In a provincial town, four schoolgirls bullied, hit, and sexually abused a 13-year-old girl for five hours straight. They recorded it on camera and forwarded the video to other students and posted it on YouTube. A student was hurt in a primary school fight in Valjevo. That incident was recorded and broadcast on a local television. In Novi Sad, three girls and eight boys hit an eighth grade student and made her eat grass. A nine-year-old boy in third grade in Čačak was bullied by three classmates, his teacher only a few yards away.
CHAPTER 5

OUR HISTORY AND YOUR HISTORY

The government invariably influences the programs that are to be written, it selects the authors directly or indirectly and it makes no mistakes in the process as the mechanisms are never wrong. People in power always explain their being in power as a natural consequence of history, and the goals that they work for follow from that historical course and quite naturally so. But that does not mean that historians cannot deliver truths within these frameworks. Falsification of history is not necessarily done by stating incorrect information; data selection can create different pictures. These assessments were heard during a discussion on the topic, our history and your history. Our guests were Slavko Burzanović (Podgorica), Jasna Babić (Zagreb), Srđan Milošević (Belgrade) and Edin Radušić (Sarajevo). A word of introduction from screenwriter Feđa Isović (Sarajevo).
Duro and Rene are in a trench, arguing over who started the war. Đuro is holding a Kalashnikov, so the scientific and historical argument is on his side. I suppose you recognise the scene from Danis Tanović’s movie No Man’s Land. In my opinion, this scene best illustrates and documents our history. The party with the Kalashnikov, that is Đuro, has the historical facts on its side. The guy at whom the Kalashnikov is pointed, that is Rene, covers his ears and has no valid argument in the debate. The point is simple: Winners write the history. But therein lies our problem. Who is to be the supreme interpreter of the wars in the 1990s? Who is the winner of the Balkans Wars? Everyone and no one. It depends which textbook you pick up, and whether it is written in Serbian, Bosnian, or Croatian. That makes history in the Balkans a strange discipline, completely different from other sciences. Math, for instance, gives the same results in Belgrade and Zagreb and Sarajevo, and I heard that two plus two is four in Brussels as well. But with history we find that it is not so, nothing is simple. If history produces differing results, if we do not have one truth, can we consider it a science, as shouldn’t science have one conclusive truth? I believe so, that we can view history as a science in this part of the world. As soon as we let religion be taught as a science, as the subject in schools is called religious science, then there is no reason why our differing histories should not be recognised as relevant sciences. To each his own.
WINNERS ARE NOT OMNIPOTENT AFTER ALL

Someone said that the history of previous generations was putting pressure to bear on current generations. Yes, winners write the history – but not only winners because at some point the winners leave the stage and leave room for new writings. Besides, there are sufficient testimonies, especially in modern times, to enable corrections. History as a profession has a principle of historical distance. Time must pass for events to settle, so that important sources explaining a particular phenomenon or certain period become accessible, allowing for an impartial view of what really took place.

HISTORY CAN BE BORING AS WELL AS INTERESTING

If we view a history lesson as a sum of facts delivered to a student to memorise, then history is very boring, especially ex-cathedra lessons without student activity. The remedy for that is workshops, but most teachers are not trained to conduct them, they have no incentives to do so and sometimes they don’t have the certain conditions necessary. But when there is interaction between the teacher and student, history lessons become more interesting.

We often debate the contents, the selection of contents and their truth, and in that we overlook one of the most important goals of history lessons, which is to develop not only historical knowledge but also critical-thinking skills, the ability to think critically which goes beyond a particular student’s interest in history in general. In any situation, that type of thinking is a powerful instrument that is useful throughout life. Then history is very close to life.

WRITING TEXTBOOKS IS A TRAUMA

History textbooks were changed in Montenegro in 2001, and since then some minor changes and additions have been made. The government always has influence; it influences curricula and selects authors (directly or indirectly). Make no mistake, the mechanisms are unmistakable and politicos always seek to show that their being in government today is a completely natural consequence of the historical course, and that their goals are a logical sequence of that historical course. That does not mean that historians cannot convey truths within that framework. Falsifying history is not necessarily only done by stating incorrect data; it can be done through the selection of data that will portray another picture.

I wrote a textbook on the 20th century – the most ungrateful period – and it was
traumatic. At one point I was close to giving it all up because of the different pressure that was exerted on me, and then I realised that someone else would paint over that work and write it the way they want it. Eventually I conceded to some of the suggestions, despite the fact that I did not agree with them. The one who commissions the work can make changes in the textbook. There seemed to be too many changes, but later I was glad I had not given up, as the textbook has been in schools for 10 years.

THE INTERNET OPENS BROAD POSSIBILITIES

I taught before the Internet age, when the Internet was not available. I believe it opens up huge possibilities. A problem in teaching history is that kids have different prior knowledge and different interests, and you are presenting one text for them all. You are giving all of them the same meal. But the Internet allows for individualised homework and papers with different formats, and allows students to research and go through the process, working with the teacher of course, to broaden their knowledge to suit their own likes, not necessarily in the way it was presented in the textbook.

JASNA BABIĆ
JOURNALIST, ZAGREB

TRUTHS ARE A MATTER OF AGREEMENT

Who are the winners of the past wars? Not the people who were in those wars, but politicians who take up space in Skopje, Zagreb, Belgrade, and Sarajevo. This talk about distance is an old prejudice, a platitude. As far as I can see, truths are a matter of agreement as time goes by. Now, everyone incorporates part of their own interests into the truth and that is where compromises are made. As a journalist, however, I am really not interested in the truth that infected our histories. We have this mythological history that is fostered by so-called nation-building historians and their disciples, the non-historians. As a student I hated history. Lexicons and encyclopaedia are there to consult when you need a year, with a brief description. I did not like history because the teachers made it so odious that I really thought it was a science. Later on I discovered that my miserable teachers had learned history the same way, so they passed their misery on to the students. I discovered that
history was interesting in the 1980s, when I read French history books. Then I realised what an incredible inspiration it was for a journalist, that is was really gossiping about the past.

**NONENTITIES IN TEXTBOOKS**

Earlier in 2013 a change in textbooks for secondary schools was announced, because some of the facts were out-dated, for instance that General Gotovina was at large and that Ivo Sanader was the prime minister. Only this morning I was astonished to see such trivial, minor matters in a textbook; the fact that a prime minister who changes every four years and is therefore an episode in history should be included in a textbook.

**THE INTERNET ENCOURAGES DISINTEGRATION**

The Internet helps us integrate on the level of communication but at the same time produces disintegration. This is visible in society. People sit at home and have no desire to communicate physically with another person. They have no idea how the person lives, they do not establish a relationship, but they communicate. This creates the feeling of a global village. That is an advantage, but only on a technical level.

**SRĐAN MILOŠEVIĆ**
**HISTORIAN, BELGRADE**

**TIME MUST PASS FOR SOME SUBJECTS**

Time must pass in order for the most relevant sources for certain topics to become available. On the other hand, some information is made easily available in the modern era thanks to media and the fact that means of communication prevent the hiding of many things. In previous years we had to wait for many years to learn something, but today a lot of things are discovered when they happen.

As for reaching agreement over truth with a capital T – that is possible, but not based on knowledge, not based on an academic approach to matters, because it is a work based on historical sources that will produce different results. Historians learn in their freshmen year that no two historians will write the same historical narrative, even given the same sources.

**STUDENTS MUST THINK LIKE HISTORIANS**

The future of history lessons is that students will learn to think as historians. The point is not to present them with facts, but
rather have them confront different historical sources. The method that historians apply is known as a critique of historical sources, and by definition it should develop critical-thinking skills. If this is not achieved through history classes, then the method failed to be useful to those who teach it or to those who study it.

For instance, I found chemistry exceedingly boring in school while we were writing formulas on the board, but once we started making soap and experimenting with acids and bases, it became interesting.

**DO NOT DEAL IN HISTORY IF IT IS BORING**

Early in the 1990s new history textbooks were written for all grades. The next big change came in 2000, or perhaps later in 2002 and 2003. A new approach was adopted including several authors and several textbooks, so that now it has reached a completely new form, but the basic plan and program has remained practically the same in all these textbooks written today by different authors.

A book by French historian Marc Ferro (Abuse and Misuse of the Past) takes 10 to 15 examples from the most different parts of the world and shows how history is used and abused in class. We must keep in mind that the history textbook is only one experience - albeit the most intense one - that a student has with history, but there are other histories as well, such as those told by the media and family, and what politicians suggest as a desirable view of the past, a justification of certain political actions. The whole interaction should be taken into consideration when we talk of what we know about history.

If we really want a history that indeed teaches, then the only path is to confront different historical approaches, results, and sources. There is no other way. Do not deal in history if that is too much effort.

**A LOT OF INCORRECT INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET**

There is a lot of information circulating on the Internet that is completely incorrect. You have an unlimited choice, but the question is whether everything that is on offer is relevant. With guidance, yes. It is good that a lot of information is available, but the quality of the information is questionable. This is where the teacher’s role is important, to act as a guide through the available information.

**COOPERATION IMPROVING ALL THE TIME**

Historians in the region cooperate. I find it valuable, but these are comparatively small communities of scholars. Often just one historian deals with a certain topic, so a fellow historian from a German institute or some other part of the world who is working on the same topic would be more interesting for a conversation. But there is communication and in some areas it is quite intense. This was renewed late in the 1990s and early 2000s through a concept of meetings and conferences of historians from the region. Since then, cooperation has been on an upward trajectory and in-
includes common projects. True, the cooperation is mostly on a personal level, but there are some institutional frameworks, and it is moving along in a positive direction. Of course it is always better for these things to be more intense.

EDIN RADUŠIĆ
HISTORIAN, SARAJEVO

DIFFERENT NATIONAL TRUTHS
In Bosnia the story of two schools under one roof is well known as a kind of apartheid. But we can talk about three schools under one roof and that reflects the real situation on the ground. I believe it is the result of history being deemed a national subject, and not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, because if you have three ethnic groups anywhere you expect to have three national stories, three national truths. It is not a problem when we are in academic circles and discuss our differing views and conclusions, because we are able to establish the truth over certain facts. But beyond that, there are always disputes about motives, causes and consequences, especially long-term consequences. Of key importance is delivering to students what science has established. Often information that is not true is served to students as an absolute truth. So, the problem is knowledge transfer from the academic to the student level.

SOMETIMES STUDENTS SEEM MORE CLEVER THAN TEACHERS
Those of us who study the past know how interesting it is, so that means that we need to make explorers out of students. In order to create explorers, we should not offer them finished facts, because finished facts lead to a finished ideology, one that is devised, which is very close to the wishes of political elites. We must develop investigators that hear the views of others and look for what is different. That will make history more interesting. We can do it in the classroom, and the key to doing so is to relax curricula. Sometimes students are more clever than their teachers, which is encouraging. These young generations understand when they are given “one” truth. I had an idea to swap textbooks and give students in Banja Luka textbooks from Sarajevo, students in Mostar the textbooks from Banja Luka, and those from Sarajevo the textbooks from Mostar. Textbooks have been changed in Bosnia three times and the improvement has been very visible, especially in 2004 when guidelines for writing history textbooks were adopted. They put more focus on social history than on political history. We have far better textbooks than those inherited from the war. Just by being inherited from the war, you can imagine their content.
TYPICALLY BOSNIAN

There is cooperation among historians, but when we speak about Bosnia and Herzegovina, the cooperation, unfortunately, is personal rather than institutional. Sarajevo cooperates better with Belgrade and Zagreb than with Banja Luka and Mostar. These are internal problems, but they have demonstrated that historians should not be divided according to those from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia or wherever else, but according to their approach in teaching history. I believe that we were able to hear tonight that personal conversations and approaches are very valuable.

ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS

NATALIJA PIŠIK (SKOPJE): What we can do and what we should do is not to lose our investigative spirit on an individual level, but bring a lot of energy into exploring personal stories and do so with an open heart.

THEODORA MATZIROPOLOU (THESSALONIKI): History is written many times and interpreted many times. I believe that we need to assume an approach that is less biased, especially with respect to our surroundings, regarding events from the past and those related to the present, and refrain from replicating prejudices and biases.

DEJAN TOMIĆ (BELGRADE): We live in a region where we are facing on a daily basis that the truth is one thing, history another, and the interpretation of history yet something else. On one side we beat our chest, we love our history, and appreciate who and what we are, and on the other hand we belittle other histories and other views.
Two Schools Under One Roof

A major problem in education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not segregation in what students are taught, both in single – and multi-ethnic schools, according to an assessment by the OSCE. For years the public has been reminded of the problem of two schools under one roof, introduced as a consequence of the war in 1997 in 54 schools with 30,000 students. “Where pears are pears and apples are apples.” The infamous statement by a former minister of education in a canton of Bosnia and Herzegovina caused furor among the public, because an official publicly implied that it was impossible for Croat and Bosniak children to go to school together, so they were to be separated on an ethnic basis. In some schools, children enter into the same building through different gates, but their thinking is healthier than that of their teachers.

While there is one basis for education in the Serb Republic, each canton in the Bosnia and Herzegovina sets the standards, establishes legislation and writes its own curricula. A stumbling block is still a set of national subjects, including national history.

Video 2

Common History in Books

A four-volume reading programme written in 10 languages is known under the term Joint History Project and appears to have been well received in many societies in Southeastern Europe, chiefly in the countries that developed in our region. A thousand teachers have been trained to use the workbooks, and through them about 500,000 students will have access to new materials and new teaching methods. There are recommendations from the ministries of education that these reading books be officially used in schools. By 2014 a total of 3,000 teachers will have benefitted from the project in the Balkans, and the process has started for the next stage in the project, including the publication of two new workbooks in six Western Balkans languages by 2017.

Video 3

Better for Students to Think as Little as Possible

While the revolution still raged in Libya during the ouster of Muammar al-Gaddafi, a revision of history began in that country. Namely, a month after Gaddafi’s murder, the Ministry of Education commissioned the printing of 35 million history textbooks, written speedily while the country was in pandemonium, during which 30,000 people had died and many schools were damaged in the fighting. Education Minister Suleiman al-Sahli explained it by saying that Libyan students needed to learn the true history of the Libyan people instead of the one that Gaddafi had invented.

Russian President Putin said that Russian secondary schools needed new history textbooks written on a single concept in good Russian language, without internal contradictions or double entendres. Russian historians backed the idea. The doctrine to have more than one textbook, and for students to choose which one to study from, was not welcomed by teachers. Now we have students who know what Borodinsky bread is but not the Battle of Borodino, history teachers complained.
Sport in the service of unsportsmanlike values – money laundering in sport; to humiliate, not to win, is what matters; hooligans at sports stadiums as a European or regional problem; soccer fans under no control or under whose control; sport in the service of nationalism, promoting nationalist values. These are the issues to which we sought answers from former top athletes and sports figures in the region: Predrag Pašić (Sarajevo), Miodrag Perunović (Podgorica), Nenad Borovčanin (Loznica) and Hrvoje Prnjak (Split). Word of introduction by writer Balša Brković (Podgorica).
It is almost impossible to find a subject that unites all the complexities of the real world as well as sport. Even as organisations, sports organisations globally have the same weight as the United Nations or a similar organisation. Sports originated in a symbolic transfer from war into something that was not war, not a conflict but a game. A trace of this can be heard in the rhetoric of sports commentators that is often a modification of military rhetoric. We have players who will die on the field, a strong strike is invariably a bomb or artillery, and so on. These words evoke the origin of sports as a phenomenon. Another important factor in the origin of sports is chivalry, because the transfer from war to game was simply not possible without the moment of chivalry that implied rules and respect for rules – rules that applied to all. When the story is told this way, it seems crazy – or quite expected – that almost all negative things visible in societies are visible in their sports, from crime and money laundering, to ideological, ethnic, and other manipulations that we have seen in this region. And so it would be impossible to expect the fate of sport to be different than the fate of society. Perhaps the fate of sport says something about the future of our societies in these parts.
I grew up in an atmosphere and time without the technological wonders of today. We were driven by our imaginations and the stories of elders, inspired by tales of chivalry and heroism, and the spirit that was awakened in me took me to the boxing ring. Boxing was to me the equivalent of a boy’s dream to be a knight.

I believe that there is a way for the government and for society to prevent bad behaviour at sports events and bring the fan groups around to “recognising the law”. All this can be controlled, and it can be done easily, if only there were a will to calm behaviour down to some normal level and convince the fans to do what they should do, which is to cheer, not to fight and play shenanigans. Government institutions in charge of sport need to influence clubs, insist that they restore order among their fans and bring their fans within a framework of normal sporting conduct and cheering.

The situation in Montenegro is more or less the same as in the other former republics; we are neither better nor worse. Things happen and I appeal again for more control. We can adopt rules, regulations and laws, but unless they are properly enforced, everything will be just words on paper.

All fan groups receive generous funds from their clubs, which is a telling sign that clubs can definitely influence their behaviour. Some fan clubs have representatives in parliaments, which provides even stronger evidence of this. What I want to say is that unfortunately, that kind of behaviour obviously suits some people.

Sport has been a means of abuse for some people and some structures of power, because sport is popular, watched and attended. Alas, a lot of ugly virus-
es were injected into sports, which then metastasised.

NO ONE ASKS US ANYTHING
You were right to chide me for taking the line of least resistance and refusing to point a finger at anyone. My own extensive experience has taught me that it is not the fear of pointing fingers at any particular culprit, but awareness that hitting my head against a wall would change nothing but would break my head. So, I am aware, and I believe that fellow athletes are aware, but there is little that we can do because no one has asked our opinion. To be honest, no one in Montenegro has asked me anything regarding these questions.

I would like to see the right men appointed to the right offices in Montenegro and other countries in the region, in order to end the practice of men who have little to do with sport running sport, which has been going on for years in Montenegro. They deal with questions that they know little about. I hope that things change in that respect.

WHAT IS INVESTING IN SPORT
I believe that few of us in this region really know what investing in sport is. Is that investing in professional clubs, in their infrastructure and staff, or is it to make sport popular on a large scale? When we see the number of arenas and swimming pools that we have built, and new academies for that matter, then we will see that investment in sport is only a goodwill phrase. When our sports officials say that we need to invest in sport, they mean that money should be given to them to buy new players, such as Americans in basketball or Brazilians in soccer. So, that is the essential difference that none of the former Yugoslav republics has clarified.

