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RUSSIA

Although 2010 did not bring any serious changes to the Russian media sector, it left journalists with a feeling of despair. Authorities retained direct or indirect control over many news media outlets, and stepped up their Internet presence. Panelists believe that the quality of journalism is declining, self-censorship flourishes, and investigative reporting has all but died. Still, a small but stable group of media outlets adhere to principles of fair, independent journalism and manage to function in a market distorted by subsidies and preferences for state-affiliated media.

Signals began to appear in 2010 that the media community is no longer willing to tolerate violence against journalists. Journalists and media advocates reacted sharply to the violent attack on Oleg Kashin, a *Kommersant* reporter, in November. Several MSI panelists commented that the media demonstrated more solidarity than seen previously, for example after the murder of prominent investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya in 2006. Elena Vartanova, dean of Moscow State University's journalism department, explained that Kashin's assault shocked the media community in part because he was not very prominent. Vartanova said, "Many journalists realized, 'That could happen to me.' If regular journalists are being assaulted, it means that the profession is really threatened." On the other hand, independent journalists show signs of fatigue. Maria Eismont, head of the Russian Independent Media Program, said that several owners of some of the best regional newspapers told her they are thinking of selling their media outlets and leaving the country. They feel there is no demand for independent journalism in Russia.

There are also signs that the government is tiring of subsidizing unprofitable state newspapers. In his address to the Federal Assembly at the end of 2010, President Medvedev said briefly that authorities should not own newspapers. This prompted panelist Vladimir Pavlovsky, editor-in-chief and director of *Krasnoyarsky Rabochiy*, to comment, "I think this is a revolutionary event. Since the October Revolution Russia always had party and state media, and no public official ever attempted to change that."

In 2010, blogs and social networks took off and became significant sources of news. Ordinary citizens now communicate with senior officials on blogs. Traditional media are increasing their online presence and picking up stories that first emerged on blogs. Internet advertising is growing rapidly, and many journalists have their own blogs. A more liberal pattern of media interests is evident among online users, in contrast to television audiences that make up the majority of the population.

The overall MSI score did not change significantly; minor drops in score for Objective 1 (freedom of speech), Objective 2 (professional journalism), and Objective 4 (business management) were offset by modest increases for Objective 3 (plurality of news) and Objective 5 (supporting institutions); the improvements in these objectives were due partially to the introduction of a new indicator in each that happened to score well. However, despite a few improvements even near-sustainable scores are out of reach currently for all objectives.

# RUSSIA AT A GLANCE

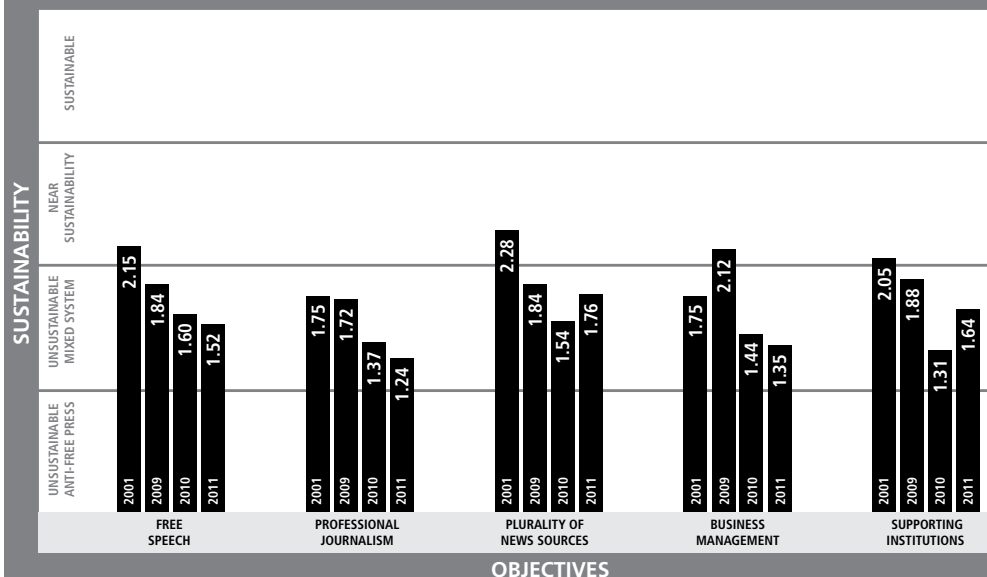
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 139,390,205 (July 2010 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Moscow
- > **Ethnic groups (percent of population):** Russian 79.8%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 2%, Bashkir 1.2%, Chuvash 1.1%, other or unspecified 12.1% (2002 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (percent of population):** Orthodox 86.5%, Muslim 10%, Armenian-Grygoryans 0.8%, Pagan 0.5%, Lutheran 0.3%, Buddhist 0.25%, Jewish 0.15% (2002 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** Russian (official), many minority languages
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$1.324 trillion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$18,350 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** 99.4% (male: 99.7%, female: 99.2% (2002 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Dmitriy Anatolyevich Medvedev (since May 7, 2008)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 27,425 newspapers, 20,433 magazines (Federal Agency of Press and Mass Communications, 2009); Radio and Television Stations: Formal statistics are not available, but the country has dozens of broadcast television channels, hundreds of radio stations, and even more cable, satellite, and Internet television channels.
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Annual circulation of 7.8 billion newspapers, 1.9 billion magazines total (Federal Agency of Press and Mass Communications, 2009)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** top three television stations: Russia 1 (18.2%), Channel 1 (17%), NTV (13.8%) (TNS Gallup Media)
- > **News agencies:** ITAR-TASS (state), RIA Novosti (state), Interfax (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** \$7.89 billion (2010 est., Association of Communication Agencies of Russia)
- > **Internet usage:** 40.8 million (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

## MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: RUSSIA



Scores for all years may be found online at [http://www.irex.org/system/files/EE\\_msiscscores.xls](http://www.irex.org/system/files/EE_msiscscores.xls)

### Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1):

Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

### Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

### Near Sustainability (2-3):

Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

### Sustainable (3-4):

Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

## OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

### Russia Objective Score: 1.52

The scores for Objective 1 (freedom of speech) dropped slightly compared to last year. The decrease came mostly from even lower scores for indicator 4 (attacks on journalists) and indicator 6 (libel laws). A modest gain was observed for indicator 2 (media licensing). Four indicators scored very close to the score achieved by the objective, however other indicators showed marked variation. Indicator 8 (media access and use of domestic and international news sources) and indicator 9 (free entry into the journalism profession) each scored more than a point higher than the objective score. However, indicator 4, indicator 5 (legal guarantees of editorial independence for public media), and indicator 6 all scored more than half a point lower than the objective score.

The panelists generally agreed that freedom of speech is only protected on paper in Russia. The Russian constitution guarantees free speech, and the Russian Media Law, in effect since 1991, is considered very democratic and supportive to freedom of speech in the mass media. But for the most part, the public does not value these freedoms, nor cares that they are not realized.

#### LEGAL AND SOCIAL NORMS PROTECT AND PROMOTE FREE SPEECH AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION.

##### FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS:

- > Legal and social protections of free speech exist and are enforced.
- > Licensing or registration of media protects a public interest and is fair, competitive, and apolitical.
- > Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries.
- > Crimes against media professionals, citizen reporters, and media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare.
- > The law protects the editorial independence of state or public media.
- > Libel is a civil law issue, public officials are held to higher standards, offended party must prove falsity and malice.
- > Public information is easily available; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media, journalists, and citizens.
- > Media outlets' access to and use of local and international news and news sources is not restricted by law.
- > Entry into the journalism profession is free and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

*Mikhail Melnikov, an analyst at the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, said that the majority of people do not understand how freedoms of speech and media are connected with other freedoms. They do not understand that open discussion of the obstacles to the realization of economic freedoms and rights for medical care and housing could help to improve the quality of their life.*

"Free speech is not a priority. Social benefits, economic security, quality of life, and other economic freedoms are valued much more," commented Tamerlan Aliev, an advisor to the president of Chechnya. Mikhail Melnikov, an analyst at the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, said that the majority of people do not understand how freedoms of speech and media are connected with other freedoms. They do not understand that open discussion of the obstacles to the realization of economic freedoms and rights for medical care and housing could help to improve the quality of their life.

Eismont also commented on the harm caused by the lack of an independent judiciary. Even when people can obtain information about violations of public interests, nothing usually changes because the judicial system is not independent. Russian authorities can easily ignore inconvenient information. For example, in November 2010, blogger Alexei Navalny published on his blog a link to the documents showing that a company, Transneft, overcharged by about \$4 billion for the construction of the East Siberia-Pacific Ocean oil pipeline funded from the Russian budget. His post attracted many Internet users, and many media picked up the story. Navalny, who is a professional lawyer, sent written requests to the public prosecutor's office and to the president of Russia to follow up on this information. But no investigation was launched.

There are legal protections for the confidentiality of sources; according to Article 41 of the Russian Media Law, media must protect the confidentiality of sources of information and can disclose them only if there is a request from the court related to the case under consideration. However, the panelists were not aware of any Russian journalists recently imprisoned for not revealing sources used in reporting.

In Russia licensing applies only to broadcast media. No licensing is required for cable and on-line television and

*According to the same decision, websites registered as media can be held accountable for readers' comments that violate the laws: e.g. promote social, national or religious enmity, only if these comments are not edited or removed within 24 hours after receiving a removal order from the media oversight agency.*

radio. Print media, if they want to publish one thousand or more copies, are expected to register.

The authorities have not attempted to institute the obligatory registration of websites as media outlets; but in July 2010, the Russian Supreme Court decided that sites are not required to register as media—though they have the right to obtain registration. According to the same decision, websites registered as media can be held accountable for readers' comments that violate the laws: e.g. promote social, national or religious enmity, only if these comments are not edited or removed within 24 hours after receiving a removal order from the media oversight agency. The panel did not hear about any attempts in 2010 to compel media websites to edit comments; it happens more typically prior to elections when sites are monitored closely.

