

Their Europe

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[This paper was originally published in Italian language as a chapter in the book L'Europa alla prova del consenso, edited by Mario Fortunato, Roma: Domzelli editore, 2006, pp. 145–153.]

Looking into the results of Eurobarometer 2005 we can say that people in Slovenia are the best students in the European Union since among them there is the highest share of those who know the EU institutions and who correctly answered to four questions about them. At the same time 49 % of them are satisfied with the EU membership, but 62 % think it is beneficial for Slovenia to be member.

Since 1994 there was the question “Would it be beneficial for Slovenia to become member of the European Union?” included in the annual public opinion surveys in Slovenia. The share of those who answered positive was 65 % in 1994, but it fell to 49 % in 2000 and 48 % in 2001, and then rose again to 73 % in 2003. However at the referendum on EU membership held on 23 March 2003 89 % of voters in Slovenia voted for and 10 % against the membership.

How come that people of Slovenia know the EU institutions better than others and that such high support for the EU membership was achieved at the referendum? Maybe part of the answer we can find in the book *Eurosis – A Critique of the New Eurocentrism* published recently in the Media Watch book series by the Peace Institute in Ljubljana, the institute where I work and in the book series which I edit. The study written by Mitja Velikonja looks into the content, aspects and the principles of the formation and operation of new Eurocentrism in Slovenia during the process of its integration into the European Union. The Eurocentric textual and visual discourse in the book illustrates the embracive mythological and hegemonic dimensions of the propaganda of the Slovenia's accession to the EU. The official campaign with the slogan *Slovenia At Home in Europe* included a series of publications, contact addresses, educational and entertainment programs and talk shows in order to encourage “the sense of domestic cosiness within the new family” (Velikonja, 2005). So, we had phone services Europhone and Euro Direct, then Euromailbox and Eurobus with a mobile library and information center touring the country, we had chance to buy euro postcards or to write to evrofon@gov.si or visit a web site Evrosplet at <http://evropa.gov.si>,

and we had plenty of free brochures available such as Slovenia in the European Union, Slovenes in the European Union, The Integral Program Document 2004-2006, Your Companion on the Journey to Europe, Wandering Around Europe, Panorama of the European Union, The European Union in Brief, The Europe At Our Doorstep, Europe Without Frontiers, Slovenia and the European Union: On Negotiations and Their Implications, the radio program about the EU entitled Yellow on Blue etc.

And in 2005 the public opinion in Slovenia is still rather enthusiastic about the EU and see advantages in the membership, even after the citizens of France and the Netherlands voted against the ratification of the European Constitution and after the EU political elite failed to achieve agreement on the financial perspective for the next period.

Every EU campaigner could be happy about that, but could we? I must say I would be more happy to see majority of people in Slovenia to answer correctly four questions about the economic, social and cultural situation of the minority and immigrant communities in Slovenia. And to see the governmental campaign aimed at raising public awareness about the situation and gaining public opinion support for, for instance, Roma integration policy or for recognition of invisible minorities from former Yugoslavia.

There are 56 millions of people in Europe with origins outside the country of residence who often face social, economic and cultural alienation. These people are mostly called immigrants or migrants although it is not proper to call second or third generation in such way: they haven't immigrated but were born in the European countries. "We live here, and we're not going anywhere. So let's start getting used to it," said Medine, a rapper from France whose grandparents came there from Algeria (Time, 4 November 2005).

In this paper I would try to connect two angles of my work – the media and minorities. And will try to connect them in my interpretation of today's Europe, but the inspiring point will be the situation with minorities and the media in my country, Slovenia.

Do the structure of media landscape and the content of Slovene media make it possible to conclude that Slovenia is a culturally diverse (multicultural) country, in which, besides Slovenes, members of about ten other nations live traditionally or in substantial numbers? Is it possible to conclude, with regard to cultural and media policies, that the public authorities in

Slovenia pay attention to this? Despite the regulated status and rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, the recent attempts to regulate the status of the Roma community, and the efforts of the Section for Cultural Activities of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, the Roma community and other minority communities and immigrants at the Ministry of Culture, a number of political decisions, systemic measures and actions are still required before the above questions can be answered positively. During the European Week of Media and Minorities in March 2005, which was organized by the European network of NGOs and the media Online/More Colour in the Media, the deprived status of the Roma community in Slovenia in the field of media was presented by my institute. When we compared it to the status of the Italian and Hungarian minorities, the National Party announced that the status and rights of these communities should not be compared, and that the Roma should acquire support and resources from EU funds.

But, what good examples, rights and support for a better access to media can the Roma and other minority communities in Slovenia expect in Europe? The European Union has no binding or common standards for the member states as far as the protection of minorities in the field of media is concerned. There are no explicit provisions related to this in the only normative instrument of the European Union in the field of media – the Television without Frontiers Directive. However, Article 22a of its 1997 version (the directive was first adopted in 1989) requires the members of the European Union to ensure that television broadcasts do not contain any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality. New amendments to the directive or even a new binding EU normative in the field of broadcast media are being prepared, and a number of NGOs are striving to include in them the provisions related to observing cultural diversity in radio and television programmes and the inclusion of minorities in the production and distribution of broadcast programmes.