GOVERNMENT HOLDS HOOLIGANS LIKE DOGS ON A CHAIN
Fan passion is a kind of outlet for social frustration, mostly for a lack of prospects among youth. By saying this I have said nothing new. Let us get this straight – fans obviously do not agree with the principle that competing is the important thing.
They are developing an identity of their own.

Bad guys are their role models, and one of the points of fan identity is to compete in hooliganism. That was imported from Britain and Italy and other places. The key question is whether soccer is a metaphor for society or whether society is a metaphor for soccer. That is crucial in recognising the problem in this region. When something terrible happens, an incident of chauvinism or hooliganism, then we always talk about some working group or some new legislation, but I doubt that we have the true political will to resolve it. I can only speculate why. I do not want to get into any conspiracy theories, but it is as if the authorities want this fan rage, to keep the dog on a leash and unleash it when necessary. Both Croatia and Serbia have passed legislation for preventing riots at sports arenas. And penalties can be given under other laws too – the one on spreading hatred, for instance. So if there were indeed a will to solve the problem, it would be solved, in Croatia as well as Serbia. I am even more sceptical when Ivica Dačić is in charge, not because of his particular nature, but because of his police history. The question is how much sensibility will he have to solve the issues without using repression only. For instance, the burning of embassies in Belgrade is an obvious example of political misuse. As far as I know, the case was not prosecuted for a long time. Now, is that evidence of some sort of collusion ...

**WHY MATE PARLOV DOES NOT HAVE A SPORTS HALL IN HIS TOWN**

Somebody mentioned Mate Parlov, who said, “How can I be a nationalist? I am a world champion.” How do we restore some of the values that transcend the newly established national framework, so to speak? I am giving an example of how it is not done, specifically through Mate Parlov. Namely, he is from the Imotski Kraj region, and when a sports hall was built in one of the towns there, I believe the town was Prolozac, a fiery debate was sparked among the local authorities over whether the hall should bear his name, which at first seemed strange. Then the opinion prevailed that he was a Yugoslav, he was what Croatian sports did not need, so there is the answer to the question. He was not big enough for such a small town, is that it?
KOSEVO IS THE CENTER OF MY WORLD

The hospital I was born in is about 50 yards from Kosevo Stadium, my parents lived 50 yards from the stadium, my primary school is 50 yards from the stadium. I spent my life at the stadium, and my dreams, my earliest dreams as a boy, are about soccer. That is how it started, with dreams at the Kosevo Stadium.

HOW INTER BOUGHT RONALDO

Money in sport is used in different ways, because sport offers many possibilities. For instance, I am in contact with Inter Milan. I know that one of the Inter’s main sponsors, Pirelli, had major problems with money transactions. Pirelli is a Brazilian company that collected a lot of money in cruzeiros, and then they had a problem with the currency. So, they decided to buy Ronaldo, a Brazilian player, whose transfer was paid in cruzeiros and his next contract in euros. Thus Pirelli converted one currency into another.

POLITICIANS NOT TAKING CARE OF THE NATION’S HEALTH

I think that politicians in this part of the world are not aware of the importance of sport as a culture and of exercise in general. News on a prime time television newscast said that a clinic bought medical equipment for the detection of heart disease. In a country where less than 10 per cent of the population exercises, there will naturally be many heart attacks to which the government has no answer. It refuses to understand that sport is the best prevention. If you have a healthy nation, you will certainly need fewer of these expensive medical devices.

SPENDING BIG MONEY IN THE WRONG WAY

The narrative on the strategy of sport started 30 years ago in the West. The strategy, which none of the countries in the region have, was conceived in a way to invest all the money allocated for sport in infrastructure for the first 10 years. So, for the first 10 years in Europe, budgeted funds were allocated for building stadiums, playgrounds and halls. The next 10 years were dedicated to promoting sport. Funds were expended to educate trainers, set up clubs and broaden interest in sport. The third stage, which is the current stage in Europe, was for sport to become a fantastic place for business with many athletes. Sport is on the level it should be in every country. Unfortunately, our countries have no strategy, and the money that is spent in this region is spent the wrong way.
WIDESPREAD NATIONALISM IN SPORTS ARENAS

Not a single case of hooliganism or hatred in sports arenas has been prosecuted since Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed. And many times it was warranted. Sport is definitely poisoned with nationalism. Politicians encourage it because it suits them. Sport is a field where nationalism is demonstrated and fans are often exploited for political purposes. The problem is not just the game between the Velez and Zrinjski clubs; there were also matches between the Borac and Zeleznica, then Sarajevo and Zriniski. So, these are paths of nationalism, and a good place for it. I am extremely proud of my school of soccer because it is exactly what we discussed, it was my answer to events of this region. Everything that I have been able to do on my own I have done, and I am very proud of it. Prevailing criteria, and the fact that my country does not appreciate what I have done, is another matter. I am not optimistic and won’t be until the people who govern the country take a more positive view of the world, and look for and financially support people who do what I am doing.

NENAD BOROVČANIN
EUROPEAN BOXING CHAMPION, LOZNICA

OFFICIALS BETTER KNOWN THAN ATHLETES, UNFORTUNATELY

I was born in Loznica where boxing is one of the most popular sports. The boxing club in Loznica used to be very popular and brought in many big names, and many teams from the region took part. I believe that in this positive atmosphere, many boys in the Lagator sports hall, which was always full, dreamed of taking the path of such big champions as Miodrag Perunović. But the difference between those times and today’s times is that today we have no role models. Today, the most widely known people in sports are officials and trainers, unfortunately, because of their squabbles and conflicts and everything else that we do not want to know about.

POLITICIANS USE SPORT FOR THEIR OWN PROMOTION

Money is predominant in the 21 century. Nothing can be organised properly without money. However, money should not be used for dirty business, but rather to promote sport. Game fixing, doping, machina-
tions by managers and violence in sports are four elements that threaten the integrity of sport. It is necessary to protect the integrity of sport, and everyone must become involved. Where there is money, there is always self-interest. Many want to gain money unlawfully. This is something that we must fight; we must protect sport from this kind of crime, for the future of sport for our children and our youth. Politics can help sport, but sport should not help politics. Many politicians seem to have changed roles and are using sport financially, for self-promotion.

**TROUBLE MAKERS SOON TO BE SENT TO PRISON RIGHT FROM THE STADIUM**

Serbia will put in place a five-year strategy on sport development this year. Sport plays a key role in building a good society. When a young man or child engages in sport, he develops character and learns fair play, which he incorporates in life later on, in his job and in his relationships with friends. Training and competition is not only a healthy lifestyle, it is a philosophy of life. For a young man to learn in childhood and youth how to fall, and that falling is an opportunity to get up and fight, it helps him overcome obstacles in life. That is a trainer’s key role. I do not mean the role of a trainer to teach him to dribble or get the ball into the net or goal, but rather to teach him to live and to make a man out of him.

Serbia has formed a national association to fight violence in sports, which is presided over by Prime Minister Ivica Dačić himself, and that is telling that the problem has been seriously addressed and that there is a political will to fight it. A working group was set up, and they meet on a daily basis. Soon a new strategy will be presented that will have prosecutors and judges on the ground, and trouble-makers will be punished and sent off to prison immediately. I am part of the team. We have not set down only repressive measures, but measures that are educational and preventive as well. The actors will become involved as well, by sending positive messages on the ground. At the next match between the Red Star and Partizan clubs, players from both teams will wear shirts saying no to hate speech.

**SETTING AN EXAMPLE AGAINST UGLINESS IN SPORT**

In some of my boxing matches, the public booed when the national anthem of my opponent was played. Conditionally speaking, it was my public that booed. I launched a campaign for my following match, and a week before the match I appealed to my fans in all media conferences to applaud the opponent’s anthem. I told them that that would be a show of respect not just for him, but for me as well. People did as I said, and I am very proud of that.

So that was a preventive and educational measure; a message from an actor from the ground is very important.

In this region, sport initiated divisions among people and the conflicts that ensued. What can we do together to make sport connect people? We talked about
the ugly derby in Mostar. If the managers of those clubs give the green light to their players to sit together and have a drink before the game, to talk and to walk through Mostar together, then things will be different in the stands. As Nelson Mandela said, “Sport has enormous power; it can divide or connect.” Sport can connect people more easily than anything else in the world. But it can also divide people. Therefore trainer education is important; it is also important for trainers to educate people in clubs. Companies that fund sports clubs need to say, “ok, we will be sponsors, but with such and such conditions, because we want a positive promotion message.” It is necessary for other actors to become involved – and I mean the government above all – to send a positive message. Media coverage is important as well. If your front page or two in the sports section reports on two trainers quarrelling, not talking about sport but sending each other some ugly message, then that cannot promote sport and sportsmanlike values.

ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS

NATALIJA PIŠIK (SKOPE): As for circumstances in sport, the times that we grew up in were indeed hard, and sport was the only way out of a brutal reality, when athletes were people that we looked up to, when their success was our success.

DUNJA PEJIĆ (BANJA LUKA): Why is it necessary to discuss sports in a sport-like way? The anti-sport element is that broader audiences increasingly regard sport through violence, politics, and money. We forget that at the end of the day, sport is an occupation like any other.

EVICA KUĆ (BELGRADE): Hate speech often passed over from the stands to the streets where it was amplified and caused serious
problems that increased tensions in the region. Fortunately, this seems not to be the case recently – there have been only sporadic incidents that have an impact on socio-political events in the region. It seems that there is still hope for sport and its true values.

**DEJAN BURSAČ (BELGRADE):** Speaking of sport, the conclusion invariably remains that the state should address the problems that occur there, starting from crime, corruption, and game fixing, and then on to a micro level, which is to include youth sport. We are witnesses that whatever the government gets ahold of in our region, is handled awkwardly, unfinished and inefficiently, and the government eventually compounds the problems and corruption. So perhaps the solution is somewhere else.

**VIDEO 1**

**AFFAIRS AND SCANDALS RUIN SPORT**

Anomalies in sport are linked most often to money laundering, sale of players, fixing games. In recent years, sport in these parts has been terrorised by the bookkeeper’s mafia, and its criminal branches all over the world are run by people from the Balkans. Remember reports on game fixing and the Bochum process in which Sapina and Cvrtak admitted involvement? Or the Offside Affair in Croatia, in which 15 soccer players were arrested, the most well known among them Nenad Pralija? Almer Gegić surrendered to police in Italy and spoke publicly about the ways and connections for fixing games. The Soccer Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina was nearly dissolved over suspected tax evasion, in which funds were funnelled to private accounts. Then-Secretary General Šapić and Finance Director Kures were each convicted and sentenced to five years in jail. Part of the management of Serbia’s Red Star was arrested and accused of selling players. Perhaps the biggest disease in sport is hate speech, which developed before the wars in the 1990s. That was why Zdravko Mamić, president of the Zagreb Dinamo Club, was detained for some time. These are just a few examples of scandals in sport, and there seems to be no end to them.

**VIDEO 2**

**FAN GROUPS AS AN EXTENDED ARM OF POLITICS**

The first major problems among fans but outside of sports arenas occurred in the 1980s. That is when fan groups became an extended arm of certain political structures, and this behaviour suited them for some reason. In recent years, fan groups caused many riots, and some of them ended tragically. The death of a fan in Sarajevo, Vedran Puljić in Siroki Brijeg, the murder of French fan Bruce Taton who came to Belgrade to root for his team, then the tragic death of Vojvodina fan Dejan Dimitrijević in a fight with fans of Partizan – these are topics on which media reported far more than on the positive aspects and success in sport.
CHAPTER 7

LGBT POPULATION

How does the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) community live and how is it treated by society? Do members enjoy the same freedoms? How do these people deal with prejudice – are they ready to come out? How informed are they of laws that protect them? Are gay parades counterproductive?

These are just some of the questions discussed by the guests of Vicinities – Jelisaveta Blagojević (Belgrade), Gordan Duhacek (Zagreb), Zlatiborka Popov Momčinović (Sarajevo) and Aleksandar Zeković (Podgorica). Renato Baretić (Split) gave the word of introduction.
A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

RENATO BARETIĆ
WRITER AND JOURNALIST, SPLIT

FEAR

I had prepared something else for this introduction, but yesterday while we were making the arrangements, my colleague Duhacek changed my mind, because he casually mentioned that I should not use the term homosexualism but homosexuality. Homosexualism leaves the impression of an ideology and movement. Since heterosexualism does not exist, neither does homosexualism. However, seeing how I make my living from dealing with words, I would like to keep both because I find the distinction between them significant – people with homosexuality as a characteristic get homosexualism attributed to them. And sometimes they become excessive in their activism, but let us leave these terms and learn something from tonight’s conversation.

Today we heard the word FEAR, which is mentioned here a lot. But we spoke solely of the LGBT people’s fear. Nobody spoke of fear among, forgive me, the rest of us who are not. There must not be Us and You anymore. We need to talk about this population’s fear, and the term includes the phobia, which is fear. That is what the media should do, what schools should implement through education – and I am glad that improvement in Croatia has been noticed. It will improve the surroundings, concentrically. Split was also mentioned and what a pleasant surprise that no horrifying bullies were at the second rally, ready to assault. I conclude with a quote from the great American actress Whoopi Goldberg who said: “It’s a no-brainer. If you’re not for gay marriage, don’t marry a gay person!”
CHAPTER 7: LGBT POPULATION

GORDAN DUHAČEK
JOURNALIST, ZAGREB

THE PROCESS OF DOUBLE EMANCIPATION

There is a fundamental problem causing many issues, which is that in the region of the former Yugoslavia, most heterosexuals think that being born heterosexual makes them better and deserving of more rights than those born homosexual, when in fact everyone should have equal rights and be treated the same. That kind of thinking causes violence issues and many other forms of discrimination. Another problem is that most of the LGBT population believes that something is wrong with them, that they are sick, disturbed and inferior, so a process of double emancipation and double liberation has to take place.

USING EDUCATION TO FIGHT LIES

It is worth mentioning that research was conducted in Croatia in 2009, and that 60 per cent of high school students graduated believing that homosexuality is a disease, which is simply not the case. No matter what anyone thinks, it is just not that way. Some schools teach students that the Earth is flat and that two plus two equals five. When I was born, everyone assumed I was heterosexual, and growing up everyone assumed I was heterosexual. Nobody ever thought I could be gay. Of course, they asked me when I would get a girlfriend, even though I was interested in boys; nobody ever thought that I might be interested in boys. Then, when I had had enough and actually wanted to come out, the reaction was negative. Society wants to be lied to. Even a lie is represented as something good.

LAWS ARE BECOMING REALITY IN CROATIA

As far as Croatia is concerned the legislation is good and getting better, with a law on partnership for life that is due to be passed by the end of the year. But the real change must happen in society, otherwise laws remain a dead letter on paper. In Croatia, the social change is actually happening, and you can tell by the large number of young people who have come out, meaning that they live their lives freely, truthfully and openly. Let me explain: “In the closet” means hiding that you are gay and “out” means getting out of the closet, being honest and open about it.

Much has changed for the better, especially in Zagreb. An illustration of that is that in 2007, there were not any gay clubs or cafes in Zagreb. Today, there are three different gay clubs, gays can be open and free in cafes, there are three gay parties frequently hosted at hetero-locations with a
mixed crowd. It is a small change concerning nightlife, which has happened in just five years.

**PRIDE IS A PROTEST**

Speaking as one who has organised parades in Zagreb for several years, I am all for them. The trouble is that people really think it is about them, like it is some kind of a thorn in the eye, when in fact it is about the way we defined the protest march. The best thing about parades is that gay people who participate feel very good, empowered and happy.

It is a paradox that we must really go through. At one moment, you are surrounded by the police, for example a couple’s first stroll in the center of Zagreb holding hands. As for the police, a banner that we carried around for years, but I believe we will leave out next time, said, “The police are here for you”. Nobody from the march broke any laws or acted violently, so the police were there for to protect the marchers from people who want to attack them. Seeing that there were between 10,000 and 15,000 people this year, there were fewer police per capita, so we did not notice them at all, and maybe in years to come they will participate but their protection will not be necessary.

**JELISAVETA BLAGOJEVIĆ**

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT THE FACULTY OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS
SINGIDUNUM, BELGRADE

**DISCRIMINATION IN LANGUAGE AS WELL**

The question of discrimination is very complex. It is preserved in language, and these discussions on terminology are very important. The term homosexualism comes from a medical discourse, from psychiatry to be precise, and it includes a discriminating connotation, which keeps us reverting back to wondering if it is a disease or not, or a disorder or not.

There is another problem concerning homosexuality, which is that the term is usually used to refer to male homosexuality, and in a way that renews discrimination within the LGBT community.

**MEMBERS OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY CANNOT CHANGE SOCIETY**

Things are looking up, more or less, but the reason why they have not improved more is probably because we expect, for some strange reason, that the LGBT community can change society. I believe that is
a heavy burden on a social group. The LGBT community should work for their own interests, but matters will not change until people who see themselves as citizens realise that the issue is almost as relevant for them as for the LGBT community, and I am referring to Serbia.

**POLITICS IN THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Every religion invariably seeks to advocate traditional values and keep the status quo. Religion and churches are not the places that one expects will face the challenges of the world and be ready to reconsider their premises. I refer to the Serbian Orthodox Church, and I do not believe that the opinions we have heard represent the Church’s position in general, but I do believe that the most aggressive ones reached the media first.

These are factions and politics within the Serbian Orthodox Church. I would like to think that the Church believes it is important to live in society and to have an institution that functions in a society that is not violent and does not discriminate, instead of metaphysical assumptions about sexuality and whether there is a point about it or not.

**ADULTERING THE EUROPEAN UNION**

All this talk about the parade created a bad phenomenon in Serbia over the past 12 years. The status of the LGBT population became politicised on a daily political level. Today the attitude toward the parade and its organisation in Serbia has become a matter of vote estimation and whether you seek to please the EU and be part of EU integration, and not what kind of society we live in and what kind of community we want to live in.