The print media registration process is quite straightforward. Applications can be rejected only if there is already a publication registered under the same title. But occasionally, the registration process does not work smoothly, noted Galina Arapova, director and lead attorney of the Center for Protection of Rights of Media: "We worked on a European court case, *Dzhavadov v. Russia*, when journalist Valery Dzhavadov was denied registration for a newspaper titled *Letters to the President*. He tried to register it as a federal newspaper." Dzhavadov lodged a complaint to a Moscow court, but lost the case. The court judged that the title of the newspaper gave the misleading impression that it was an official publication of the president's administration—and that the journalist had to ask the president's administration just for permission to use the word "president."

As Russia continues its transition to digital television, licensing for new broadcast media was put on hold. Media outlets could only apply to renew existing licenses. Beginning from the Far East and moving westward, the entire country should be covered by digital television by 2015. In 2010, technical preparations for this transition started in Khabarovsk region.

Although there were no scandals to speak of this year over failed license applications, given the licensing freeze, Anna Kachkaeva, an associate professor at the Moscow State University journalism department who also covers issues related to television on Radio Liberty in Russia, commented on the broken licensing process. "It is absolutely obvious that over the last few years, the Federal Competition Commission stopped having a real impact [on the licensing process]. The process got muddy, people quietly made backdoor arrangements, and the competition procedure does not attract the attention of journalists and public."

Market entry conditions and tax structure for media are comparable to other industries. Several panelists emphasized that market entry conditions and taxes are unfair for all industries, but some argued that media should get tax breaks and other preferences (such as no VAT on newsprint, advertising, technical equipment, etc.), because they serve a public good.

Crimes against journalists, media outlets, and citizen reporters are not rare and are not prosecuted vigorously. The corresponding indicator fell this year, and was the lowest for Objective 1. Arapova noted that investigations of all principal murders of journalists failed; she mentioned that in 2009, Alexander Bastykin, the chief of the Committee for Enquiry at the Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation, said that his agency successfully investigated four out of every five murder cases. "For some reason, this statistic does not work when the murder victims are journalists and civic activists. And the number of violations of the rights of journalists is enormous," Arapova concluded.

According to the Russian Glasnost Defense Foundation (GDF), 10 journalists and citizen reporters were murdered or killed in accidents in 2010 (in 2009, GDF registered 11 lethal cases, in 2008—five). There were also 51 attacks on journalists and six attacks on media outlets, including robbery, bombings, and a takeover of the studio at the radio station in Asbest, in the Sverdlovsk region in the Urals.<sup>1</sup> Civic activists who use blogs widely to communicate with the public often become victims of violent attacks. In some cases local authorities are thought to be behind the attacks—that was the case in Khimki, where Kashin was beaten severely. Kashin believes his attack stemmed from his reporting on threats to the Khimki forest. In other cases extremist groups are suspected.

"If a crime against a journalist is committed in Moscow, people in Moscow and around the world immediately learn about it. The president, prime minister, and the authorities react, and pledge to oversee the investigation.

<sup>1</sup> See the Glasnost Defense Foundation website for complete details, available in Russian: [http://www.gdf.ru/murdered\\_journalists/list/2010\\_2010](http://www.gdf.ru/murdered_journalists/list/2010_2010)

If a similar crime happens outside the capital, the media community, civic society, or the president do not respond,” said Pavlovsky. He also mentioned the 1996 murder of Vladimir Alferiev, a correspondent of *Segodnyashnaya Gazeta* in Krasnoyarsk: “This crime still has not been cleared, and I believe that this had a serious impact on the media environment in Krasnoyarsk. Today almost no one dares to do investigative reporting.”

No laws specifically govern editorial independence for state media. According to the media law, an internal editorial chargé and agreement regulate relations between the editorial board of any state media outlet and those who appoint the board members. Fedor Kravchenko, a managing partner of Media Lawyers Collegium, noted that Russian society generally agrees that state media are the property of state authorities.

Pavlovsky said that state media are unable to have editorial independence: “Editorial boards and supervisory boards established in these media are made of deputies and officials who usually share the views of the ruling party. Even ruling party deputies, let alone the opposition, cannot appear in the state media if they have not secured prior approval from the officials who oversee the state media.”

Libel is both a civil and a criminal matter in Russia, so the corresponding indicator scored low. Furthermore, a person can be subject both to civil and criminal penalties for the same offence, a practice approved in a 2005 Russian Supreme Court ruling. Arapova noted that criminal cases against journalists for libel occur quite often; she mentioned the recent case of Vladimir Timakov—a journalist, public activist, and deputy of the Tula City Duma. After he published material accusing the governor of the Tula region of corruption, the governor lodged both civil and criminal libel cases against Timakov. Timakov lost both. Pavlovsky added that recently, a Krasnoyarsk businessman tried to launch a criminal libel case against *Krasnoyarsky Rabochiy* newspaper, but the prosecutor’s office decided not to open the case.

The panelists confirmed that Internet service providers or web hosting companies are not held legally responsible and punished for the content of individual website owners who use their services to create web pages.