Articles 81 and 92 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which is now the integral part of the EU Constitution Treaty, prohibit discrimination and enforce the imperative of respect for cultural diversity. The way to anti-discrimination legislation and measures in the European Union was paved by Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam on the establishment of the EU, which was approved and signed in 1997. This article enables EU bodies to become actively involved in the fight against discrimination. In addition, two binding regulative documents related to the abolishment and prevention of discrimination were passed in 2000, i.e. the Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between

persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (2000/43/EC) and the Directive on equal treatment and employment (2000/78/EC). /By the way, I wonder if angry young men in French suburb ghettos have been aware about the mentioned directives. Of course, it is rather cynical wandering, but it indicates so called democratic deficit in creation and implementation of the EU instruments, and disconnection between them and the citizens./ The EU has developed a whole range of activities, networks, institutions and funding programs aimed at abolishment of discrimination, racism and social inequality (for instance, Community Action Program to Combat Discrimination, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Annual Report on Equality and Non-discrimination,¹ also co-funding programmes for national and transnational projects such as EQUAL, INTI and such). To a large extent these activities and support are meant to abolish discrimination in employment and create conditions for better employability of deprived groups, mostly minorities and immigrants.

Numerous projects that aim at media integration of minorities and immigrants and are developed by NGOs and the media in EU member states must therefore target economic integration if they want to be funded by social funds and integration funding programmes of the EU. Thus, the support for cultural diversity is given, but only on the basis of parameters that strengthen the ability to include minority members on the labour market and in national economies. This is where theoreticians such as Wallerstein or Balibar come in. They believe that the discussions on social exclusion based on cultural differences cannot be undertaken without being familiar with the categories of class differences, that ethnic differences only conceal class conflicts, that ethnicity is a historical product of world capitalist economy, i.e. that history of ethnicities is closely related to the development of power and class structures of individual states and to demarcation lines in the modern world system.

Even when scholars and activists who advocate media integration of minorities in EU member states address the media industry, they often use economic arguments. They stress that by not including minority members in their editorial boards and by ignoring or stigmatising minority communities in their programmes, the media are alienating a section of readers/listeners/viewers which represents a significant portion of the public and is potentially interesting for advertisers, so the media are actually losing a share of the market. According to the studies quoted in *Thinking Forward – Making the Media More Diverse – A Guide for*

¹ Cf. http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/public/pubst_en.htm

Changing Agents, published in 2004 by the Mira Media organization in the Netherlands, there has been an increase in the number of minority members and immigrants, especially young ones, in European urban areas. At the same time public broadcasters and other central media are experiencing serious problems in attracting young people in urban centres to become their public. Urban population in Europe is largely multicultural; according to the above mentioned publication, in the near future a half of urban population in Europe below the age of 30 will be of minority ethnic descent.

What does it actually mean to observe cultural diversity in public policies and everyday life in a certain society, and why is it important? What is multiculturalism, and, did it – as the (spiteful?) headlines in Slovenia suggested after the murder of the Dutch director – die even before Slovenes could actually get to know it, recognize it and start to integrate it into the system? In order to achieve social cohesion, stability and security, every culturally diverse society must achieve ‘morally grounded and politically sound answers’ (Kymlicka, 2003) to questions related to the status and rights of minorities. The demands to acknowledge their identity and observe cultural specificity are put forward by minority groups in various countries; the process can also be observed in Slovenia with regards to the Roma or members of nations from the former Yugoslavia. To observe the principles of cultural diversity, i.e. multiculturalism, means to ensure the equality of members of national minorities and ethnic groups and their full inclusion (integration) in the society, not only on the basis of generally valid individual human rights but on the basis of special, additional measures, i.e. by granting them group-differentiated rights. Irrespective of the fact whether cultural diversity of a certain country stems from its historical development and borders (regardless whether the inclusion of certain nations or ethnic groups is voluntary or not) or from immigration, or even both, it is necessary to develop a policy which observes and strengthens cultural pluralism and protects the minority from the domination of the majority or its political and economic power (i.e. from decisions and measures that would prove harmful to minority members). The range of such group-differentiated rights is wide.

Bhikhu Parekh, who has been developing his theory of multiculturalism also through his work in the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain and the British Commission on Equal Opportunity, makes another step forward in advocating a new political structure of multicultural society. Such a structure would balance the conflicting task of encouraging unity

and common belonging of all citizens on the one hand, and encouraging and observing their cultural diversity on the other.

In my country, Slovenia, there is need to discuss multiculturalism, which should be integrated in the political system in a better way, because it would create an environment preserving the society and strengthening the cohesion of all individuals and communities within it. In addition, it would prevent the society from breaking apart due to exclusionist policies or due to serious discontent of minority communities. Minority access to media, the extent of their inclusion in the media landscape and industry, and also their representation in the media content are indicators of public policies and also public opinion, i.e. they indicate the amount of multiculturalism in the public and private spheres Slovenia can withstand.