**THE PARADE IS A STRUGGLE IN EVERYONE’S BEST INTERESTS**

I completely agree that there are pros and cons to holding the parade, and among the reasons in favour is the delineation of a political space, to which effect I repeat my earlier argument that until people in Serbia recognise the parade as a place where all citizens are fighting for their own best interests, the parade’s influence will be limited and the social group will be marked out.

**ALEKSANDAR SAŠA ZEKOVIĆ**

President of the Board of Directors of the LGBT Forum Progress, Podgorica

**HOMOSEXUALITY IS NOT A DISEASE**

Recent examples show that the events that were organised as a public outing brought on an increase in violence in almost every municipality. The more visible the topic is in society, the stronger the pressure on the LGBT community and the LGBT movement in general.
The essence of the problem is fear. LGBTQ people are afraid to express their identity in such an environment that mostly regards homosexuality as a disease.

I think it goes for the entire region that not enough has been done in the past two decades to correct the wrong treatment of homosexuality. Officially, science has not established it as a disease, and in my opinion governments throughout the region have failed to address the problem. Education must be one of the main instruments in that, I believe. So when younger generations start to learn about it in a good and correct way, the way that science has established, we will have solved today’s problem, I believe.

**NO SUPPORT FROM THE INTELLECTUAL ELITE**

We observed that quite a few public figures were on the opposite side at the first Montenegrin Pride Parade in Budva. Of course, it is one thing to have a differing view about something that is part of freedom of speech and expression, but to join a mob that is ready to lynch people who only seek equal rights in society, now that, in my opinion, sends a very bad message. Among them were unfortunately university professors, even deans. So, Montenegrin intellectuals failed to show solidarity and proved selective in the matter. However, I do believe that there is solidarity in general toward the LGBTQ community as a group that is discriminated against, threatened, and side-lined.

I think the parade could create a social distance, but I also believe that there is nothing better for encouraging the development and maturity of mentality and institutional mentality than a gay parade. I think we should have them every year in any environment.

**LACK OF SOLIDARITY**

Speaking of sharing responsibility and burdens, the LGBTQ community is left on its own in the region, and there seems to be a lack of solidarity that was demonstrated much more in some other areas where human rights are concerned and where we are fighting for a more just society. Societies in the entire region are troubled by organised crime, corruption, lack of rule of law and so on. But we cannot halt and suspend the realisation and improvement of human rights because society has other priorities, we must understand that. These processes are simultaneous and concurrent, and we need the energy and stamina to address them.

**DISCRIMINATION ON MULTIPLE FRONTS**

Discrimination in the family is crucial, as it prevents the expression of one’s true identity. The “shame and disgrace” that could befall a family in such surroundings is crucial and prevents a person from being liberated, who in difficult and extreme situations opts for suicide. In Montenegro, we have seen families disowning their children publicly because of their outspoken
sexual orientation. The families are severely disgraced. I believe LGBT people in the Balkans should be congratulated for their fortitude, living these past 20 years in evil and troubled times and often facing multiple discriminations. As members of other groups, whether they be minorities or disabled, they also suffered discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. When we view the environment, I believe those people deserve praise for their fortitude.

ZLATIBORKA POPOV
MOMČINOVIĆ
ASSOCIATE AT THE SARAJEVO OPEN CENTER, SARAJEVO

REINVIGORATING INSTITUTIONS

The biggest problem is legislation, which is favourable compared with previous laws. But the problem is that institutions lack sensibility; they are not empowered to implement the laws. On the other hand, LGBT people are often ignorant of the rights they have earned under those laws. Sometimes they are aware of them, but they are afraid to publicly defend their rights and thus reveal their identity.

Legislation has certainly helped change the status of the LGBT population, but if society fails to carry through these changes and stop the lives of these people from turning into hell, people who are desperately fighting for their rights, then we really cannot believe that we have done anything meaningful.

When we have had assault cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina against LGBT people; sometimes they gave statements in court in the presence of their attackers. So we have these loopholes, and when we try to solve the problem and penalise a criminal offense, we create a new fear among the LGBT people.

IS THE PRIDE PARADE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE?

Pride is a completely legitimate way to fight, although I would call the parade a protest in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans, rather than a pride parade. We have yet to attain to the level of social maturity for LGBT people to earn equality, to earn their rights. In places where they have the march, there is pride because they are proud of the result, but in our milieu I would call it a protest and change the term. As far as the strategy is concerned, some people believe that it could be counterproductive, that it would be better to work gradually for a few years on increasing sensitivity and awareness, education, sensibility of institutions, the school system and so on, and then stage the parade. The community is divided on that.
ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS

PETRA PEKICA (ZAGREB): I really liked what the Montenegrin gentleman said, because I think that education as prevention is extremely important in this matter. That is why our lack of understanding for one another, whatever it involves, or potential hate and love, start from the earliest days.

NERIMANA RIFATBEGOVIĆ (SARAJEVO): No, I am not afraid for the future of mankind. I am rather concerned about a huge number of orphans. That is what I am afraid of. I am afraid of a society that believes it is okay to have orphans, when they can be loved. So what are we really discussing today? We are talking about love and the right to love anyone you want, and situations when we have children who need all this love, who need parents, who need to be looked after, we believe that it is better to keep them in orphanages in order to preserve our idea of what a community should be.

VLADICA JOVANOVIĆ (BELGRADE): I believe that there are two problems. First, we have this traditional view of a family, with mom, dad, and two children who are all Christian Orthodox – only that is a family. Secondly, everyone else who is part of society is non-existent on the social stage. This doesn’t refer only to the LGBT population but to every other minority as well. Schools need to develop an atmosphere of equality, because the opinions of our parents and elders will not change. We all have rights, and children and young people must learn that they are entitled to express their opinions and that they are relevant.
CHAPTER 7 : LGBT POPULATION

VIDEO 1

DISAPPOINTING STATISTICS
According to a poll conducted this year by the Ipsos Strategic Marketing, 35 per cent of citizens in Serbia do not want LGBT people in their neighbourhood, 40 per cent do not want them for a boss, and 47.5 per cent for a friend. It is especially disturbing that 28 per cent of respondents believe that people with different sexual orientation are sick and that the government should provide medical treatment; 34 per cent believe that they are not sick but they are harmful for society and should be suppressed. In Croatia 60 per cent of people claimed to have been harassed in this past year. In Montenegro, 47 per cent of respondents have negative views about the LGBT population and 42 per cent see it as a disease. It is interesting to note that 17 per cent are in denial of homosexuality in Montenegro.

VIDEO 2

IS ENCOURAGING HATRED A CRIMINAL OFFENCE?
In most EU countries, homophobic and transphobic incidents or hate crimes are not recorded in official statistical data on hate crimes. Encouraging hatred, violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation is considered a criminal offense in only 18 member states. In only 14 member states are homophobic incidents considered an aggravating circumstance in crime. Only in two member states are gender identity and crime based on transphobic hatred explicitly mentioned in laws of hate crimes. Because of incrimination and persecution based on sexual orientation or gender identity, some members of the LGBT population choose to leave their homeland. Thirty-three member states consider sexual orientation a basis for persecution in seeking asylum, but only six of them include gender identity.

VIDEO 3

FROM PERSONALITY DISORDER TO A SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION
In the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, same sex was treated as a criminal offense and those who committed it were not even considered human. Things changed in the 19th century when medicine, especially psychiatry, began to observe the phenomenon as a type of mental disorder. By the end of the 1940s, homosexuality was considered a type of psychopathic, paranoid and schizoid personality disorder. Homosexuality as a disease was treated with prohibitions and cruel medical treatments such as castration, but to no effect. Today science does not consider sexuality a mental disorder.
CHAPTER 8

CIVIC SECTOR IN THE REGION

Does civil society teach us how to live freely and creatively? Why is a large part of the nongovernmental sector fighting to make ends meet? Are NGOs powerful and influential and how much so? What is the relationship between the government, civil society, and the NGO sector? These are some of the topics that will be discussed with the guests of the eighth show of Vicinities – Ivica Šola (Osjek), Vanja Čalović (Podgorica), Hedvig Morvai (Belgrade) and Luan Shllaku (Pristina). Word of introduction by writer Enver Kazaz (Sarajevo).
WORD OF INTRODUCTION

ENVER KAZAZ
PROFESSOR AT THE FACULTY OF LANGUAGES, SARAJEVO

CIVIL SOCIETY TEACHES US FREEDOM

Civil society develops where there is a need for freedom of space, democracy, plurality, and civil action. The emancipation of civil society began in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The participants were to undermine, call into question, or topple the nationalist regimes. That is when civil society was attacked for national betrayal and marked as a fifth column, yet these were the best people who had a vision of social development in this region, understood truth about the course of history, and actually knew what they wanted to accomplish from societal values.

Governments quickly perceived the threat of nongovernmental organisations, so they set up government organisations within NGOs. That was when targeting began – projections, workshops and the like – of an entirely empty language of ideas whereby neoliberal ideology sought to implement barbarous transition societies into quasi-capitalist, original accumulation of capital. Today, civil society teaches us how to live freely and creatively, and today civil society struggles to survive. Times have never been harder and if we listen carefully enough, we will hear that one political client was the government and the other the ideals of democracy.

We saw a history of civic society in countries of the region and opened the question of the future of civil society. Namely, if it addresses vital problems, it is indestructible. If it is closely involved in social problems, it will necessarily contextualise and solve people’s problems. Ideological stories are over, but challenges for the future remain. Ecology, outstanding human needs such as health, welfare and other forms of insurance, education, networking, and so on. Civil society won over heavy ideology, but life still has challenges ahead.
NGOS ARE NOT THE EQUIVALENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil societies are a pillar of democracy. If we take a look, civil society is between the state and private sectors, the so-called third sector. Civil society is under the obligation of the legal order and it does not seek power. The prevailing forms of organisation in civil society are pluralist and diverse. Civil society is not the same as a nongovernmental organisation. Therefore, nongovernmental organisations are not the equivalent of a civil society.

AUTHORITIES DEMONISE CIVIL SOCIETY

I believe that the treatment of nongovernmental organisations is still at some strange level in all Balkan countries, both on the part of the people and their governments. People highly distrust civil society, which they identify with the nongovernmental sector, so there is always confusion there. And there are many reasons for it to be so. International donors are partly to blame as well, as they virtually created the nongovernmental sector in the whole region, as we have heard. This contributed to the region’s development, but on the other hand it created distrust because of its non-transparency and processes that were not sufficiently visible to the public, not sufficiently clear. Media play a part in this as well, and especially the authorities who demonise civil society as they see fit; sometimes they benefit from it, and other times they contribute to treating civil society as treasonous.

INVOLVING PEOPLE IN DECISION MAKING

In order to build democracy in a society people need to be involved in decision making which is why we have ncos that work on influencing political decision-making, they advocate certain policies and open various channels toward the authorities. But their communication is not good. I have an overview on regional level because my fund supports think tanks that are involved in research and persuasion but regardless of the quality of work, they can hardly find ways to really influence decision making. Often these organizations could be consulted, often the governments could use their knowledge and experience and so on. However, this has not become customary yet, because of this mistrust and lack of mechanisms on how best to do it.
CIVIL SOCIETY AS A FACTOR OF EU INTEGRATION

Civil society is basically a factor in EU integration because it is a pillar of democracy. Civil society is actually a demonstration of the concept of citizens, because they are engaged in civil society. The citizen is active, thus showing that a citizen understands and has responsibility and rights. In this way civil society exerts influence, if its activities promote values that are in line with democratic principles, which are again the same as those we aspire to in EU integration. Again, we have a separate civil society section, and a group of nongovernmental organisations that work in direct partnership with the government and the authorities in order to guide our governments on that path.

NON-GOVERNMENT DOES NOT MEAN ANTI-GOVERNMENT

Today nongovernmental organisations seek to become partners with the authorities. The organisations that we support in the region seek to influence passage of certain bills; they advocate certain public policies and were partly successful for some, but not others. What I see as a problem is that in this case, a service is offered, a quality, and these organisations have to fight very hard even to come to the point of exchanging information. I am so sorry that a lot of hard work is put into a task and the other side just has no understanding of how to make use of it in the right way.

CIVIL SOCIETIES, ORGANISATION AND PARTICIPATION

Today we approach what is happening in developed democracies where civil society plays an important role. Civil society has its role in developed countries, because that is a way to organise people and to get them involved.

I believe that this is a time of social movements, and they are developing thanks to new technologies. It could be said in some ideal world that if you empower social movements, it will not really matter who is in power.

VANJA ĆALOVIĆ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MANS, PODGORICA

FIGHTING CORRUPTION AND ORGANISED CRIME

We are fighting corruption and organised crime. When we talk about it, we are primarily dealing with high-level corruption. You know that Montenegro is the only country in the region and one of the few countries in Europe that has not changed its government. And you know that a few countries have filed court pro-
ceedings against our leaders and incumbents precisely because of their connections with organised crime. So it is hard work, but it is a matter of choice. Every job is hard if it is done thoroughly. The important thing with MANS is that we have strong public support for our work, and we influence public opinion to a large extent and encourage people to feel free to demand that the government work in the public interest.

RECOGNISING PROBLEMS OF PEOPLE

It is extremely important for organisations to be in contact with the people. It is one thing to work in an NGO that has a fine office and to get a big salary, but you have never been on the ground and yet you pretend to know the problems that people face. It is another when you go out into the field and talk to people about everyday problems, and then you try to do what you can. I would suggest to fellow activists never to depend on a single donor, as then you get into a situation of having to do what that particular donor wants.

GOVERNMENT SEES US AS FOREIGN MERCENARIES

We try to document every concrete case of organised crime or corruption and to publish it, and we ask for a concrete statement. Based on that, we demand that prosecutors and courts process the cases and send the people to jail. And we call for a change in legislation if these are deliberate or systemic errors, in order to prevent a repeat of the misdeed. Because our leaders are corrupt, they try to show us off as foreign mercenaries, while they cooperate with EU countries, for instance, and say that Montenegro is open for cooperation with international organisations. But when we cooperate with the EU, then they ask why we are working against Montenegro!

(NON)PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NGOS AND GOVERNMENT

The partnership depends on the government. We are fighting corruption and organised crime, and it would be quite duplicitous of us to discuss with corrupt government officials who have links to organised crime, ways on how to unwind themselves from organised crime. A more dangerous situation is the government setting up its own nongovernmental organisations to obtain legitimacy for certain policies, and thus feign democracy. In the process of European integration, I believe that the nongovernmental sector will have, or it already has, a function that will proceed toward changing certain matters, certain rights that belong to the people and certain laws, and in that sense, we will have an opportunity to really press, I cannot say the government, but press the people to put pressure on the government to really make changes.

POINTING TO PROBLEMS AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS

Trust is gained only through work, and here is a thought related to what you said about influencing legislative changes. I could cite a case from the previous presi-
dential elections in Montenegro, in which we pointed to a large number of irregularities as well as corruption that took place, and today we are part of a parliamentary working group, and nearly 50 per cent of the changes in legislation that were accepted were proposed by MANS. So, we were in a situation to point out a problem and propose a solution, and that is something that people recognise. If you just appear and say, “ok, here we are, we have decided to deal with this matter,” then you hardly earn anyone’s trust, from neither the people nor from the donors, nor any political structure. A large number of nongovernmental organisations have solutions but are unsuccessful in proposing them to the government. The authorities are partly to blame for this because they refuse to implement certain solutions, but in many cases the nongovernmental organisations are at fault. They lack public support and they have no real knowledge, yet they press for certain solutions that are really not suitable in the country’s context, but were perhaps copied from some other country.

LUAN SHLLAKU
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE KFOS, PRISTINA

NGOS AS THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES
We have increasingly become a nongovernmental organisation that has its programs and works as an ordinary nongovernmental organisation, and then it has this other part, which is donations, where we help other institutions. What I wanted to say is that NGOs have run into something called the NGO market. The market is primarily a donor’s market, and the other market that should be normal and where governments should allocate a certain part of the budget to encourage the nongovernment sector, that part is mostly inactive in the region. The fact that some NGOs stand above the government as the sword of Damocles – they know that they will create a big scene if something very concrete in corruption emerges. So it is very possible that such governments are reluctant about entering into these transactions.

BETWEEN PRESSURE AND PARTNERSHIP
Ngos are always on the margin. They could be a group that puts pressure on the
政府做不好的事情，以及未进行的改革。这使我们处于一种情况，即我们期待在欧洲看到这种情况的出现。换句话说，这是我们的角色之一，那就是成为政府的伙伴。社会有政府所没有的潜力。政府简单来说没有，尤其是我们年轻的行政部门，缺乏执行某事的潜力，尤其是在人权、保护环境、文化和每一件事。革命具有文明社会的味道

文明社会经常扮演提供更好信息给公众的角色，以便形成推动更大变革的杠杆。说到重大变革，我们指的是文明社会所做出的改变，例如在塞尔维亚推翻米洛舍维奇或在克罗地亚关于图季曼和其他人。某种程度上，这些颜色革命具有文明社会的味道，非政府组织能够带来这些重大变化。但在此背景下，我认为这并不完全正确，仅是这些非政府组织能够作出这些重大变革。

反对民粹主义

非政府组织必须变得更强大，否则他们将输掉与民粹主义和不断加强的民族主义的战争，因为文明社会和非政府组织提出在某些领域推动民主，而民粹主义者和其他人提供更好的选择。他们说他们会解雇那些不称职的人，这比文明社会的提议稍好一些。

IVICA ŠOLA

头目媒体文化部

克罗地亚欧塞克大学

文明社会，一个自由的房间

一个严重的问题是文明社会如何在部落文化的背景下发展。这就是一切开始和结束的地方。文明社会，那是一个非强制、自由组织的领域，用以确定政府、过度政府管理、市场动荡之间的价值和利益。那就是自由选择的领域，那是非强制的。

处理具体问题

我不是调查员，我们不会玩阴谋论，但处理20世纪90年代具体问题的协会做得最好。正义和非政府组织提出推动民主在某些领域，而民粹主义者和其他人则有更好选择。他们说他们会解雇那些不称职的人，这比文明社会的提议稍好一些。

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organisations that lived in the community, that received no instructions from outside on what they should do, they developed an open society. How do you develop an open society when grenades are falling? They were mostly charitable organisations, voluntary groups, and student organisations that dealt with the problem of democracy, but they got little space in the media for their work. But they were successful and ironically, the ones that had the least money, mostly local organisations, were the most successful, far more than those that came from outside, were elitist and gave lectures on their approach.