Although the Russian media law guarantees journalists access to public information, it is not easily available. As indicated by the panelists’ low scores for this indicator, Russia meets the corresponding indicator only minimally. “The government has created the semblance of openness, but it is not possible to get access to information, especially to public interest information, for example on the environment, human rights violations, etc.,” commented Arapova. Kachkaeva

said that often, public officials refuse to talk to television journalists, damage their cameras and equipment, and try to prohibit video recording. Pavlovsky said that press offices of government agencies restrict journalists’ access to senior public officials. Journalists have taken to carrying the text of the media law to prove they are allowed to shoot in public places and public offices in case they are threatened.

The law does not restrict access to and use of local and international news and news sources in media and blogs, and the panelists assigned some of their highest scores to the corresponding indicator again this year. Media are allowed to reprint and rebroadcast foreign and local news programs and materials. Also, Russian media outlets have joint projects with their foreign counterparts. For example, TV Kultura rebroadcasts Euronews from 6:30 to 10 a.m. *RBK Daily*, a business newspaper, cooperates with the German *Handelsblutt*. On the web, journalists generally do not believe that foreign websites are monitored or blocked.

Entry into the journalism profession is free and unrestricted. Panelists believe that the government is very unlikely to try to impose any restrictions, as it has other ways to control media. So the corresponding indicator again received a high score. Anyone can become a journalist. As Arapova noted, there are many chief editors who do not have formal journalistic training.

However, government and municipal agencies have the right to set the rules for accreditation of journalists, and they often use accreditation as an instrument to control access to their events. Usually accreditation is given to registered media. Potentially, this could put bloggers at a disadvantage, as they are not considered to be journalists in Russia. Andrei Ponomarev, correspondent of Interfax-South news agency, however, does not believe this is a serious problem, as many Russian bloggers—especially those who cover public interest issues—are journalists, and can get accreditation through their media outlets.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Russia Objective Score: 1.24

The panelists all agreed that professional standards of journalism are declining; hence scores for this objective dipped slightly and indicate that Russia only minimally meets the aspects of this objective. Most of the indicators did not vary much compared to last year, except for indicator 8 (niche and investigative reporting), which accounted for most of the dip in score. With the exception of indicator 7 (modern facilities and equipment), which scored more than a point

*“The trouble is that reporters, especially in the Internet Age, are less and less rigorous about fact-checking, and often rely completely on press releases and information provided by news agencies. Often journalists presents only their own point of view and ignore other perspectives,” said Pavlovsky.*

higher than the objective did, all indicators scored close to the objective.

The panelists cited several reasons contributing to declining standards. Many journalists are leaving the profession, taking more lucrative jobs in public relations departments of government and municipal agencies and businesses instead. Aliev noted that newspapers supported financially by federal, regional, and local authorities have little incentive to attract readers, and churn out material “just to fill the pages.” Few independent newspapers adhere to international standards of journalism and support journalists in building up their professional skills. Another reason is that the financial crisis compelled many media outlets to lay off staff. The workload on remaining journalists increased considerably, making them more likely to sacrifice quality of reporting for quantity.

Several panelists also commented on the very low level of education of young people entering the profession, and their lack of the critical thinking that quality reporting demands.

#### JOURNALISM MEETS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF QUALITY.

##### PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM INDICATORS:

- > Reporting is fair, objective, and well-sourced.
- > Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards.
- > Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.
- > Journalists cover key events and issues.
- > Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption and retain qualified personnel within the media profession.
- > Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming.
- > Facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient.
- > Quality niche reporting and programming exist (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

On the other end of the spectrum, Ponomarev said that many older journalists still practice the old Soviet-style journalism.

Most of the panelists agreed that reporting is not always fair, objective, and well-documented. “The trouble is that reporters, especially in the Internet Age, are less and less rigorous about fact-checking, and often rely completely on press releases and information provided by news agencies. Often journalists presents only their own point of view and ignore other perspectives,” said Pavlovsky.

Vartanova noted that in Russia, there is no tradition of separating facts from the personal opinions of journalists. The reporter’s opinion is often integrated in his or her reporting. Only a few media outlets manage to maintain the separation of news from reporters’ views. In many cases, media, particular those with larger staffs, consult with technical experts to enhance their work. Bloggers, however, usually do not consult with experts.

The Russian Union of Journalists adopted the Code of Professional Ethics for Russian Journalists in 1994. This code is well aligned with international standards. The Union of Journalists also established a jury responsible for reviewing ethical conflicts and violations of ethical standards by journalists. There are also some media outlets that have their own codes of ethics and follow them strictly. Still, many journalists break ethical standards, leading a majority of panelists to decide that Russia meets the corresponding indicator only minimally.

Regarding the practice of giving gifts to journalists in exchange for favorable coverage, Pavlovsky commented, “In Russia, it is customary to accept them.” He is concerned that gifts are often disguised as awards competitions for reporters covering specific topics: “When competitions are organized by various ministries and agencies, no matter federal or regional, they leave the impression that journalists and media are bribed. The journalists who best cover the achievements of the agency win the awards. Sometimes journalists are ready to sing the praises of any authorities, even bad ones, just for some small vase, voice recorder, or notebook.” Another form of corruption is the widely accepted practice of allowing authorities to cover all of the travel expenses of reporters invited to cover their events.