In some European states, the governments, NGOs, minority communities and the media have developed examples of best policies and practices which aim to contribute to media integration of minorities: better access of minorities to media, better representation of minorities in the media, and abolishment of discriminatory media reporting about minorities.

The legislation pertaining to the media and the regulators in European countries often entrust the care for the consideration of cultural diversity to public service broadcasting, in some countries they also grant special frequencies to the minority broadcasting media and provide special financial support for the production of minority and multicultural programmes (in some countries, this is provided for by the government bodies responsible for culture and/or the government bodies responsible for integration, employment and social affairs, in other countries it is special national funds for the media), or there is a provision demanding that minority representatives become members of programming councils of public service broadcasting.

In Europe, it is with regard to the integration of minorities in the media possible to find some common system characteristics such as, for example, the networking of non-profit minority and community media initiatives and organisations at the European level, or demanding the recognition of a third media sector (in addition to the public and commercial sectors also the community one); another characteristic is that the functioning of minority, community and multicultural initiatives is developing most in urban Europe, that is in large cities where minority and immigration populations are the largest and where cities and city authorities

themselves often develop normative and supporting mechanisms – even when there are none at the national level – for their legitimacy and development.

Public service broadcasting in some European countries, including the BBC, have integrated the cultural diversity in their personnel and programme policy (through so called *diversity departments*), or appointed advisors/supervisors for this area (*diversity officers*), who have already met a number of times and announced the establishment of a working group for cultural diversity within the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

Among the activities of public service broadcasting are programmes aimed at searching for and training talented and creative personnel from minority communities, ensuring proportional representation of minorities within the personnel structure particularly in news editorial offices, ensuring the production of educational, documentary and drama programmes that contribute to the integration of minorities and to social cohesion. Special items within the budgets of public service broadcasting in European countries are necessary to provide the financial foundations for the implementation of principles of equal opportunities and cultural diversity in both programming and employment policy.

The BBC, for example, has set itself and by 2003 achieved the goal of at least 10 per cent of its workforce being represented by the members of ethnic minorities, while the new goal, which should be reached by 2007, determines a quota of 12.5 per cent. The BBC has also set up a database of potential contacts in various minority communities and of experts in cultural diversity matters, who are at the disposal of the BBC's journalists and programme producers, and are via a web site available also to others. Such mechanisms can contribute to better access and representations of the minorities in the media.

According to the assessment of *Thinking Forward – Making the Media More Diverse – A Guide for Changing Agents*², in the EU member countries there are thousands of minority and community media, in the production and distribution of which a few tens of thousands of people are involved, working mostly on the voluntary basis. These are magazines, newspapers, radio and television stations and programmes and the internet media, all aimed at minorities and immigrants. Often these are local media, sometimes regional or national. Most

²Ur. Ed Klute in Monica Goracci, *Mira Media*, Utrecht in Rim, 2004.

frequently they are created in the language of communities they are aimed at, thus providing information and educational content necessary for the active inclusion of the community members into the wider society. There are also platforms for discussions and the exchange of opinions within these communities or between them and the majority population.

In Italy, the Netherlands, Greece, Great Britain, Denmark, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Macedonia and other European countries NGOs and training centres have been established for the vocational education of talented youth from minority communities, the aim of which is to contribute towards their qualifications for jobs in the media, towards their inclusion in the mainstream media or towards their creative input within the minority media. Alongside this, there are workshops and seminars for the journalists from the mainstream media about adherence to the cultural diversity principles and the prevention of discriminatory reporting on minorities.

In Slovenia, every government so far and the public opinion have had a problem with their readiness to acknowledge that we are a culturally diverse society and that in view of this it is necessary to reformulate public policies, normative framework including the Constitution, institutions, curricula, political and civil culture and, if we follow Bhikhu Parekh, also the definition of the Slovene national identity.

The minority, cultural and media policies must thus be harmonised and interwoven in such a way that it becomes clear to the general public and in particular to minority communities who is responsible for the media integration of minorities in Slovenia and what are the goals. At the moment, this is partly the Office for Nationalities, but exclusively for the Italian, Hungarian and the Roma communities (i.e. its so called “autochthonous” part), and partly the Ministry of Culture via the department for the cultural activities of the Italian and Hungarian communities, the Roma community, other minority communities and immigrants. Furthermore, it is necessary to change the policy of exclusion into a policy of inclusion and offer equal access to the media, in particular to the public service broadcasting, and to the public resources such as frequencies and budgetary funds based on equal criteria for all the minorities in Slovenia.

There is obvious need in many European countries and in the European Union as a political, economic and cultural entity to rethink and reformulate the norms and policies with regard to

citizenship. We don't need exclusivistic or devided societies, fortress Europe or holly Europe (Baudrillard, 2005). The media integration of minorities can be relevant instrument in attemps to overcome such false formation of European societies.

(November 2005)