NGO MAFIA

The worst expression I heard about civil society is that of the NGO mafia, because some of them drive an Audi 6. Figures were released in Croatia – NGOs received 1.5 billion kunas from the government and 3.3 billion from other sources, so more than 500 million euros circulates in the sector. Science received only 0.7 per cent of the budget; agriculture far less. So stereotypes develop because the money is big. That is how the term NGO mafia came to be. Only five people appear repeatedly who live well by it, and they deal with an ideology of their own, an agenda of their own, not community problems – and this I emphasise. And it’s always the same five people, as if the entire NGO sector in Croatia had only five people.

BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF CITIZENS AND BIG CAPITAL

Differences arise most often over big investment projects. Problems concern the environment, spatial planning, and ecology. On one side is big capital that seeks to invest (the case of Dubrovnik), and on the other side is the public interest to preserve the surroundings. So we have capital on one side and a growing trend in Europe on the other, where many topics evolve on ecology and sustainable development. In Croatia, we no longer deal in ideologies, and I am pleased to say that, but rather concrete problems that are important for the community. Capital is on one side and investments on the other, and this is where the nongovernmental sector gets mostly into conflict with the government and with capital, from Istria to Dubrovnik, through Slavonia. I will keep to myself whose side I am on.

MONEY IS SLIPPERY GROUND

We are always talking about money. That is bad for nongovernmental organisations, to always be talking about funding. Most of the projects in Croatia – the most successful ones – were done by volunteers, and I will mention the group of volunteers in Osjek known as the Veronikin Rubac. Often it is up to people to offer their skills, and then miracles are created. I believe that that is one path, the path of volunteers, which civil society should take, because the ground is always slippery where money is concerned, and it creates conspiracy theories. On the other hand, when
somebody funds something, they demand something in return. During proceedings at The Hague Tribunal, a head of a nongovernmental organisation said he had to find more victims, as then he received more funds. That was published, and it is not something that civil society is proud of.

**ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS**

**NERIMANA RIFATBEGOVIĆ (SARAJEVO):** Despite all the criticism that we have heard and considering everything that was said, and it is well-founded, I believe that the role which nongovernmental organisations had and still have should not be forgotten. For instance, the organisations in Montenegro. In countries in the region where corruption is systemic, one cannot expect the fight against corruption to begin with the institutions themselves. Therefore the civil sector can put on the agenda topics that should be addressed.

**PETRA PEKICA (ZAGREB):** Because civil society in Croatia did not lack funding, they boomed and found sources for continued funding. However a potential danger looms since Croatia acceded to the eu. New funds that will be made available will require co-funding from these organisations that they fund themselves by investing in projects.

**DUNJA PEJIĆ (BANJA LUKA):** I would like to comment on one of the video clips, where the results of a poll said that 1 per cent of respondents confirmed that the dialogue between the nongovernmental sector and government was in fact quite elaborate – I really think that the respondents are employed in the public administration. I am talking about proposals in a large part of the public administration for including the civil sector in decision making, only to meet the formal conditions required for the passage of a bill or act. There is no true wish, hope or need to actually produce solutions that are for the benefit of the people.

**MILOŠ ĐINĐIĆ (BELGRADE):** So, we went from anti-war, humanitarian actions, greater democracy to achieving elementary human rights, and we arrived at organisations that deal mostly in post-material values, such as protecting the
environment, gender equality, some of the cores of human rights and so on. So, civil society as a vibrant, flexible, dynamic, and innovative group of people as such has the potential to work independently for a long time yet, from changing the context of European integration or changing concrete politics.

VIDEO 1

NUMBER DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO POWER

The true power of civil society cannot be measured statistically. The number of civic associations and NGOs is not proportionate to the power they have in countries in the region. In Croatia 46,000 organisations are registered, in Serbia more than 19,000. The number of registered civic associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a little over 12,000 and in Macedonia 4,000. Most of them deal with social services – 27 per cent. Another 23 per cent are in culture and media, around 10 per cent in education, and less than 1 per cent in international cooperation, religion, philanthropic mediation and promoting volunteers. Every tenth organisation has more than 20 activists. Most often the number of active staff is between five and 10.

VIDEO 2

NO DIALOGUE

Polls conducted in almost all countries in the region yielded similar results on the question of dialogue between the government and civil society. Five per cent gave the response that there is no dialogue, 47 per cent said that it was limited, and 42 per cent said that it was mediocre. Only 1 per cent believe that there is detailed dialogue between the state and civil sector, which is half the number of those who have no idea whether the dialogue exists at all. Most of the organisations have a clearly drafted mission, but only half have a strategic plan. It is interesting to note that nearly a half are not acquainted with or are partially acquainted with legal regulations that pertain to organising civil society. More than half of the organisations cooperate with the government by organising non-institutional education (seminars and training), whereas others mainly carry out actions in the local community.

VIDEO 3

ON WHOM DOES THE SURVIVAL OF CIVIL SOCIETY DEPEND?

The future of civil society and its sustainability depend mostly on government support. As much as 82 per cent of respondents believe that the government is not lending enough support. The main obstacle for the development of civil society is an underdeveloped donor business sector, 78 per cent believe. The main problem is that domestic donors have pulled out, 73 per cent believe, and the same number pointed out poor cooperation with local governments. Poor cooperation with media and an unfavourable public opinion least affect the sustainability of the civil society, about 55 per cent believe.
CHAPTER 9

WAR CRIMES

The purpose of the show was not to examine the fairness of The Hague Tribunal but to emphasise the need to prosecute war crimes, what has been done, to show the progress that was made, what remains to be done, where the obstacles lie, and whether societies have confronted everything that was committed. The guests are Dragan Markovina (Split), Veseljko Koprivica (Podgorica), Smail Čekić (Sarajevo) and Ivan Jovanović (Beograd). Word of Introduction by writer Renato Baretić (Split).
I would like to carry out a small test first. Is there anyone in the studio today who believes, who is sure, that not a single war crime was not committed in his or her name? Okay... no one. Namely, war crimes are always committed on somebody's behalf. If the criminals did what they did in their own name, they would simply be killers or slayers or rapists. If they operated in their own name, their personal name, there would not have been as many of them. That is why they operate under someone else's name and call on us to acquire a certain aura of chivalry, and their mission becomes noble. They never asked us if we wanted that. They never asked the people who were on their side either. In fact, they like that it was done in their name but without questions asked. Because they do not want to sully their hands, and they want to sleep peacefully. I would like the show and discussion to focus on this other group, but I suspect that this group of people will not be listening today, because they do not watch shows like this; they like stuff to relax their minds. And this show will not relax anyone's mind. Let us just say, sweep up the dust in front of your own door. Do not let others do it for you. Do not show off and sweep in front of other people's doors. We need to sweep until the broom wears away, and then get a new broom and sweep again, because of these young people. Why do they need enemies in life? They need friends, and they need to make new friends. Why have enemies? Perhaps the comparison is unsuitable, but I hate to pay my bills and taxes, but I pay them regularly every other month. My soul is in pain, but when I pay my dues I feel good, because I am at peace for two months. I would like us to think along these lines and just pay our dues, with an open mind, so that nothing like this happens again. As for the satire that someone mentioned on the topic, I recommend a book of poems, Pjesme iz Lore, by Boris Dezulović – that is one broom sweeping away our troubles.
I believe that a crucial problem of our societies after the country’s disintegration is that we failed to confront the crimes that were committed on their behalf, of each society individually. I also believe that that goes back to World War Two and the fact that we never explained that war and how it happened.

So, the fact that we never discuss events frankly, that ethnic minorities were purged at the time because of the collective responsibility of Germans and Italians, that it was a regular thing to move into someone else’s home and so on. That war left lasting consequences that we have relived in a far more severe form, at least in civilian areas. As for the number of victims, it is crazy to discuss that, because if we see a system in it, we can see it regardless of how many people were killed, and it is never a single incident.

“WE WERE ATTACKED”

I believe that something was done in Croatia nevertheless. Nobody denies straight out that nothing happened, but it is mostly justified by facts, that we were attacked, that it was a consequence, that we did not plan it, and so on. Perhaps it was most apparent when Gotovina was acquitted on all counts, and when 90 per cent of society went into a collective trance; there was no room for either the victims or for what happened.

On a high and legal level, Croatia certainly reached the end. But I feel terrible living in a city where the case of Lora has not been solved, and I believe that that is telling in itself.

INTELLECTUAL CLIMATE ON THE POSTULATES OF THE 1990S

What is the ambience in which the national independent state is set as an absolute, on behalf of some 19th-century national romanticism, that should be before everything else? In fact it is preventing us from building a more humane society, and for instance specifically in Croatia, preventing us from respecting minorities. Thus we have this problem in Vukovar today. I believe that before the intellectual climate changes, and in Croatia it is mostly ultra-conservative or perhaps mildly conservative but still on the postulates of the 1990s, there will be hardly any progress on that.
WE HAVE LEARNED NOTHING FROM OUR HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Of course the war was waged for higher interests, though I will not get involved in a detailed analysis. Naturally many people defended their homes for idealistic reasons, but they know nothing about the big narrative that happened in the whole process, for which I am quite convinced that a large part of it was carried out according to a plan and that it was agreed in advance. Now I do not have definite proof of this, but I believe that this is a fact. But speaking of a negative historical heritage, if we refuse to rely on the better and more favourable side of our historical heritage – our peoples’ liberation war against fascism – if we refuse to rely on that but bring out sundry domestic fascism from 1941, then we really need to ask ourselves what kind of people we are.

There is no going back – what happened, happened. I am afraid that we have no remedy against it, because if it was possible after the horrors of the Second World War, not only in the former Yugoslavia but throughout Europe and beyond; if that experience and evil from the recent past was not enough to prevent us from repeating it, then I do not know what will stop us.

VESELJKO KOPRIVICA
JOURNALIST, PODGORICA

FIRST THE COMMANDERS, THEN THE EXECUTIONERS

There were five war crimes in Montenegro and only one was prosecuted and a conviction delivered in court. Four remain; the trials are ongoing extensively, no one has been convicted, and in my opinion the most important thing is first to punish the order-givers and then the executioners.

We generally know the names of the victims, whereas the slayers have the status of being suspects. No one has been validly convicted, so I believe that it is very hard to establish the names of the culprits. Many people were involved, and the number of witnesses is diminishing, documents have been destroyed, and interest is waning, even in the courts. Media and the public are manipulated, so it is unlikely that we will have a definitive report.

CRIME WITHOUT CRIMINALS

No one denies that crimes were committed, but we have crimes without criminals, a slow justice system, close to injustice. Courts procrastinate; everyone is working...
on hushing up the case, the purpose being not to reach the order-giver when discussing war crimes in Montenegro, not to bring them to justice – and they are mostly the same people in the 1990s that are in power today. So as no government will act against itself, blame is placed upon the immediate executioners, even on witnesses who dared testify about war crimes, such as Slobodan Pejović who spoke about the deportation of Bosnian refugees. So everything is mixed up, and that is how it goes.

It is absurd that members of the army and police are on trial for war crimes – mostly they are, and their defence is that they received orders from their commanders and that they obeyed the law. No one admitted to committing a crime.

The political elite, the incumbent government was involved in all those crimes that took place in the 1990s, and it is doing everything to save itself and place the blame on the immediate executioners, those lowest in rank. Even the opposition shows little interest, at least in public, to have these war crimes investigated.

**PUBLIC DENOUNCEMENT MISSING**

As for the intellectual elite, I believe that we cannot speak of a large number of intellectuals. Those who were not in power early in the 1990s crossed over to the side of the government, they settled in either as members of parliament or as journalists or editors, or they found a place in various organisations. So few remain, and that is why we are weak. They rallied around a few media and nongovernmental organisations, and they do not have the strength to fight against a political elite that controls justice, the media and the police.

It is interesting to note, especially for those of us who denounce this, that there is no moral denouncement by the public. Perhaps there will be one in court, somebody will be convicted, but the public never condemned, but rather even justified.

**A DEBT FROM THE PAST**

Let us not forget that we live in an area where we have a surplus of history, and unfortunately a shortage of reason, so we could have a repeat of this. I suspect that some event could reappear from somewhere, so until the courts say what they have to say, and historians too, until all the crimes are solved and there are no more taboos, young generations will carry on this debt, as we do. There is always a potential danger of war crimes emerging and war criminals, until every war crime is solved.
CHAPTER 9 : WAR CRIMES

SMAIL ČEKIĆ
PROFESSOR AT SARAJEVO UNIVERSITY, SARAJEVO

NARRATIVE OF WAR CRIMES IS NOT FINISHED

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the narrative of war crimes, of genocide, and other atrocities against humanity and international law is not over yet, and we are afraid whether it will end at all.

There is still a lot to be done and we wonder why that is so; most of all we should keep in mind the fact that unlike the other former republics, the most widespread and monstrous atrocities were committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including genocide against Bosniaks in an inter-ethnic armed conflict. So far, considerable progress has been made for a scientific investigation of all those forms of crimes.

DENYING GENOCIDE IS THE LAST STAGE OF GENOCIDE

In Bosnia and Herzegovina genocide and other atrocities against humanity and international law are still concealed, minimised, played down, denied, and refuted. Speaking of the process, let me recall that all well-known investigators of the Holocaust and of genocide believe that denial of genocide is the last stage of genocide. Therefore genocide is unfortunately still on-going in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and not only when we discuss it. There are acts of genocide in keeping with the convention on the prevention and punishment of genocide that confirms the fact that genocide continues, especially against Bosniaks.

The essential problem is to establish the number of victims. It should be noted that this is about a very difficult, extremely complex, sensitive, responsible and indeed broad investigative enterprise. One of the most important things is to establish essential terms such as the description of a victim, or victims. What is a victim? Then based on this, establish categories for all these victims, categories of victims – and an especially key question is to establish the status of those victims.

ACCEPTING THE FACT IS TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY

Most criminals deny their guilt before a war crimes court, saying that they only executed orders, and most of the investigations are about that. In 2007, I had an opportunity with my associates to discuss the matter with Ms Carla Del Ponte. She said that that was an attempt by the accused to mitigate the punishment, the guilt that is.

We come to a crucial question that is called public apology. For victims of genocide, regardless of whether this is about the victims of genocide or war crimes, that is crucial and it contains two crucial, es-
essential elements that are mutually connected, or as classical Marxists would say, that are in dialectical unity. This is about an element known as recognition of the fact. Accepting that genocide or a war crime was committed is accepting responsibility for a committed crime and in keeping with that, a key process is that after such a public apology comes a process of redressing injustices that were done.

**THERE IS ONLY ONE TRUTH**

There is a problem where media are concerned, and the problem is called influence of political elites, political parties, and their leaders.

Speaking of the process of education, every education has a key role, however, problems arise. It is true, we have convictions, we have works of science, we have people who neither believe nor accept the relevant facts of the verdicts. They dismiss relevant academic works, and that causes problems, as various truths appear, whereas there is only one truth.

We need just and adequate education where they will speak, explore the truth and only the truth, and it will be the only measure and standard in that society. Without truth, there is no real education, nor science, nor journalism.

**WE DO NOT HAVE CULPRITS AT THE MID LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY**

War crimes trials are mandatory under international and domestic laws for each country in the region, and it is a major moral obligation to conduct them. Apart from trials, it is also important to discuss crimes, and reconciliation in the region cannot take place until each of the hostile parties says to the party of the victims, we are sorry about the atrocities, we believe you, we do not deny them, we apologise. We have names of culprits in large numbers, both executioners and others at the top of the command chain, who are at The Hague Tribunal. But we do not have names and accountability of those at the mid level of responsibility; that level has not been touched at the trials in Serbia.

**PLAYING DOWN INSTEAD OF DENYING**

In Serbia the process of confronting the atrocities has started and it is quite far advanced, especially compared to the situation in the 1990s. The topic is no longer taboo and politicians, including govern-
ing political structures, are far more open about it. We have a large number of trials in progress before local courts which is very positive; we no longer have denials, but we do have downplaying, especially where Srebrenica is concerned and the infamous question “what about what they did to us?” However, a large number of people, especially from the intellectual elite, see it as a task that someone from the outside has imposed – the EU and international community.

Today local justice works much better than in the 1990s or in early 2000s, major progress has been made, however there are still many problems, beginning with technical ones, such as witness protection. This is mostly the problem in local courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. Next you have the problem of conducting investigations when you have a conspiracy of silence in the police, army, and governmental structures. Yet again, justice often resorts to self-censorship; sometimes there is no immediate political pressure, but they are reluctant to cause upheavals or get in the bad books of someone in power, whether politically or someone with power in the police or army. Of course there are political pressures as well. I am sceptical about anyone from higher levels of command being brought before a local court anywhere in the former republics.

**A CRIME IS A CRIME REGARDLESS OF NUMBERS**

It is much more comfortable from the moral point of view to be a victim than accused and have the part of a criminal. The victim cult is very developed in the Balkans, however it is used for some political and collective narratives or historical showdowns, and the respect of an individual victim is often missing. The attitude toward victims of war, at least in Serbia, is often quite inhumane. I believe that Serbia has done probably the least for its victims and remembers them only when it needs to confront the other side or to deny crimes that are attributed to the Serb side. Numbers are really not important in order to establish that an atrocity took place. For instance, whether it was 7,000 or 8,000 in Srebrenica, or “only” 2,000, it is obvious that the number of Bosniaks who were killed is the number that the Serb Republic Army captured. If they had captured 10,000, then there would have been 10,000. If “only” 3,000 were killed, that means only so many were captured. But it is important to write down the names of victims and count them in order to prevent manipulation. But we have not done this since World War Two. However, now we have the conditions to do so, we have more information, and what The Hague Tribunal has done is a valuable archive for such an assignment.