Many media outlets make contracts with regional and local authorities for so-called “information support,” that is, coverage of their activities. Authorities usually review materials published under these contracts. But these materials are not always marked as advertorial.

Although larger media outlets try to avoid plagiarism, many smaller media use a lot of materials from the Internet and fail

to refer to the sources of information. Many bloggers, as well, copy and paste text, and often do not refer to the source.

Self-censorship continues to flourish, leading panelists to assign their lowest scores for Objective 2 to this indicator. Ponomarev noted that now, journalists can use blogs to publish information rejected by editors: "Often when editors reject my material, I publish this information on my blog, and people from other media call me and ask about the source of information and contacts."

Although media do cover key events and issues, journalists often are forced to cover events when people start to talk about them. For example, in 2010, national media only covered forest fires in Central Russia when they were already well underway. Media tend to cover events that will not "bite" the authorities, and will not undermine the trust that ordinary people have in the government. Anything riskier likely will be avoided by journalists until pressure and demand from the public builds, noted Arapova. In 2010 there were many cases when issues were first raised in blogs and on Internet forums, and only then appeared in mass media. Certain events are not covered by media outlets, but covered by social networking tools. There are also many local and regional events that never get covered by national media. Anything that contradicts the official point of view has less chance of getting broad coverage in larger media, especially on television—but journalists, bloggers, and citizens are tapping social networking services as an alternative way to sharing information.

Andrei Allakhverdov, editor-in-chief of the Foundation for Independent Radio Broadcasting, expressed concern that journalists in the regions do not actively look for stories, but wait for tips—often from authorities: "All themes are prompted by the administration, even on basic things like drugs or Russia's 2010 census campaign. If regional journalists cover the issue of drugs, it is always a police check. They never look for topics themselves. Until they get a press release from the administration, they do not make a move." And when journalists need experts, their first choice is governmental officials.

Panelists consider the pay level of Russian journalists low. The beginning of the economic crisis in 2008 and 2009 forced media outlets to cut salaries—and so far, many have not returned to higher levels. Ponomarev said he was making RUB 20,000 (about \$660)—considered a good salary for a journalist in Rostov-on-Don, the largest city in the south of Russia. Journalists and editors at *Krasnoyarsky Rabochiy* make RUB 15,000 to RUB 20,000 (about \$500 to \$660) a month, but payment is often delayed. At *Courier. Sreda. Berdsk*, a newspaper in the small city of Berdsk in the Urals region, journalists and editors make RUB 15,000 to RUB 30,000 (\$500

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to \$1000) a month. Thus, in 2010, the average salary of a journalist was around RUB 20,000 (\$660), by comparison, an average public official pulled in about RUB 35,000 (\$1160) a month.<sup>2</sup>

The panelists commented that the level of pay is not sufficient to retain qualified professionals within the media profession. Many journalists prefer better paying, less hectic jobs at government press offices—and more journalism students plan to apply for jobs at press offices than at media outlets.

According to Eismont, there is no relation between corruption and level of pay—rather, it is a matter of personal integrity and values. There are journalists who make little money, but adhere to journalistic standards. And, of course, there are journalists who make a lot but still are ready to accept gifts and payments from officials and businesses and provide favorable coverage in exchange.

Entertainment materials and programming eclipse news and information in most media, and this indicator drew some of the lowest scores for this objective. Melnikov expressed concern that producers apply an entertainment approach to information programs. News presenters try to make jokes and this distracts people from information. On major national television channels, news makes up about 10 percent of airtime. Major channels air political talk shows as well, but they go on air very late, often around midnight.

Allakhverdov said that people rarely express a need or desire for information: "Surveys show that people want just meaningless entertainment, some gutter press, and celebrity news, something to laugh at." And, he added, media corrupted people by catering to their lowest interests instead of trying to enlighten them and promote free speech.

According to the panelists, facilities and equipment used by media outlets and journalists are sufficient to gather and produce news—although they are not always modern.

<sup>2</sup> Data of the State Statistics Committee for the first half of 2010. [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/free/b04\\_03/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d04/185.htm](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/free/b04_03/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d04/185.htm)



*“For the past fifteen years, rural areas have been plagued by poverty. People do not have money to subscribe to newspapers. I once brought old newspapers to one village, some from half a year ago. I thought people would use them to light their stoves. Instead, they were reading them,” said Pavlovsky.*

This year, many panelists shared the impression that investigative reporting died in Russia. The panelists underlined various reasons for the decline of investigative reporting. It is expensive for media outlets to pursue, it runs the risk of creating problems—and there is a heavy sense of pessimism that very few people would care, and nothing would change after the investigation aired or was published, anyway.