**INTELLECTUALS GIVING AMMUNITION TO POLITICIANS**

Politicians have the greatest responsibility because their decisions can bring about change fast, but they are not the only ones responsible, and I believe that their responsibility is overestimated. If you will
allow me one example of empirical investigating conducted by the OSCE and Human Rights Centre every other year, which shows that so-called analysts or intellectuals had the most influence on public opinion about The Hague Tribunal, followed by journalists, and far down below politicians who had only 1 per cent of influence more than nongovernmental organisations. Politicians speak publicly, but the ones making weapons and giving them ammunition for the past 20 years have been intellectuals.

WHEN CRIMINALS BECOME HEROES
I take a different view on reasons why people view some war criminals as heroes, and I am convinced that they do not see them as heroes because they know they committed an atrocity or genocide in war and condone that. People do not glorify Mladić as a hero because they think, because they believe, that he killed 7,000 Bosniaks in Srebrenica and say ok for that and so he is a hero. They accept only the part that all of us accept about our people, our families, our brothers and our people, we think only of the good about them and disregard the bad side. The negative things are attributed to manipulation, to lies, wrong persuasions, international conspiracies, and the fact that people in Serbia were convinced of that, and I believe elsewhere as well, regularly since the 1990s, when the wars broke out.

ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS

ADNAN OVČINA (SARAJEVO): How do different countries confront war crimes, that is the question. For instance, the question has begun to be addressed in Croatia after its entry into the eu. However, the approach by the international community in addressing war crimes is different for each country and therefore a problem. The international community is particularly focused on economic issues, which casts a shadow on the question of war crimes and creates problems. If we look at the practice of The Hague Tribunal, it is one step forward and three steps back. I believe that we are so many steps back that we have started all over again.

EMIR KALAČ (PODGORICA): I would say that countries have not faced the problem in the right way so far, despite the declarations condemning crimes and declarations about the government confronting war crimes in the proper manner. The essential point is missing, and that is concrete results, trials and processes that will lead to order-givers, not only those who committed the actual crime.

DEJAN RADIĆ (BANJA LUKA): An interesting question arose during the show, and that is on whose behalf were the crimes committed. In connection with that we recently had an opportunity to read in the media a farewell letter of an American veteran Daniel Sommers, who committed suicide because of war crimes, and in the letter he spoke openly not only about the horrors of war and government hushing up these
horrors, and about the weaknesses of the system in general related to health concerns of veterans who were involved in that war. So that would be a very interesting question that we should discuss sometime in the future, perhaps in one of the next shows of Vicinities.

IGOR NOVAKOVIĆ (BELGRADE): There is an awareness on an individual level that nation-building projects that began early in the 1990s have not been finished, and that potential confrontations on a collective as well as individual level will in a way delegitimise the project that exists in all countries in the region. In that sense, individuals and people on the whole do not want to confront these crimes.

VIDEO 1

WAR CRIMES CATEGORIES

A direct war criminal slays by giving vent to his lower instincts, ideological or chauvinistic passions, and mostly he enjoys the brutality. Psychologists claim that the warrior and war criminal slay in war, but the differences are huge. A fighter kills an armed enemy that operates in battle, he does not kill children, women, elders, the disabled, wounded, or prisoners of war.

A direct criminal differs from a criminal by way of whom he kills and why he kills, who kills and what he feels when he kills. Other categories of war criminals are equally destructive, those are immediate executioners, direct and indirect order-givers. A direct order-giver is in the middle or upper command and sets the destruction carried out by the direct and indirect executioners.
Science claims that a war criminal is not born but is created, and that most war crimes are categorized as normal. Court psychologist Gilbert tested the intelligence of war criminals tried at Nuremberg, and the results showed that most had above-average intelligence. Von Schirach 130, Frank 130, Donitz 138, Goring 138, Schacht 143. Ideology was crucial, then organization and social milieu, as well as individual psychological characteristics. Erich Fromm concluded in a detailed study of the characters of Kornhoff, Stalin, Himmler, and Hitler that people with a more or less expressed non-profile, sadistic, authoritarian, and conformist trait in their character were potential terrorists, criminals, and torturers. And that war criminals were recruited from the ranks of extremely suggestible and frustrated individuals, regardless of their personalities, and from the ranks of personal avengers.

Even a description of the war is disputable in the former Yugoslavia. Croats call it the homeland war and celebrate it as a fight for independence, in Bosnia and Herzegovina it depends on to whom the question is addressed. The Serb Republic’s official narrative says that it was a civil war, whereas the Federation believes that it was a foreign aggression. And, many will add that numerous clashes were waged on religious grounds. The governments in Serbia and Montenegro claimed for years that the country was not involved in the wars. And they insisted on this until bombs began to fall, and when the official language changed and Serbia declared that it was at war with NATO. At the time, Kosovo Albanians claimed that they were leading a liberation war, whereas the alliance insisted that the bombing of Serbia and Kosovo was a humanitarian intervention and thus put into the background the destructive side of war.
Why is secularism so important, why has dialogue not opened yet on the status of religion and the relationship between the churches and religious communities and the government, are all churches really equal in all countries in the region, is the power of religious communities in our societies so strong that it cannot direct governments and politicians in one direction or another, and are churches just companies that make big money? These are some of the questions that our guests on the 10th episode of Vicinities will address – Aleksej Kišjuhas (Novi Sad), Branko Baletić (Podgorica), Ivan Ugrin (Split), Dževad Hodžić (Sarajevo) and writer Balša Brković (Podgorica), who will say a word of introduction.
CHURCHES HAVE BECOME NATIONAL FETISHES

The subject of religion affects everyone in some way, even people who are atheists, in a way that suspends reason. A sense of piety that often comes over us impedes critical thinking. Some call it the phenomenon of religion, that it cannot be subjected to critical analysis. But on the other hand, the Church is not a phenomenon of religion. The Church is an organisation that seems magnificent, acting on behalf of all the people who believe in a fictitious character, deriving its entire power from it. And a look at the magnificent cultural heritage left by all organised religions over thousands of years, from Islamic art through the Renaissance, European, pre-Gothic architecture, and Bach’s music – these are probably the greatest achievements of mankind. But we could say that standing on the other side was a concentrated power, the biggest in more than 2,000 years. If we were talking about an association of say, farmers, perhaps Bach or Durer or the most important painters would only have depicted farmers and cattle breeders.

We live in a region where we have a completely bizarre situation, where churches have become national fetishes and are therefore unable to respond to their universal nature and mission, but concede to become a mechanism in a major evil. Churches have cafés and restaurants, but they do not pay taxes. They have very profitable businesses and that has to do with what was said at the beginning: The topic alone suspends critical thinking. Lastly, whenever I see that someone, some donor as they are called, built a church and paid 5 million euros or dollars for it, I think how many jobs could have been created for so much money, how a lot of other things could have been done with that money. What we have here, though, is service to a historical spectre. And I do not believe that it is the right course.
CHAPTER 10: THE CHURCH AND ITS SEPARATION FROM THE STATE

ALEKSEJ KIŠJUHAS
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, DEPARTMENT
OF SOCIOLOGY, NOVI SAD

BETTER ASSEMBLE AT UNIVERSITY THAN UNDER A CHURCH ROOF

The most important element related to religion is secularism. This is not simply the separation of religion from government, but a right to be free of religious ideas, religious authorities, norms, and so on. Secularism alone can protect us against evil. Religion is indeed a social activity and it is important for people to dance out a ritual under some roof, but I prefer to remain sceptical and maintain an atheistic idea that it is better to gather under the roof of a university than a church.

CHURCH SEPARATION FROM STATE IS AN ILLUSION

The separation of church and state is rather an illusion than a reality in spite of constitutions and everything else, from the stamps for building the St Sava Cathedral, which is a trivial example, to religious teaching in schools, which in my opinion, is frightful. Speaking of equality among religious communities, I find it irritating that we are always talking about five, six, or seven religious communities and then weighing their equality. I do not know where to draw the line. If these beliefs are in the supernatural, and they are, if there is no proof for their beliefs (and there is none), how do we distinguish between the so-called traditional and non-traditional? What is the difference in believing in comparatively traditional figures of disputed historicalness such as Moses, Jesus, or Allah and the rest, from someone’s belief in a pink unicorn that lives on a cloud?

INDIRECT AND STRONG POLITICAL CLOUT OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

I believe that our decision-makers do not have pastors, as George Bush Jr. does, to advise before making decisions. Yet they measure the pulse, they communicate in ways that are not allowed. They do it because of the influence the Church enjoys on a large part of the population. I evoke Voltaire, who had a conversation with a priest at his deathbed. The priest asked whether he was ready to renounce Satan, and Voltaire supposedly answered that now was not the time to make new enemies. That is how our politicos act, except they are always at the deathbed because their politics are short-term, and they do not want to make enemies among the clergy.

CHURCHES TRADE IN PEOPLE’S FEAR OF DEATH

Religious communities can be regarded as companies that make large sums of mon-
Plus because of the fact that they do not pay taxes on their business, I would describe them as not only profitable, but companies that make excess profit. But things are not that simple. Their function, of course, is not just financial, although some members of the clergy obviously have purely pecuniary interests. But generalisation is not particularly useful. I believe that many of them truly believe that they are doing us all a favour and that they have renounced worldly possessions. Their purpose is broader but the pecuniary part is what stands out, especially in poor societies such as ours.

It is not all money or day-care centres or hospitals that we are talking about. Churches peddle comfort and trade in people’s fear of death. They sell them their reputation and the price is very dear. It is control over our bodies in this life, in this world, the only one we have got, for a world that will never be. I find that a dreadful bargain.

**IDEAS BASED ON ARGUMENTS AND NOT RELIGION**

Unfortunately, we spoke little about secularism, and it was interpreted as a bogeyman. The idea of separating public affairs from religion is one of the biggest achievements of the modern age and a precondition for modernisation. Regardless of whether we are privately religious people or not, this is not just about banal politics, the constitution and so on, this is about a person’s right to be free of religious ideas, that public ideas are based on evidence and not belief, on reason and not tradition or revelation.

**CHURCH DENIES EXISTENCE OF CHURCH**

This is not the case in practice, though in Montenegro one might say that the Church is closely connected to the state. The Church is not entirely to blame for this. You asked me a very important question. The two are not equal, because the Serbian Orthodox Church denies the existence of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, which was abolished by Regent Alexander in June 1920. The strange part about it is the absence of dialogue; the Serbian Orthodox Church rejects dialogue, claiming that the Montenegrin church is an NGO, yet the Serbian church is not registered in Montenegro and operates beyond the legal system.

**NATIONAL RELIGION AS AN IDEOLOGY**

Speaking of the Orthodox Church, it had neither the willpower nor strength to go through the ordeal of reformation. It is centuries behind reality and behind its own believers. The Church has its own constant plans whereas governments change. They achieve their plans and the
government makes use of the Church during its tenure with no regard for what happens next. I am convinced that the Serbian Orthodox Church has achieved its plans over time in Montenegro, yet the government avoids tackling the conflict and is sweeping the problem under the carpet. Even politicians accepted national religion as an ideology. In the Church, which is more deeply grounded in many affairs, a number of highly educated people are cleverly making use of the government’s gaffes in hesitating to start a real dialogue.

BOUNDARIES OF A BISHOPRIC MORE IMPORTANT THAN NATIONAL BORDERS

The Church is beyond the legal system. According to recently published data, the Serbian Orthodox Church collects 50 million euros from the Monastery of Ostrog every year. Perhaps the figure is overstated, but the Church has not denied it, and it cannot be accurately established because the Church is not in the tax system. Naturally, the Church cannot be asked to pay value added tax for going about its regular affairs, but it could for the rest it earns from selling various items, from restaurants and facilities. The Church is building a hotel in Budva, by the sea. You asked a legitimate question. In a country where half the primary schools do not have toilet paper, the government allocates huge funds to build religious buildings. The Church still insists that the boundaries of its bishoprics are more important than the national borders, and that it is entitled to do in its diocese as it pleases.

CHURCH WOULD NOT CALM PASSIONS

The peoples who live in these parts have an undeveloped identity. One way to have it completed, though the process is an ongoing one, was through religious communities that were supposed to act by calming passions. But quite the reverse took place. Take a look at events in the past 20 years, and you will see that they did not work to that, but to the opposite effect.

LET ME NOT BELIEVE

Dignitaries of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro often speak insultingly about agnostics and atheists. My conviction as one who fights for civil rights is nevertheless to say, I let them believe and they should let me believe.

IVAN UGRIN
JOURNALIST AND PUBLICIST, SPLIT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE AND CHURCH

We have had many disputes recently. The government of Zoran Milanović has a major problem, because he has no dialogue with the Church at all. In fact, he brings up certain questions that occasionally pro-
voke a conflict. On the other hand, the president, although an agnostic, tries, he really tries, to have a good relationship with the Church. He was at the inauguration of Pope Francis in Rome on March 19, as was Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić and many others. Many people really wanted to attend the ceremony.

RESOLVING DISPUTES IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY

Cardinal Kuharić and then Episcope German invited responsible politicians, believers, and people of good will on May 7, 1991, to resolve misunderstandings and disputes fairly and in the spirit of Christian love, for the benefit of peace and security. They repeated the same in August. Kuharić said, and I remember this as if it were yesterday: “If my enemy destroys my house and church, I will not destroy his. If he kills my brother, I will not take vengeance.” The problem is when we descend to a lower level. Peace was proclaimed from the higher levels. The problem is that people always see things as black or white. It is hard for us to apologise and start anew, to move on. So, thank you and forgive me are the two most important words in life.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

The Serbian Orthodox Church works legally in Croatia as other religious communities. The Vatican signed four concordats with the Croatian Government and in addition to those, there are agreements with other religious communities that are equally free and provide equal rights to all other believers. I said that they were a minority, they are not predominant, but they are not deprived of their rights; they are legal. These things function more or less in everyday life, not always ideally, but I disagree with you that they are second-class citizens. They are not. The father of the Croatian nation is Ante Starčević. He was a strong anticleric. The same goes for Stjepan Radić who harshly criticised the Church. There is invariably a critical attitude toward the Church in Croatia. I would not agree with the rigid view that being a Croat necessarily means being a Catholic. They are not subversive elements at all. There are disagreements over some other issues, but not these religious ones.

MANY PROPERTIES NOT RETURNED TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church receives funds from the government budget. And these contributions, as contributions to nongovernmental organisations, are not taxed. It would be another matter if the Church was developing congressional tourism, for instance, or something similar to that, then they should certainly be taxed. This is being drafted in Italy and it will most likely be done in other countries. Transparency of funding is another matter. Many properties in Croatia have not been returned to the Catholic Church. It has extensive property in Zagreb, an entire construction block known as Capitol. The Church acquired extensive property in 2,000 years. St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome took centuries to build.
DIALOGUE OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND STATE YET TO TAKE PLACE

Our societies throughout the region should open a dialogue on the status of religion in society and the relationship between churches and religious communities and the state, in order to move away from current models that have been at work.

Speaking of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would say that the Church and state are separated formally and legally. But in reality they are often not. This is especially not the case in one of the entities. I am referring to the Serb Republic that has a patron saint’s day. Thus the entity bonds, legally and symbolically, to one church, in this case the Orthodox Church. It shows that the government and its institutions are connected with one church and that it discriminates against other citizens who are not part of that church, putting them in an unequal position.

ALLOWING BELIEVERS’ PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LIFE

I believe that the opening of a serious, patient, and broad social dialogue is ahead, allowing us to overcome current models and move toward a new one in which other religions would take part in political life, democratically and legitimately, in the same way that people who are believers are entitled to take part in political life and to articulate their motives, demands, hopes, and goals, and be led by their religious affiliations, their sentiments and value systems. That is provided that holders of office must not articulate political platforms, goals, and motives in religious language; that is, they must articulate and justify them on a reasonable basis that is acceptable for all.

“CHANGE THE PEOPLE”

People are entitled to have objections, and they can vote differently in the next elections. I am neither alluding to nor aiming for that. As long as there are multi-party fair elections, citizens can replace any government and political option that assists nongovernmental organisations and religious communities and churches for preserving cultural and historical monuments, thus mixing the funding with religious communities and churches.

We have hardly criticised politicians who are close to churches and religious communities and their relationship, but it seems to me that the only solution is to change the people.
WE MUST NOT ALLOW RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES

Being a Muslim, I come from the Islamic Community and will say something critical about my community. Firstly, I believe that talk is overstated about some groups being neglected, the atheists and agnostics. Secondly, I am deeply convinced that privileges for citizens based on religious identification – in their social lives, professional, political or any other – should not be allowed, although this is visible. It harms the credibility of religious life, affiliation, and tradition.

ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS

ADNAN OVČINA (SARAJEVO): The difference between Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries in the region is that Bosnia and Herzegovina has three constituent peoples and virtually three constituent religious communities, one follows from the other and they coexist perfectly. Each controls its own ethnic community. But a good example of a rather complicated situation where ethnic and religious communities are concerned is the population census that is forthcoming in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and one of the biggest issues is ethnicity. If you are part of a certain ethnic group, then you are necessarily part of that group’s religion. If you are not part of a certain religious community, then you are not part of that ethnic group, either.

EMIR KALAČ (PODGORICA): Speaking of numbers, all public opinion polls show
the Church to be at the top of most highly trusted institutions. That piece of information gives support to the Church, in fact to all religious communities, so they often have these forays into the realm of secular government. On the other side we have politicians who are very cautious about sensitive topics, especially in Montenegro where we have had continuity of one government. Sensitive questions are swept under the carpet; of course sooner or later they will surface. I am not trying to present the public as black or white, but when we put everything on paper, there are a lot of indicators of the Church’s power, power of religious organisations, where the government is powerless.

VIDEO 1

INFLUENCE ON GOVERNMENT INDISPUTABLE

Religious communities are declared as separate entities from the state but their influence on governments is indisputable. The Serbian Orthodox Church has contracts on cooperation with the Serbian Assembly, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and so on. It had its own ministry in several governments. Croatia signed four concordats with the Holy See – on legal matters, cooperation in education and culture, care for Catholic believers, members of the armed forces, and police services in Croatia, as well as economic issues.

VIDEO 2

BILLIONS FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Luxury in religious communities in countries in the region is a frequent topic in media. The SUVs of Mufti Zukorlić, the Audis of Serbian bishops, and the residence of Bishop Kacavenda – these cases were widely depicted to show the luxury that is inconsistent with religious teaching on humility. At the start of his pontificate, Pope Francis urged modesty, so Croatian bishops removed their gold crosses. Croatian media reported that the Catholic Church is the recipient of tens of millions of euros from the government based on a concordat with The Holy See. The Serbian Government transfers about 6 million euros to the Serbian Orthodox Church every year. Religious communities collect far more money through their services and from contributions. In Germany, the Catholic Church receives 10 billion euros from the budget every year and in Italy the figure is 9 billion. The value of the Church’s properties in Italy is 1.2 trillion euros.
CHAPTER 11

STATE ADMINISTRATION

What can be said about the state administration in countries in the region, should it be modernised and become professional, how do we develop an administration that will be a partner to citizens, how would we describe our administrative culture, and what are administrative reforms on the path to EU integration. These are some of the questions discussed by the guests of Vicinities – Đordije Blažić (Podgorica), Ana Babović (Beograd), Dejan Buha (Sarajevo) and Anže Božić (Ljubljana). Word of introduction by writer Voja Žanetić (Belgrade).
IT IS ONLY PROPER TO HAVE ORDER

Speaking on the subject, it is only right that I say something about queues; I hate queues. When we had queues for cigarettes way back when, I nearly stopped smoking. When we had queues for coffee, I switched to tea. I have my savings, because I refused to join the queues for the Ponzi schemes we had. Whenever I see people queuing up I think it must be a fraud of some kind or that something is not working properly. It is very annoying to see queues in front of a government institution, because when people queue up for the government it means that something in the country is not quite right. And when it is not right, then some people will be skipping queues or cutting queues, and there you have it, order is lost. And everyone knows what order is. Order means not having to stand in line for something that I paid taxes and contributions for in order not to stand in line for. Order means not needing hundreds of papers for something. Order is to have order and for things to be in order. To have freedom, and democracy, and opportunities, and prosperity, but not queues. When there is a queue in front of me it means that something is wrong with the country. And please let the state administration tell me that I am wrong.

As far as I am concerned, the state is something that concerns me. As far as I am concerned, Franz Kafka wrote the best case on the state and its administration and gave the best name for it, too – The Trial [translated as The Process in Serbian]. Because running the country is a process – and a good one, if I am not like Kafka’s Jozef K, but a bad one if I am. As far as I am concerned, I would gather all state and party officials, the senior ones, put them in a pen and have them read Kafka, and then apply it to themselves and to each other for a while. And if they learn something from it, if they understand what a state should not be, we just might let them out, but then why release them when we have already got them in there? As far as I am concerned, the government is something that concerns me and, as far as I am concerned, we should start stockpiling Kafka’s books because we never know when that fine day will come.
Reforms are necessary to move from a classic authoritarian and repressive government toward one that serves the public. However, the government cannot carry out these reforms, because it is naturally incapable of reforming itself, so it is necessary for someone outside to reform it, if we want to have an administration that is a partner to the people, and not people being the government’s subjects.

Whenever a new government takes office, they say that they will launch reforms, it will take four years and be completed by then. What they fail to understand is that reforms have a beginning but never an end. Naturally the process is a hard one, a process that carries many changes with it and the point is, who is to be at the head of these changes.

It is interesting to note that Montenegro changed its administration as many as 45 times since 1990. The first law was passed in 1991 and in the next 22 years the organisation of its state administration changed 45 times.

Today Montenegro has a different reform; we are reforming the first reform, and the term is from 2011 and 2016, so we will see the results after that.

IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEM
What all countries in the region have done, more or less, is to introduce an evaluation system for administrative relations, a system of professional service. The law says it all nicely, that everything is in order, but implementation is a problem, especially for Montenegro and countries in the region aspiring to join the EU. Therefore, depoliticising norms is not a problem, it is in the legislation.

The law on state officials follows the standards of duty, and everything is fine from that aspect. But we have another aspect, which is a problem because it is contradictory, where we have a loot system in reality, a system of political suitability, whereas the situation in our normative system is quite different. That is the point.

STATE ADMINISTRATION NEEDS EDUCATED STAFF
If we take a look at countries in the region, we see that none of them look after their personnel. We do not have people who are educated for the administration. The job of my colleagues in the state administration – and I worked in the Montenegrin government for 15 years – requires educated people. We cannot speak only of lawyers in general and economists in general. State administration is multidisciplinary
with many engineers, technicians and other professions, not just lawyers.

Across the region, we have all changed our systems; we have gone from Weber’s Classic State Administration to a third model, New Public Management, the modern administration. Yet we can change hundreds of laws and the point is not whether we change legislation, but something that is far more difficult, and that is to change the habits of people who have worked on the same job for decades. When you ask them what they are working by, they claim to be working by the law. Sorry, I do not think so. You are working by your habits. That is a serious problem, a problem of people’s mindsets. I think it will take generations to change that.

STATE ADMINISTRATION, A SAFE HAVEN

Political will is determined by some kind of struggle for power as a priority, but the administration operates largely to buy social peace. Social peace is secured by the state administration, with a collapsed industry or one that is near collapse, and the economic situation is similar more or less throughout the region; securing stability and a social minimum of existence can hardly be done without the public sector.

DEJAN BUHA
ADVISER FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM, SARAJEVO

LONG ROAD FROM STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENTATION

Reforming the public administration is a key social process in every country, and what we all strive towards is to obtain a more efficient and effective public administration. I believe we should include all segments of society in the process, because administration is not a vacuum, it cannot reform itself. Therefore we should include all segments of society and establish a dialogue with all sectors, and at the same time, work on promoting the culture of administration.

Whether we want the reforms or not, they are inevitable and in progress. We all have strategies, and that is a major problem. Specifically in Bosnia, our strategy is very good but there are so many setbacks in its implementation.

STATE ADMINISTRATION FERTILE SOIL FOR CORRUPTION

The system, such as the state administration, which enjoys enormous rights from the social, economic or any other sector,
provides fertile soil for corruption. That is one of the biggest problems, particularly in some of the extracted sectors such as education and health care, sectors that are in the government’s purview. Corruption is perhaps most widespread in the state administration when it comes to hiring and promotion. But I believe that corruption is a bigger problem in these sectors, generally in the public sector.

**CUMBERSOME STATE ADMINISTRATION**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have 13 governments plus the Council of Ministers – imagine the numbers in these ministries. As far as partisan hiring is concerned, we have an infamous ethnic key whereby departments are required to hire people from different ethnic groups in line with the population census from the 1990s. It is symptomatic that partisan hiring keeps growing, various advisers to ministers who are hired not through public job openings but appointed on a minister’s discretionary powers. Another symptomatic trend is the growing number of appointees, people who are not administrative employees, not professionals with higher education but a kind of logistic support for various agencies. I heard recently that more than 60 per cent of the entire staff in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation Government were appointees.

**GOVERNMENT IS THE BIGGEST EMPLOYER**

All countries are moving toward streamlining their administrations, especially developed countries. We are still not at the stage where reducing the government apparatus will do any good. We need to take a number of steps such as performance measurement, developing competence, and redirecting staff, because staff mobility is very important, especially in countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina where you have four virtually separate administrative levels, so we need to have people come and go. Recently I had an opportunity to see the trend in the UK. They have moved from New Public Management to a new, so-called neo-Weberian state model, where the administration is seeking to develop competence in order not to hire the private sector but resolve matters ‘in house’. If state administrators are to head in that direction, then it is important that they are capable of doing certain processes on their own, to have this sort of leadership.

In countries in transition such as ours, with a lean and shaky real sector, we need to keep in mind that the government is the biggest employer in society and that any radical changes could indeed produce tectonic upheavals. We are importing a lot of these ideas from the West, beginning precisely with New Public Management, but we cannot just replicate things, we need to keep the context of our state in mind all the time, especially as we are yet developing democracy and our economy.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere in the region, I believe, the parameter is ironically no longer whether pay is high or low, but whether the job is a steady one. Considering that our private sector is so
depressed, it is almost correct to say there is no economy; it does not matter whether you are qualified or not, everyone seeks employment in the public sector because the pay is consistent.

**ANA BABOVIĆ**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SERBIA ON THE MOVE, BELGRADE

**REFORMS SET BY ELECTION MANDATE**

The Serbian state administration is cumbersome, partly slow and lazy one might say, which affects efficacy and efficiency. But, it includes 300 or 400 people who are the driving force, and it is thanks to them that Serbia always gets good grades from the European Commission on its reports on administrative capacity.

Reforms are defined precisely by the election mandate. When parties assume power, they talk about reforms then very often forget about them, so they take much longer than they need to.

The government drafts a strategy and implements it for a few years, takes note of its errors – although it knew at the start where the errors would be made, but still it went ahead – and then the next strategy is drafted. Currently, a new strategy is to be drafted by 2016, and I cannot say for certain when it will improve. I believe that will be when the right people come to the right place.

**PROFESSIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATION**

Depoliticizing is a popular term, but I do not believe that that is the point. Rather, it is professionalism. If you have someone who is indeed a professional in his line of work, I do not mind his political engagement.

At one point there was an attempt to implement professionalism by giving steady employment to current staff who are sheltered like white bears, but I do not have the impression that we had a selection process to separate the good from the bad. A large number of people are not sufficiently professional to do their job, and I believe that streamlining the administration would give good results.

I used to joke that some people in the administration were overpaid, that they did not earn that money. So let us get rid of the ones that we do not need and leave those that are competent, and then they should get paid more. I call for that; perhaps we should do as businesses do.

**PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OPEN TO CORRUPTION**

If we lack order, then there is a way of skipping order, and most often we give money or anything to speed up a procedure. Centralisation is a problem with pub-
lic procurement and in similar areas where professionalism is lacking. You just know the person who is in charge and then you strike a deal; that is the space most open to corruption in state administration.

Public enterprises play a big part in who gets a share of what, because we know how these companies operate and make money, which goes to fund their parties.

REAL SECTOR IS THE SOLUTION

An electronic administration would leave many people out of work. It is a question of political willpower, and I believe that parties must have an interest in that because it would earn them political points, since everyone complains about the state administration. On the other hand, streamlining the administration and laying off a large number of people, which would certainly have to be done by introducing electronic services, would put a lot of people on welfare and they are going to need new employment. Since the country has no real sector, there is nowhere to employ them, so there is a problem.

Therefore we should focus on opening the private sector. If you do not have people who contribute to the budget, and instead you keep digging into the budget and borrowing more and more, making debts our great-grandchildren will have to pay back, that is of no help. So, let us try to boost the private sector, and then we people can get jobs there.

ANŽE BOŽIČ
JOURNALIST, LJUBLJANA

CORRUPTION AS A MATTER OF PERCEPTION

Although public administration has been depoliticised, politicians employ their people when their term ends. As a journalist I am highly critical of that, and when it happens, it should be widely reported in media, broadly discussed, and the public alerted; sometimes it works.

As for corruption, I believe that it is a matter of perception. I read a poll conducted by Transparency International, a global survey that showed that every fourth person in the world had paid a bribe in the past two years. In Slovenia, thank God, only 6 per cent. So, 6 per cent of people agreed to pay a bribe, but perception of corruption is much higher. People have an extremely poor opinion of political parties, the assembly, judiciary system, … and I believe that the public sector was the fourth.

BETWEEN PROFESSIONALISM AND SUITABILITY

If a government is too centralised, you get a ruling elite and that is a disaster. In the
other direction, if it is too decentralised, then you get local sheriffs in power. Neither is good, as both are extremes.

Speaking of professionalism, some people are really qualified and others are suitable, party people. The minister is always a political figure so it depends on him, how he organizes things, if he allows such a practice to develop. I would say that it was half-half – we have professional people as well as others. At least the number of our ministries is lower, I believe we have 12 or 13, and before the figure was about 20. But then smaller agencies become a problem, directorates, and then a minister’s support service, and in Slovenia the number is horrifying.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

We brought public and private partnership in the health sector in Slovenia. The government handed out huge concessions to doctors, but the result was quite poor. We still had the same queues and the doctors who were paid concessions made quite a bit of money. They worked in public hospitals until 2 pm, after that they worked privately, and it worked well for them. But not for the public. Electronic administration is key for the future, and we have taken a few steps toward that end. We have e-administration where you can get some things done, however you can have neither your ID nor your driving license issued there. Our minister is considering electronic elections, which I find extremely interesting; in Europe only Estonia conducts them.
ALUMNI OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS

JELENA MILJANIĆ (PODGORICA): One matter that I would like to add is that the perception must change with legislative and strategic reforms toward the state administration and the programs that it offers. So when a person requests something from an administrative officer, he is not only a client, but also a boss to the officer providing the service. So we need to change that perception as citizens – we are paying for the service. We should have this dimension of two-way responsibility about roles, the one offering the role and the one accepting it.

DUNJA PEJIĆ (BANJA LUKA): We can talk all we like about the state administration not being efficient, being cumbersome and the need for streamlining it, go on about the necessary staff reductions in the public sector in general. But until there is political willpower to tackle the problem, none of it will be done.

AZRA BEČIROVIĆ (SARAJEVO): One idea is to employ people in public administration with temporary contracts, for four or five years, so they can work on themselves and try to keep their jobs. Another is to change the attitudes of people; I recall a Nobel laureate in economics saying something to the effect that amassing offices in public administration made it unclear who was master and who was servant.

VIDEO 1

STATE ADMINISTRATION GETS LOWEST EVALUATION SCORE

Every poll shows that people complain mostly of administration inefficacy. They are dissatisfied with service quality, staff incompetence, and above all, staff rudeness. Bribery is one of factors of the least concern in terms of public discontent. Polls in all countries in the region show that about 50 per cent of respondents believe that politicians are corrupt. About 30 per cent believe that judges are corrupt. About 20 per cent believe that police officers are corrupt. It is interesting to note that around 35 per cent of respondents said that they gave a bribe to speed up a procedure; 18 per cent did so to ensure better treatment, and 13 per cent to obtain information from a worker in the state administration.
Economists estimate that the number of employees in the public sector in countries in the region is three times the European average. In Serbia, the figure is 550,000 and 63,000 in the administration. In Croatia, 400,000 in the public sector of whom 52,000 are in the administration. In Bosnia and Herzegovina employment in the public sector is growing and has exceeded 115,000, of whom 50,000 work in the federal administration and local self-governments. In Slovenia the public sector employs 160,000 people. There are no precise figures for Macedonia, though estimates range from 90,000 to 180,000. Montenegro has the highest number of employees per 1,000 – 34.2. In Serbia it is 23.1, in Croatia 24.5, and in Slovenia 24.1. Regarding salaries, the highest per capita are in Slovenia, 27.7 euros, and the lowest in Macedonia 8.7 euros. Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are equally expensive, costing 11.4 euros per capita.
Ethnic music as part of our common cultural heritage – is it the same as folk music, how do we cherish, foster, and promote it, why is playing this music like “digging into one’s DNA, one’s secret or formula for life”? You will hear a discussion on the topic from Vlatko Stefanovski (Skopje), Biljana Krstić (Belgrade), Amira Međunjanin (Sarajevo) and Tamara Obrovac (Pula). Writer Renato Baretić (Split) delivers a word of introduction.
Three Dimensions of Ethnic Music: Love, Sex, and Prostitution

Ethnic music has three dimensions in the world, as everything else. One is love, the other sex, and prostitution is the third. Love is when you realise that so many wonderful people before you, though musically illiterate, created and cherished beautiful melodies and songs in ravines, crags, and vales. Sex happens when you seek to upgrade the melodies with something of your own, an embellishment, spruce them up, add something. You leave a trace on these eternal songs. Perhaps you leave one of your own. That is what our guests are doing today. Prostitution, on the other hand, is what some other people are doing and thankfully they are not with us tonight. They are trampling the love and passion in sex. It is a theft of the rhythm and harmonies and fit only for dancing on the graves of our ancestors. That is what a friend said, who is an expert, a professional, and a serious man. I would like us to try to make a distinction between the three dimensions in the discussion that follows, among the people who as I said deal mostly in the second dimension. As I set off with sex I will finish with it, God forgive. After the song, after the sex that these lovely four people performed, I would remain quiet, look up at the ceiling with a smile, and smoke. I am speechless. But there is something that I must say. I am from Split and this young gentleman worked with Dziboni from Split, and nobody mentioned any song from Dalmatia. Next time I am invited, with the same team, the four of you please have a Dalmatian sex song ready to perform.
CHAPTER 12: ETHNIC MUSIC

VLATKO STEFANOVSKI
MUSICIAN, SKOPJE

REVIEWING MY OWN IDENTITY
Playing music and creating music is a special feeling; you delve deep into yourself and re-examine your own identity. Working with music that surrounds you, with ethnic music if you prefer to call it that, is like digging up one’s DNA, one’s secret or life formula.

I am glad that 35 years ago my friends and I reached out to these treasures at a time when young people were ashamed of it, obsessed with pop and rock music. We made very good arrangements of those traditional songs, at some unconscious level, and performed them successfully.

MUSIC IS WINNING FREEDOM
It is touching the DNA, one’s being, asking questions of identity. Who are we, why are we, where are we from? When we start playing, people go crazy as we probably touched the most sensitive part of them at that instant. To me, it is a question of winning freedom. Freedom is what interests me in music, and the territory that I can conquer. At home we had a cult record by Kiril Mancevski who sang mainly songs from western Macedonia. Unfortunately he is no longer living, and I never had an opportunity to meet him. I found the record in my home and compared it with the best blues of Ray Charles. Mancevski touched the blues in Macedonian music. His music has a melancholy note, a sadness, and he has this beautiful velvety voice. Then I began comparing, because I had reached traditional music through Hendrix. At first I was fascinated with the Stones, the Beatles, Hendrix and Dylan, and later discovered that this was just as valuable, if not more valuable.