Several panelists noted, however, that the quality of economic journalism is quite high. Arapova attributed the absence of good niche reporting to the lack of relevant training for journalism students and the high turnover of working journalists. For example, often once a reporter covering judicial and criminal beat learns enough on the job, he or she leaves for another job and a new journalist replaces him or her and does not know the basics of the beat.

### OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

#### Russia Objective Score: 1.76

Despite the great number of new sources, the Russian people are not exposed to multiple viewpoints. State media continue to serve as instruments for government propaganda. The rise in the score for this objective this year is due partly to the introduction the new indicator 8 (media provide news coverage and information about local, national, and international issues). It received the highest score within this objective, almost three-quarters of a point higher than the objective score. Without this indicator the objective score would have been 1.66; still an improvement of 0.12 compared with last year. Better scores for indicator 5 (private media produce their own news) and indicator 6 (transparency of ownership) contributed most to this improvement. Indicator

3 (public media are nonpartisan) received the lowest score, more than a point lower than the objective.

According to the Voice of Russia, the total number of registered media exceeds 90,000 outlets, more than 90 percent of which are private.<sup>3</sup> This figure, however, includes media that publish only rarely or individual television and radio programs that can be registered as media.

According to a survey conducted by the Foundation for Information Policy Development, in 2009 Russia had 517 regional and 2,870 municipal newspapers, with a combined circulation of about 34.7 million copies.<sup>4</sup> There are 20 free television channels capable of reaching between 36 and 98 percent of the population. There are some 230 paid television channels. Ninety-nine percent of Russian citizens can watch at least one television channel, while 70 percent have access to at least seven free television channels. Forty-three percent of households subscribe to cable television. There are 325 unique radio stations, most broadcasting in several cities. The total number of active radio broadcast licenses is 2,246.<sup>5</sup> The daily Internet audience equals 25 percent of the adult Russian population, and the monthly audience reaches 38 percent.<sup>6</sup>

### MULTIPLE NEWS SOURCES PROVIDE CITIZENS WITH RELIABLE, OBJECTIVE NEWS.

#### PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS:

- > Plurality of public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, internet, mobile) exists and offer multiple viewpoints.
- > Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted by law, economics, or other means.
- > State or public media reflect the views of the political spectrum, are non-partisan, and serve the public interest.
- > Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for media outlets.
- > Private media produce their own news.
- > Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge the objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
- > A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.
- > The media provide news coverage and information about local, national, and international issues.

<sup>3</sup>Voice of Russia website, <http://rus.ruvr.ru/2010/07/09/11916583.htm>

<sup>4</sup>Russian Press Market. Industrial Report. Russian Agency for Press and Mass Communications. 2010. <http://www.fapmc.ru/activities/reports/>

<sup>5</sup>Industrial Reports. Russian Agency for Press and Mass Communications. 2010. <http://www.fapmc.ru/activities/reports/>

<sup>6</sup>As of July 2010. Data of Public Opinion Foundation.

In the summer of 2010 the Public Opinion Foundation surveyed news consumption by Russian citizens. Eighty-seven percent of people get news from television, 21 percent from newspapers and magazines, 19 percent from the radio, 13 percent from news websites and 4 percent from blogs and social networks. Asked which sources of news they trust most, an overwhelming majority—71 percent—said television, 3 percent said print, 4 percent said radio, and 1 percent responded news websites and blogs. When asked to give specific names of news sources they used, 57 percent named state television Channel One and 49 percent named state television channel Russia 1.

The panelists said that mobile phone and SMS news alert technologies are not common. Mobile operators are trying to promote advertising via SMS, but it is still uncommon. Russians are much more interested in SMS voting on various issues when media outlets solicit public opinion.

These data indicate that while, in principle, Russian people have access to multiple sources of information, they actually use very few. Panelists were concerned that with television channels as the major source of information, citizens only hear the government's views. Alternative news and opinions are available only through a few independent media outlets and online, but most people do not use these sources of information. "There is an obvious difference in public agendas—one for those who use Internet, and one for those who watch television," noted Kachkaeva.

There are very few independent newspapers, and those affiliated with the authorities dominate regional and local markets. According to Aliev, "In Chechnya, there is only one private newspaper, funded by a businessman from Moscow. Its circulation is small, but it is rather popular. At the same time, there are about forty newspapers created by various governmental structures."

Many independent newspapers went online, and their sites often now function as local news portals. But online consumption of news, especially of local news in smaller cities, is still low, and independent newspapers continue to serve in these areas as the main source of alternative points of view. Although the Internet is available in smaller cities, the cost is prohibitive for some, including the cost of equipment. In smaller cities, people make less money, and there are more elderly people who have never touched a computer in their lives.

Eismont offered statistics to prove the point. The private newspaper *Zhukovskie Vesti*, published in Zhukovsky, population 100,000, has a circulation of 13,000, while its website has 2,000 to 2,500 unique visitors daily. *Kamenskie Zory*, a newspaper published in Kamensk with 35,000

*"Media ownership, however, is not transparent. Most people do not care until they have a problem they need assistance with, and must choose where turn for help: a private or a state newspaper," said Komornikova.*

residents, had a circulation of 9,000 and 250 to 400 unique visitors on its site per day.