AUDIENCE IN LONDON WENT CRAZY FOR OUR MUSIC
Allow me to boast a bit and say that I had the pleasure and honour of performing with the London Symphony Orchestra last January at the Barbican Centre, and the concert was sold out. We had four encores and three days of rehearsal. I recorded it all; I was the soloist, and the orchestra backed me and played Jovka Kumanovka and Eleno Kerko. In a way I provoked the orchestra, directly or indirectly, to play seven-eighths. At the first rehearsal they asked me how they were supposed to count, whether it was one, two, three, four... seven, or one-two, one-two, or one-two-three. I was happy and proud to work with them. Before that we played in Monte Carlo and Leipzig with renowned European conductor Christian Yarvi. The audience went wild! We had four encores; they loved us.
NO ONE HAS INTELLECTUAL RIGHTS

I do not have intellectual rights on everything. I have a Slovenian friend from Celje who has been around the world in search of music. He has travelled to Polynesia, Malaysia, India, Nepal, England, and the States. The man is a natural ethnomusicologist in a quest for beauty, looking for music. He has not been to Macedonia yet. I told him, Bosjan, it is time to come to Macedonia and drink clear water from our spring. No one has intellectual rights on traditional music. It is fantastic, the unknown author who created these beautiful melodies. There is a big question mark for me there, a huge fascination. How was it possible for anyone to write *Elena Kerko* or any of the many southern Serbian songs from Vranje that are fantastic? However, I do not play Macedonian music only. I play blues that is not part of our tradition, and I play Gibson guitars and turn on audio amplifiers. I have a rock band also. Brits could tell me, “You cannot play rock and roll; you are not from Britain or the States.”

KEEP TRADITION AWAY FROM THE ASSAULT OF GLOBALISATION

It is important to say where each song is from, but not to the point of competing – which music is better or more valuable? A man of culture and education must respect the cultures around him and beyond. Let it be the Eskimo culture, which I have not experienced, but I have respect for, because the people eat only fish and live in igloos. On the other hand, we have to preserve these traditions from the horrible infestation known as globalisation.

AMIRA MEDUNJANIN
SINGER, SARAJEVO

SONGS THAT TAUGHT ME UNIVERSAL VALUES

To me, music is a nice place to escape to when I feel down and when I need to recover, especially traditional music from these parts. It’s a place that gives me joy and sadness, and I get in touch with all these deep feelings that every one of us feels at some point in our lives.

I have long been fascinated by songs that were developed who-knows-where, in what village or town, and have survived all these years; they have guided me through life and taught me some good things, funny though it may sound. All the songs contain some messages in their verses, metaphors that taught me universal values about life, and I tried to live by those principles.
I HEAR ONLY THE VOICE AND SILENCE IN EMINA

I grew up with traditional music, but I listened to other bands as well. Back in those days, old arrangements did not suit me; there was too much playing. Words were not heard, at least it seemed so to me. Then the famous Mostar Sevdah appeared. I got an album from a friend from Canada in 1990, and I had never heard of these people, and I liked it. For me, the sevdah is a fantastic form in music; it is free and great for improvising.

I listened to Himza Polovina, and he is one of my favourite narrators, his song Emina is an evergreen among us thanks to his sensibility. His performance is exquisite. He devotes special attention to every emotion that comes from words, his breath and interpretation; he was a tremendous influence on me. Ibrica Jusić is another great performer. I never hear Emina with any instrument, only the voice and the silence.

POWER OF MUSIC TO SHOW TO THE REST OF THE WORLD

I had a great team, 10 of us musicians from 10 Balkan countries, on the stage together for the first time, and we met only three days before. We had a concert on London’s Trafalgar Square; Nelson was looking down on us as we sang Jovano, Jovanke and Zapjevala Sojka Ptica. The square was full of Brits and the reaction was fabulous. I was moved to a point in the song when I got shivers, and the public responded. The emotion is so fluid, a love relationship at every moment. That is the power of the music we should share with the rest of the world.

NO GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

This area has the least of the government’s attention in the country, with all the other woes. Unfortunately, we are not giving sufficient space to preserve and cherish the tradition and to promote it. Just a few of us enthusiasts, working alone with small support, sometimes none.

BILJANA KRSTIĆ
SINGER, BELGRADE

TRADITIONAL MUSIC FOUND ME

A song that someone sent from a spring came from the soul and heart, with an instinct, and it comes to us and brings us together, makes peace with time and our differences and takes us back to the source. Music is everything to me. I do not know what I would do in life if I were not in the music business. I have worked at Radio Belgrad for 30 years as a music editor. I have liked to sing ever since I was little; my family sang a lot. The traditional music that I sing found me.
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ETHNIC AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC

The term ethnos means people, and that is traditional music connected to a people, that is my view. Perhaps the difference is in the collection of styles and traditions, whereas ethnic music is linked only to a particular people. We really live through our traditions, and that is a starting point for many of the genres. From artistic music to jazz ... whatever. The important thing is that it lives and that it is passed on to the next generation.

THE SEVDALINKA IN BOSNIA, THE MERAK IN VRANJE

I do not sing the songs of distant traditions in India or Japan – I would not know how to – but I sing the songs of Vlach people, because I worked in a music school in Negotin for a year and became acquainted with the music then. The sevdalinka in Bosnia is the merak in Vranje. Macedonia also has fantastic songs, and they are all sevdalinkas [ballads]; they are all love songs, beautiful love songs that were sung in the Balkans. I know little about the music in Istria, but I know about the Istria seconds, and so on. We always had these divisions, but a true love song inspires emotions, and Kiril Mancevski is a favourite performer of mine as well. Thanks to him, I recorded the song *Jano Savdalino*, and I must confess, I cry every time I hear him sing it.

MANY PLACES FOR THE SAME SONG

A popular sevdalinka, *Niz polje idu babo sejmeni* from Bosnia, and the Macedonian version *Od polit idu babo sejmani*. We do not know which is older, and Mara Đordević from Kosovo also sang it. The former is better known, but both are beautiful. Songs are passed on. Bosnia’s version has son Marko, Macedonia’s version has son Stojan, and there are some differences in melody. The Macedonian version is more ornate, and the Bosnian has a different expression. Everything was recorded in this region, and that is how I see it. One song can really be found in all these places.

GOVERNMENT CARE FOR ETHNIC HERITAGE IN MUSIC

I think, though I might be wrong, but I believe that Macedonia looks after its musicians the most. Why am I saying this? I felt that when Tose was alive, the whole country was behind him, and I have the feeling it is the same for you, Vlatko. Perhaps I am wrong. I wish Serbia would back its real artists to help people promote what is good. But we just do not have time for art or culture with all the trouble that befell us, or for any of the other things that are important for us and that really matter, the only things that we can demonstrate today. Music is a universal art form. It would be much easier for us if only they would help us a little, so we do not have to do everything ourselves.
CHAPTER 12: ETHNIC MUSIC

TAMARA OBROVAC
SINGER, PULA

WE MUST PRESERVE TRADITION IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM

We have this good saying: “He who sings means no evil.” I like to add, he means nothing. My story is a bit different: I am a jazz kid – I was fascinated by the freedom to improvise. After I graduated from music school in Pula, I played the flute. I went to Zagreb to see live performances, and I fell in love, started practicing in all sorts of places, wanted to know it all, and then I realized I was not an American but an Istrian.

I do not divide music into genres, only between good and bad music, and good music is true music, one that comes from the soul. Bad music is one that lies, one that was not created with a true emotion. As far as the ethnic principle is concerned, I believe I am obliged to preserve tradition in its original form. That is necessary in order to pass the music on to the next generation in its original form.

UNIVERSAL ENERGY OF EMOTION

As far as the outside world is concerned, I believe that it is unimportant in the end, just as the verbal component is unimportant. Most of the energy is passed through some kind of emotion created between people on the stage, so they have this love relationship or, forgive me, a sexual relationship, and the same thing happens with the public. Places where we played, from Finland and Japan where nobody understood us, to our neighbouring countries, the response of audiences was about the same.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND JAZZ

I would like to express a dilemma, two small problems that I see in the relationship between traditional music and jazz. Traditional music at some point becomes too repetitive; it has a melody that is repeated and therefore needs elaboration, some addition, harmonically, or some interlude. In jazz I often encounter art for art’s sake, and virtuosity per se which becomes detached from the emotional background and loses meaning in the context of music. How well I said that, but I am trying to reconcile what music means for me; I would like to say that music is everything. You wake up sad in the morning and then in five minutes you are happy, and various stages in life that carry different emotions. I believe that is what music should do, in a way.
THE ORIGIN OF THE SONG

The way I see it, it was not one author who created it, but a moment when a melody came about and then generations and generations polished it. Sort of like throwing out what is unnecessary and leaving the essence. I experience it in the melody when I sing it. To me these melodies are archetypal, so pure because they were sifted through generations, and the finest part was left.

GUESTS OF VICINITIES

GÁBOR GALANTAI, SECOND SECRETARY OF THE HUNGARIAN EMBASSY IN BELGRADE: I like the music of my southern neighbours very much, because it is not commercial and I believe that the emotions are really human and I enjoy it. I believe that the musical culture of the Western Balkans is of exceptional value in Europe.

MARKO ČADEŽ, SPOKESMAN AT THE GERMAN EMBASSY: Of course I am familiar with this kind of music; I believe that all of your guests tonight had big concerts and performances in Germany, and I believe that traditional Balkan music and music from the region is highly appreciated in Germany, where there is a market for it and an audience.
CONCLUSION

REACTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

BALŠA BRKOVČ

VICINITY IS IS A KIND OF ANCIENT SQUARE

The show is healing; Vicinities is an agora to which we keep returning, to talk and to be heard. We are people as long as we speak and hear each other, wrote Holderlin. If we do not trust true poets, who is to be trusted? Vicinities is important because it brings us to the agora and shows that we have similar problems. These attempts to establish bridges of dialogue deserve credit for a new culture of understanding and tolerance that has developed amongst us. Another detail, not insignificant: the people who created the show have demonstrated with their personal stance and professionalism how simple and natural it is to talk. We will know more about each other after every debate, which is no minor achievement in these parts.

VJERA ŠUMAN

IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS THINGS OPENLY

It was enjoyable being with the incredible crew from Vicinities as well as the people from our surroundings who are troubled by the same dilemmas, transitions, conversions, markets, democracy and future in Europe. These shows, with their high viewership and approval ratings in the region, have shown how important it is to discuss things; it is the only way to better understand ourselves and our neighbours. There are many topics that we need to discuss and which we can discuss, so I hope that the Vicinities continues to moot new questions that trouble people in this part of the world, questions that are often painful and hard but necessary so that we understand each other better as people and as neighbours in order to be here for each other as good neighbours are. I wish the Vicinities team many more good shows, interesting guests and conversations. All the best to you.
MAJA BOBIĆ

WE RARELY TALK WITH NEIGHBOURS

It was a great pleasure to take part in *Vicinities*. Unfortunately, we rarely get a chance to discuss with our neighbours topics of concern for us all and for the future of the region, such as European integration, no doubt. I believe that our audience is better informed thanks to the excellent concept, and the know-how and expertise of our anchors and the creators of the show. The show gives a proper view of the challenges faced by our countries and societies, the similarity of our problems, and possible joint solutions. I believe that the forum, the approach and degree of professionalism displayed in examining subjects that are often complex and painful are rare in public discourse, so *Vicinities* has been refreshing for us all.

SLAVIŠA ORLOVIĆ

CREATIVELY AND EURO-ACTIVELY

*Vicinities* has come as a refreshment in the spiritual desert of the media contamination surrounding us. After being closed up in ourselves and detached, *Vicinities* has opened us up and brought us together, bridging differences and removing barriers. It has been inspirational and comforting, the ideas were realised and the show’s mission was achieved. The topics, guests, meetings, debates, main points, and professional team who were above and beyond the parochial mindset and spirit, promoting and defending universal values. The participants and team of *Vicinities* have been creative and Euro-active. Keep it up!

TANJA VUJOVIĆ

SERIOUS PROJECT

I have only words of praise for the organisation and realisation of the entire project of *Vicinities*. As far as the topic on violence among youth is concerned, I am sure that the educational aspect and creativity are only some traits that make the show special. The show drew attention to important problems that are pressing in our society. I have heard that the show has a wide audience and the statistics prove it. The show is serious and presents true values.
MIRZA IBRAHIMPAŠIĆ

BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING

The idea is original; I believe it is unique in the region and certainly an important attempt at civilised dialogue and building bridges of understanding in this region. The effect of the lack of dialogue is that we know little about each other, it produces misunderstandings which generate tension and ultimately clashes, which are absurd. Our memories of that are still fresh.

MARKO SOMBORAC

PUT US IN A ROOM AND GIVE US PAPER

My time on the show was perhaps the only time I was able to meet renowned fellow cartoonists from the region in one place and exchange views on problems in our profession. If there is anything to find fault with, then it is certainly the thankless topic of cartoons and laughter, my view being that we should skip the talk all together. Just put us in a room, give us a subject and a piece of paper and then record our drawings. An idea for the next series, perhaps?

JASNA BAJRAKTAREVIĆ

AUTHENTIC IDEA

All the topics were interesting and applicative, the guests competent, and the whole idea authentic and educational. Dynamics were achieved through survey results, the words of introduction and closing remarks, and especially the kind words from direct and indirect actors in the project who gave the show a natural and relaxing mood. I am pleased to have been a part of the project. Thank you for inviting me! Good luck for your next project, may it be successful and lasting.

SRĐAN MILOŠEVIĆ

OPENS IMPORTANT TOPICS

Vicinities raises important topics in a meaningful and adequate way that goes beyond the daily talk and concerns systemic questions that demand creative and efficacious answers and solutions in our societies. Guests were planned and selected carefully. The show’s format, which requires guests make their points through brief answers, makes the debate dynamic. I hope the topic on history was helpful, at least for the people concerned.
MIOĐRAG PERUNOVIĆ

**SHOW COULD BE LONGER**

I gave many interviews during my long sports career and appeared on many shows, but the experience I had on *Vicinities* was one of the best. Without exaggerating, everything was highly professional – the organisation, the anchors who properly guided the show's flow with their friendly manner, the selection of topics, and knowledge of the problems and topics that were discussed. Everything was quite superior. Now, considering the number of guests and topics, I believe that the show could be longer, but let us not look for a needle in a haystack. There is always room for improvement, and the production crew knows that best. It was a great pleasure being on *Vicinities*. Good luck to you all!

BELUL BEQAJ

**WE WERE ONLY PARTLY SUCCESSFUL**

The project can become meaningful if we contribute toward creating respect and mutual understanding, without the demonstration of power. For instance, the discussion on violence. Today it is not just a question and matter of scientifically describing and explaining it in the sociology, social pathology, and criminology of Albanians, Slovenians, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. It is a common concern for us all in these environs. Is there a higher goal of young people that would justify the use of any means, including violence? Is there a higher goal of powerbrokers that would justify use of violence against youth? I believe that we achieved only part of our goal on the show, because we failed to send a message to the public that force must not become a right for powerbrokers.

DUŠKO VUKOVIĆ

**AGAINST THE PROVINCIAL MINDSET**

Some of the main traits of the provincial mindset that prevailed late in the 1980s and early 1990s, which the great Radomir Konstantinović so accurately described, are to regard one's environs as foreign and hostile and to assume that defence. This provincial mentality is still very strong, and many circumstances play into it, encouraging and feeding the subjective weaknesses of impoverished Balkan peoples lost in a dismal transition. Everyone who works against dispiritedness and makes even the least effort to do so will have done a great deed. That is my view of the shows collected in the *Vicinities* project.
EDIN RADUŠIĆ

FACING A BURDENSOME PAST AND PRESENT

There is no alternative to dialogue and openly challenging problems and dilemmas that are pressing on every community. This is true particularly in post-conflict societies, as today’s of the former Yugoslavia. A dialogue that is unbiased, relaxed, well-meaning, and open – as offered by the Vicinities series – is a good example of how to face the burdensome past and present that have merged into one in an area once occupied by the common state of Yugoslavia.

DŽEVAD HODŽIĆ

I AM SATISFIED WITH MY OWN REPRESENTATION

I hope I contributed; I tried to give brief and concise answers and to keep to the subject. I believe, however, that we strayed from the topic several times during the show and I promptly reacted. And here is a critical remark, if honesty is allowed: I believe that it is not good to prefer this or that concept or position in advance and beforehand. However, I give the show a very good grade, and thank you once again.

ALEKSANDAR SAŠA ZEKOVIĆ

TIME HAS MOVED US APART

The project helped people in the region get to know one another better and to hear one another, from the point of view of the topics discussed. The times past have moved societies in the region away from one another. We have devoted ourselves to moving toward Europe, neglecting and forgetting that that calls for better cooperation among ourselves and not to forget our neighbours. The themes in the series helped us stay abreast of circumstances in the region and its societies, to keep ourselves informed, and to foster dialogue and cooperation. The project helped people get to know each other. Projects of this kind are indeed necessary to keep the entire region together intellectually, civically, democratically, and professionally.

DEJAN BUHA

GO ON BREAKING DOWN PREJUDICES

The concept and focus of Vicinities is something quite new and positive in the region’s media and social space. Excellent synergy between anchors who are not trying to be the stars of the programme, and participants who are projecting a picture from an unusual angle, and a young audience with opinions of their own – that really sets the programme apart. Vicinities is definitely
the path to regional dialogue and cooperation with a very important focus on young and successful people who will be the holders of tomorrow’s changes. By breaking down the barriers of prejudice and presenting reality in the countries of our environs, the project has definitely proved successful and necessary. I believe this is evident from the reactions from all the countries where it was broadcast.

After the painful subjects that were debated, the following series might refer to more positive stories and models, in individual countries and regionally.

RENATO BARETIĆ

YOUR IS SISYPHEAN LABOUR

The *Vicinities* has not served its purpose entirely, but will continues to push ahead. It is Sisyphus labour, but it is great that someone would do it of their own accord, not as a punishment. And so professionally, to boot. I have been on many shows in the past 20 years and co-hosted various television programmes, but I have not been with people who have approached an onerous task with such relaxing seriousness.

Every party needs to communicate with former fellow nationals or compatriots, if you prefer. Up until now, it happened in isolated cases or in outside situations, but with *Vicinities* it has become regular. Therefore the project has been beneficial as well as healing. Its effect is not immediately visible as it never is with any remedy, but in time it certainly will become so.