Vartanova noted that the Internet offers a broad spectrum of views, but blogs often present facts out of context, making it difficult to get a complete picture of a situation. With all of these considerations, the panelists gave low marks to the indicator assessing whether a plurality of news sources exist and offer multiple viewpoints.

Russian law does not restrict citizens' access to domestic or international media. Although it is difficult to say whether or not the authorities monitor Internet use, they do not block websites. Overall, the score for this indicator again was one of the highest within the objective.

No registration is required to access the Internet, to own a satellite dish, or to use any type of media. People in large cities enjoy access to broader media options than those in smaller cities. In many rural areas, media choice is often limited to two federal television channels and a local newspaper. The main limiting factor is economics. "For the past fifteen years, rural areas have been plagued by poverty. People do not have money to subscribe to newspapers. I once brought old newspapers to one village, some from half a year ago. I thought people would use them to light their stoves. Instead, they were reading them," said Pavlovsky.

Access to international media is often limited by poor knowledge of foreign languages, especially outside major cities. Vartanova also noted a lack of interest: "Many people in Russia just are not interested in what people in other countries think."

State media do not reflect views of the full political spectrum, serving the interest of executive authorities rather than the public. Thus, the score for this indicator was, again, the lowest for the objective. Several panelists noted that state media believe they serve public interest—meaning that different people have different understanding of what constitutes public interest. And many people believe that support to the authorities, promotion of the official point of view, and consolidation of the society around authorities is in the public interest. Melnikov noted that the spectrum of

views present in media affiliated with regional authorities depends directly on the position of the governor. Governors of the Kirov, Saratov, and Perm regions are liberal, so state media in these regions have very pluralistic tendencies.

Of the three major Russian news agencies, two are state-run (ITAR-TASS and RIA Novosti), while Interfax is private.

As noted in last year's MSI, RIA Novosti boasts the most advanced multimedia newsroom in Europe, and offers text, audio, video, photo, and infographic content. Ponomarev noted that Interfax generates revenue in two ways: paid news subscriptions for media outlets and paid "information support" services for state agencies. Additionally, there are smaller private agencies (Regnum, Bankfax in the Altai Kray, and UralPolit.ru) covering the Urals and Siberia.

Galina Komornikova, editor-in-chief of *Courier. Sreda. Berdsk* said that Interfax uses news from the sites of local media outlets—officially, after making contractual arrangements with these outlets—but without paying. Major media outlets buy subscriptions to the news provided by news agencies. Many other media choose not to subscribe, but instead use the news available for free on agencies' sites—and while some provide attribution, others do not. Some media outlets, especially at the national level, use information from international agencies.

Private media produce their own news, so the score for this indicator was relatively high, and improved slightly over last year's score. Local independent media outlets are often the principal producers of local news—for local and even some national media and news agencies—and their websites have become city news portals. There are also numerous online media outlets that produce their own news.

"Media ownership, however, is not transparent. Most people do not care until they have a problem they need assistance with, and must choose where turn for help: a private or a state newspaper," said Komornikova. She refers to the tradition in Russia of media outlets helping people to resolve their problems; for example, journalists and editors might involve necessary specialists, like attorneys, to help find solutions.

Holding companies play an important role in Russian media, as well. According to the data published by the Russian Agency for Press and Mass Communications,<sup>7</sup> 50 national media companies account for half of press circulation and more than half—60 percent—of advertising revenue. Another 90 to 100 interregional and regional media companies account for another 25 percent of circulation and revenue. Nine companies own the 20 free television channels.

<sup>7</sup> Industrial Reports. Russian Agency for Press and Mass Communications. 2010. <http://www.fapmc.ru/activities/reports/>

Vartanova shared her view that Russia faces the problems of a high concentration of self-censorship and opinions rather than the concentration of media ownership.

Mainstream media fail to present a broad spectrum of social issues; many topics appear only online. Some topics that the press neglects include the activities of NGOs and environmental issues. The reasons go back to Allakhverdov's observations above: that many journalists wait for press releases from authorities and view authorities as the main source of information. Further, journalists not trained in school to think critically have a narrower worldview, reflected in their media content. There are minority-language information sources, usually newspapers, but not for all minorities. For example, according to Pavlovsky, there are two national autonomous areas in the Krasnoyarsk region—for the Even and Taimyr people—but there are no newspapers in their languages.

The new indicator, "Media provide local, national, and international news," received the highest score in this objective. Most municipalities have local newspapers that report local news. These newspapers usually do not cover regional, national, and international news, as people get that from television. The state television channel Russia 1 has slots for regional news filed by regional offices. NTV, which has a network of re-broadcasters, allots time for local news.

## OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### Russia Objective Score: 1.35

The Russian media market is distorted. A great number of media outlets receive financial support and preference from national, regional, and/or local authorities at the same time sell advertisements, often at below-market prices. In 2010, the advertising market has somewhat recovered from a 30 percent decline in 2009, but remains tight. Independent media continue to face unfair competition with state-affiliated media. Lower scores this year for indicator 6 (market research) and indicator 7 (audience and circulation measurement) contributed to an objective score just slightly lower than last year. Indicator 1 (efficient and self-sustainable media) improved somewhat to offset the loss. Indicator 3 (the advertising market) remained the leading indicator, scoring just a bit more than half appoint higher than the objective. Otherwise, all indicators scored relatively close to the objective.