VESELJKO KOPRIVICA

YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO BOAST OF

I believe that *Vicinities* is one of the best shows broadcast in the Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin languages. The topics are current, they are not local, they are interesting and the guests who come from different parts of the region and whose opinions differ, are competent. It is easy to see that every episode was thoroughly prepared and professionally done. The show is of superior quality because, among other things, of the time constraints and that the guests were required to keep to the subject and not interrupt one another.

NENAD BOROVČANIN

VERY DYNAMIC AND PROFESSIONAL

It was a great pleasure to be part of *Vicinities*. The team was very dynamic, well-organised and professional.
In May 2013, CDRSEE launched a website www.okruzenje.net to support Vicinities’ activities. This is where we first post news about topics for the shows, guest lists, teasers with interesting excerpts, and information about future shows. The shows are available in the website’s archive for downloading and streaming following premiered television broadcasts. Information about the shows broadcast to date is available as well, with biographies of participants and their comments. A separate section entitled Iz Mog Ugla [From My Viewpoint] carries introductions by our keynote speakers.
Apart from suggestions from our visitors, we also have a poll posted on the home page at all times. Here are the results for some of our questions:

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO WATCH VICINITIES NEXT YEAR?**
- yes 83.3%
- no 13.3%
- maybe 1.7%

**DO YOU APPROVE OF OUR CHOICE OF GUESTS?**
- yes 63.6%
- no 18.2%
- maybe 18.2%

**DOES VICINITIES HELP US UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER BETTER?**
- yes 78.4%
- no 2.7%
- maybe 18.9%

**ARE THE TOPICS DISCUSSED ON VICINITIES INTERESTING AND TOPICAL?**
- yes 87.5%
- no 3.1%
- maybe 9.4%
MEDIA SUPPORT

Twelve episodes of *Vicinities* were broadcast from May through November 2013 on RTS (Radio Television of Serbia), HRT (Croatian Radiotelevision), BHT (Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina), TV Vijesti in Montenegro, Alsat-M in the FYR of Macedonia, RTRS (Radio Television Republic of Srpska), TOP TV in Slovenia, and RTV in Kosovo.

**SANJA GVOZDENOVIĆ**
HRT (CROATIAN RADIOTELEVISION),
EDITOR IN CHIEF OF THE HTV4 INFORMATION CHANNEL

Broadcasts of the regional political talk show *Vicinities* enabled viewers on HRT to hear views on issues of common interest through a very dynamic debate. The show’s impartiality and its professional and open approach were visible in the treatment of sensitive topics and in the selection of different but relevant guests from the region.

HTV4 has no indicators on viewership, so I am unable to provide information on viewership and audience evaluation. We are in the process of installing technical equipment that I hope will soon enable audience measurement on HTV4. The show was assessed as good and interesting in individual reports that reached me. Since HTV4 is broadcast free-to-air, the show is available to viewers in Europe.

The shows that have aired to date produced a definite interest for continuing cooperation, so I use this opportunity to confirm that. HTV4 is open to projects of public interest, therefore new proposals are more than welcome.

**VLADAN MIĆUNOVIĆ**
EDITOR IN CHIEF, TV VIJESTI (MONTENEGRO)

Broadcasting the second season of *Vicinities* in the prime-time slot shows clearly the importance that TV Vijesti has attached to the talk show. The shows will not top our viewership ratings, but they will definitely have an audience that will not have sundry farms and grand parade shows served aggressively and insolently instead of real-life of concerns. That was a powerful reason why we decided to broadcast *Vicinities*, even though we are a commercial television station.

*Vicinities* is far better, more open and of higher quality than the surrounding and so-called brotherly love, the worse side of which we witnessed in the past 20 or so years. We do not see these shows as a longing for bygone times or a way to renew something that is most likely lost forever, but as an opportunity to help viewers through the experiences of wise people to better understand one another and to live and cooperate more sincerely.

I would like to commend the efforts of the authors in improving the show technically and content-wise this year, to make it
more dynamic and interesting for viewing. The editors and anchors displayed high standards of professionalism and objectivity. They guided discussions very well and spurred their guests to get the most out of them. The topics were carefully and knowingly selected, and the selection of guests was excellent as well. They were all focused, they felt good and that was visible, and they cared to keep the project at a very high level.

**ANAMARI REPIĆ**
DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL,
RTV IN KOSOVO

RTV Kosovo, our public broadcaster, agreed immediately and with pleasure to air *Vicinities* on one of its channels. We decided it would be the new channel in Serbian, the RTK2, a new show in Kosovo on a new television channel. We thought at first to show viewers a new angle of television journalism that was not just news presentation, interviews, and footage of events. It is a new approach that breaks down local barriers and develops stories through dialogue, debate, and a regional approach to topics around us.

Unemployment, the influence of religion, unpunished crimes, life for young people in any country and in the region cannot but intertwine and affect our lives wherever we are. We face and get to know topics and problems we are familiar with in a new way; we identify with them and become involved.

In our environs we have societies that share the same history, not a glorious one, but we should work together for a better future. We are mutually connected through differences that do not divide, but enrich us. That is why the show is called *Vicinities*, right?

A series of talk shows on regional current affairs is very welcome; it was well-received. It was quite important for us that some of the guests were from Kosovo, so that our viewers could see that everyone, including people from Kosovo, were welcome to give opinions on political, social and other topics of interest to us all.

Promoting a multi-ethnic and multicultural debate when the opinions of various ethnic groups are important and equally appreciated, as well as being open to criticism, is extremely important for Kosovo where at least six different communities live.

Thanks to *Vicinities* for showing us that our vicinity has common problems, concerns and challenges, but also hopes.

**NENAD LJ. STEFANOVIĆ**
EDITOR IN CHIEF OF THE INFORMATION PROGRAM OF RADIO TELEVISION OF SERBIA

RTS is the biggest media house in the area that broadcasts independent productions as well as its own extensive programming. *Vicinities* came to RTS through a public competition that it won owing to its freshness, innovation, approach and topics. After 12 shows, I can say that our expectations have been met in full, and our view-
ers are happy to see a new form of the old television talk-show genre. *Vicinities* has let our viewers hear the voices and opinions of people from across the region, which added to what they hear or see or read every day in their own milieu, with opinions from “the other side,” and to learn something new, break down prejudices and shift their usual discourse. They need not agree with what they hear, but the opinions should differ and information should be comprehensive. With four guests from four milieus on every show, and a satirical introduction, *Vicinities* is a unique television endeavour, and RTS looks forward to working together in the future as well.

**DRAŠKO IGNJATIĆ**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
RADIO TELEVISION REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

A culture of dialogue is the basis of the *Vicinities* series, which allows for arguments as well as professional and critical-thinking on subjects that are so very close to all the countries that were created with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. The importance of the approach is in the fact that the experiences of the participants in the shows are similar, as they come face to face with phobias, corruption, or the search for truth and justice in their own milieu. Resolving dilemmas, refusing to compromise and pull back, pointing out unacceptable patterns and stereotypes – these are a cathartic choice for the series. Even though it will not change the awareness of people entirely, it can help alter the environment and shape an acceptable view for younger viewers by directly pointing out well-known taboos.

Sometimes the show lacks the tone of a polemics or contradictory opinions that would affect viewers’ perceptions and interaction among participants.

The theme of *Vicinities* was well set as a way to re-examine ethical criteria in our societies and to test how vital bodies of the state administration work, and to show the actual level of human rights.

Judging from the experiences of the participants and analysis of the civil sector, no one can boast great achievements to that effect, but clearly the results in countries closer to the EU are visibly better, regardless of instances of human rights violations.

Hopefully, by pointing to sharply detected topical but awkward problems, the ultimate goal can be achieved, which is a more just, humane, and honest society where man and his rights are inviolable.

**HAMDI RAŠITI**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
ALSAT-M TELEVISION, SKOPJE

*Vicinities* is a mirror of the region, and the series was carried out in a very positive way, dealing with issues that are of daily concern for us. It shows that people in the region have essentially the same social and political problems.
The beauty of the show is that it includes guests from all over the region who exchange their experiences and views on various topics of concern to us all.

From the technical angle, *Vicinities* looks good by European standards, too. We have had very favourable reactions from viewers who asked when the season was over whether we would broadcast the show again.

**OLIVERA DODIG**

ACTING DIRECTOR OF TELEVISION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The public broadcaster joined the project at the start, considering it valuable from the aspect of bringing closer those who got lost on the paths of our ugly reality. We welcomed it from the aspect of reconciliation, getting to know others, in order to show our viewers that they too had identical or similar problems that were solvable through their own experiences.

*Vicinities* is a valuable project that brings people together with a good energy and will to debate and incite necessary change in a productive manner. Changes in the way we understand others, by breaking down prejudices, and on the principle of not flinching from what we heard. This is a space without language barriers, culturally similar, with social and economic circumstances that favour ordinary people struggling to make ends meet, and politics that continues to divide more than connect. Therefore it is only natural to open up the space and look over into the neighbour’s lawn, replicate and apply a good practice in order to move on to the EU that we aspire to and which ought to be our future. *Vicinities* helps us surround ourselves with people who have a recipe for change for the better, or will find it with us. Through face-to-face dialogue, *Vicinities* says the good and the bad and thus overcomes the distrust that is still among us. And for media to make a contribution as well as connect the diversities, help build mutual confidence and at least round off the narrative for the well-being of their citizens, it is because they are worth it.

**VLADIMIR VODUŠEK**

DIRECTOR OF TOP TV SLOVENIA

Cooperation on *Vicinities* was a favourable experience for us because topics from the region are always interesting for viewers in Slovenia even though it has been a member of the EU for nine years. The selection of guests and topics, the professional guidance of the anchors and the production were a positive surprise for us and proof that top-quality television production and journalism still live in this part of the world.

**VESELJKO KOPRIVICA**

EDITOR IN CHIEF, MONITOR NEWSMAGAZINE, MONTENEGRO

Topical, interesting, and civilised. In a word, professional. Why praise the *Vicin-
ties series? Because the show is different from sundry television programs that we are inundated with, that bomb viewers with propaganda, primitivism, ignorance, lengthy talks for the self-promotion of anchors and guests. Vicinities is immune to that. It is easy to see that the shows were carefully prepared, through a selection of topical and interesting topics and its guests, and cleverly wrapped up in 45 minutes. Everything is done with balance. I was pleased to hear that the shows were widely viewed in Montenegro, and I did not hear any objections to the content. Cooperation between Vicinities and Monitor is perhaps rare for this region, an example of successful cooperation between an electronic and print media. As far as I know, only our weekly publishes excerpts from the show in Montenegro. And as far as Monitor is concerned, we are happy to continue this cooperation. Our pages are open to Vicinities.

**DŽENANA KARUP-DRUŠKO**

ACTING EDITOR IN CHIEF, DANI NEWSMAGAZINE, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

First of all, the importance of the project Vicinities is that it is regional and that every show featured guests from the region whose statements sometimes showed that identical problems troubled the countries created from the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. And, sometimes they discussed their differences and pointed to possible solutions.

Secondly, the choice of topics was quite good, indicative of issues that concern our societies, mostly for similar reasons, such as public administration or religious communities.

Thirdly, the last show on ethnic music is a topic that deserves to be featured more on public broadcasters in the area because it emphasises our common past, and it talks of what is positive and what once connected the people of the former Yugoslavia. We speak so much of bad things, what divided us and led to the breakup of the country, that we forget to bring out positive things and what induced the peoples to unite into one country.

The shows are therefore very important in the process of facing the past, what the country has been discussing in the context of war crimes over the past years, the wars that were waged in the former Yugoslavia, and that we can’t forget the valuable things that still exist in our societies. The problems that this transition brought are mainly the same; discussions focused on how to overcome them and how society can and should fight them. In short, I believe that our differences have narrowed slightly thanks to the project Vicinities.
IN CONCLUSION, WE INCLUDE HERE THE LAUDATION DELIVERED BY MR. MARTIN SCHULZ, THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, AT THE CEREMONY TO PRESENT THE 2013 FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD TO THE CDRSEE.

“Dear Mr Šebek, dear Mr Carras, dear excellencies, honoured colleagues of the Federal State government, of the government, of the European Parliament, dear Kurt, dear Roland, dear guests, I apologize for being late, and I beg your pardon as I will have to leave early, but I have to tell you that we are in the middle of coalition negotiations with the CDU. I interrupted them, the coalition negotiations, at least the European side which I represent there, due to the award ceremony here, because I believe that the Human Rights Award is at least as important as the coalition negotiations. It was also my wish to be with you here today, and I am honoured that I may give this laudatory speech. As Kurt Beck said, we honour a special organisation, the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe. I want to congratulate you on this award.

For 15 years now, you have made enormous contributions to the reconstruction of civil society in the Balkans. Strengthening democracy, pluralism, and the rule of law are your goals, and your commitment has been the reconciliation between people and nations in Southeast Europe. You have rendered outstanding services to revising history of the Balkans. Two of your projects have particularly impressed me personally. The first is the Joint History Project. As Kurt Beck has pointed it out, for over 14 years you have encouraged teachers and pupils to critically assess their own history. The work that you are doing is of enormous value. The philosopher George Santayana said once: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” None of us have forgotten the horrors of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, and we will not forget the tragic consequences of these wars. Families have been torn apart, homes have been destroyed, people have been displaced.

Twenty years is a short time and scars have yet to heal. We know, especially here, how important it is to keep the memory of the past awake and to make sure that we come to terms with it. The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation does exactly that. Novel teaching models and revised curricula have been adopted in many countries of the region thanks to the dedication and efforts of this centre. The history books that it has produced have been translated into ten languages.
Ladies and gentlemen, in order for true reconciliation to be possible, sacrifices must be made and responsibility for past injustice has to be accepted. Today, both Serbia and Croatia are working in unison with the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia. This is an important step because true reconciliation is not possible without justice. This so-easily-said sentence is actually a sensation. The fact that these two countries fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court is as I feel, one of the great achievements of the region. This Center has made an invaluable contribution towards coming to terms with history and reconciliation between people. Teachers, scientists, associations, students, and translators from all countries in the region have participated in this cross-border project. I would like to thank all contributors who have dedicated their time to a critical and transnational teaching of history and contemporary history. The project’s joint history book is dedicated to coming to terms with the past.

The other project that has impressed me and that I wanted to mention is “Employed, Empowered” project. Employed, Empowered is a flagship project of the CDRSEE in Serbia that aims to integrate refugees and returnees into society. A network of help desks has been set up in seven cities to absorb refugees and returnees and assist them in becoming socially integrated. Eight thousand people were aided by the project in 2008 and seven thousand were aided in 2009. If your goal is to maintain peace, ladies and gentlemen, you must show people a brighter future. The non-governmental organisation that we honour today has done so.

The European Union was founded on the premise “never war again”. Its members have vowed that they will do everything in their power to prevent another war in Europe. Reconciliation of historic enemies is the surest way to secure peace. This is what the founding fathers of the European Union felt. They also understood that sheer will is not enough, and in order to give Europe an immune system against war, they have set up common institutions that make the resolution of conflicts of interest possible.

Especially today, in 2013, we need to remind ourselves that neither economic linkages, government cooperation, goodwill, nor cultural cooperation are sufficient to secure lasting peace on their own. A similar, networked world such as our globalised world of 2013 existed. It was Europe before the First World War. I recommend that you read the great book, “1913”, by Florian Illies. I have found in this book a citation, ladies and gentlemen, that got me thinking. In 1913, the English writer and later Nobel Peace Prize winner Norman Angell, wrote an open letter to German students. In this letter he wrote that Europe at the beginning of the 20th century is linked and intertwined to such an extent that individual
countries are financially and economically so interdependent on each other that a major war in Europe is not possible. The British Foreign Minister wrote to the Prime Minister a note, its content was: “The German economy will fall into the arms of Wilhelm II, because the internationally cross-linked German economy will be unable to cope with the follow-up costs of a war.” That was in 1913. A year later, a World War broke out. Shortly after, Europe was in rubble and ashes.

No, it is not the economic linkages. It is the common institutions that guarantee peace in Europe. It is the will of states and nations to work together across borders to establish common organs, which form the framework for reconciliation. That is the premise of an integrated Europe. The European perspective, namely the perspective to belong to this alliance and its organs and institutions, has made an invaluable contribution to stabilisation in South East Europe. On the 1st of July of this year, I was present in the capital of Croatia and very happy to witness it become a member of the European Union. I am confident that we will be able to incorporate Serbia also into the European Union.

Yes, it is through joint institutions that we have succeeded in Europe throughout the second half of the 20th century to banish the destructive demons of the first half of the 20th century. The demons of hatred, intolerance, racism, and superiority rhetoric became visible again twenty years ago with the will to kill people because they do not fit a particular concept. These demons have been forbidden, but we must not deceive ourselves that they do not exist. It is in 21st century Europe that they reared their ugly head again. It is manifested in hatred against the Roma, it is generalised towards allegedly lazy southerners, and it is maintained with anti-Islamic beliefs. The scapegoat ideology is again driving large numbers of voters to extremist parties.

Ladies and gentlemen, democracy and freedom need to be fought for every day. The often-quoted phrase of the British philosopher Edmund Burke got it right: “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that the good men do nothing.” The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation belongs to the good, who every day do something. You campaign against the oblivion of war and for the reconciliation between peoples. You fight every day for democracy, rule of law, and human rights. You make every day an indispensable contribution to a vibrant and active civil society and thus to peace in Southeast Europe. For your dedication and hard work over the past 15 years, I would like to thank you as the President of the European Parliament as well as a guest of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and on their behalf. And I personally would like to congratulate you from all of my heart for this award, you have really deserved, the Human Rights Award of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Thank you.”
Judging from reactions by viewers and television editors in the region, *Vicinities* was warmly welcomed this year as well. The CDRSEE and EFB plan therefore to provide new shows in 2014. Check for updates on our website, [www.okruzenje.net](http://www.okruzenje.net), and look forward to good news, for instance that *Vicinities* will have 24 episodes next year. Our production team will feature new shows. As we said in the previous edition of this publication, let us not boast about our promises. Stay in touch, the world of modern communication makes that easy.