Many independent media outlets are self-sustaining. The Alliance of Independent Regional Publishers brings together 48 independent regional and local media companies. Anna

Koshman, the Alliance's executive director, referred to their experience: "Given that newspapers have survived over the past 8 to 10 years under unfavorable political and economic conditions, their managers are not idiots and try to optimize business processes, especially when crises hit. Over these years, media outlets have developed management, financial, and accounting professionals who know how to manage effectively. But the thing is that the advertising market in the regions is not developed enough to allow media to make adequate profits or, in some cases, even to be self-sustaining. Only one or two of our member newspapers closed in the crisis, but nobody feels super secure or has financial reserves to survive further hard times. This is not management inefficiency, but because advertising rubles go to television and to Moscow-based media outlets."

Regarding the sources of revenue, in Russia there are no accepted standards for revenue structure. Few media companies are publicly traded and, therefore, few must disclose their financial information. Furthermore, said Eismont, "In Russia, the multitude of revenue sources does not necessarily lead to editorial independence." Editorial policy depends on the position and values of media owners. When they believe that media should serve the public interest and journalism should be fair and objective, they manage to make their media financially sustainable even in small local markets. Some pursue diversification, e.g. launch entertainment projects, offer printing services, etc., and use profits from these projects to support their flagship news products.

**MEDIA ARE WELL-MANAGED ENTERPRISES, ALLOWING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.**

**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:**

- > Media outlets operate as efficient and self-sustaining enterprises.
- > Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources.
- > Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market.
- > Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards.
- > Government subsidies and advertising are distributed fairly, governed by law, and neither subvert editorial independence nor distort the market.
- > Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor the product to the needs and interests of the audience.
- > Broadcast ratings, circulation figures, and internet statistics are reliably and independently produced.

*Editorial policy depends on the position and values of media owners. When they believe that media should serve the public interest and journalism should be fair and objective, they manage to make their media financially sustainable even in small local markets.*

Over the first nine months of 2010, the Russian advertising market grew by 14 percent.<sup>8</sup> Panelists said that this growth occurred both in Moscow and in the regions. There is a rapid growth of web media advertising, in particular—this segment has grown by 24 percent. Many media outlets now train their staff to sell online advertising and actively pursue this source of revenue. Koshman said that newspapers have gotten more creative and offered advertisers special projects to boost income. Still, the Russian advertising market is heavily skewed toward television. There are estimates that, in 2010, 73 percent of advertising money will have gone to television, 10 percent to print media, and only 6 percent to the Internet.<sup>9</sup>

Advertising agencies support the advertising market, but, as Pavlovsky noted, many have stopped working with print media and switched to the fast-growing outdoor advertising sector. (Outdoor advertising grew 18 percent over the first nine months while print advertising grew only 7 percent.)<sup>10</sup>

Russia's law on advertising limits the amount of advertising in media. On television, the limit is 15 minutes per hour, on radio it is 20 percent of airtime per day, and in print 40 percent of publication space can go to advertising.<sup>11</sup> Panelists agreed that in 2010 media outlets easily complied with these requirements, as the advertising market had not yet completely recovered after the crisis.

In Russia, government subsidies are part of the business model of some media outlets. Most panelists agreed that government subsidies and advertising are not distributed fairly and distort the market considerably. Pavlovsky said that, at least in Krasnoyarsk, subsidies are not transparent. There is no single line item for media subsidies in the city budget

<sup>8</sup> According to the Russian Association of Communication Agencies. [http://www.akarussia.ru/knowledge/market\\_size/id351](http://www.akarussia.ru/knowledge/market_size/id351)

<sup>9</sup> "Review of Advertising Market: 2010-2011 and prospects." November 11, 2010. <http://www.planetasm.ru/blogi/userblog/%D0%9F%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B0%20%D0%A1%D0%9C%D0%98%20News.html>

<sup>10</sup> Numbers for advertising are from Russian Association of Communication Agencies website: [http://www.akarussia.ru/knowledge/market\\_size/id351](http://www.akarussia.ru/knowledge/market_size/id351)

<sup>11</sup> Numbers for the limits are from the Law on Advertising. The text is available in many places, e.g. <http://www.consultant.ru/popular/advert/>

*The Federal Antimonopoly Service, charged with oversight of advertising in Russia, does not control state media outlets as strictly as it does independent ones. "Therefore, state media publish ads that are officially prohibited—e.g. ads of fortune tellers and unregistered food supplements," said Koshman.*

of Krasnoyarsk; money comes out of budgets of separate departments and is impossible to track, but most subsidies and information support contracts go to the local newspaper *Gorodskie Novosti*. "Sometimes it gets completely ridiculous. Once the mayor's office openly launched a tender offer for the publication of official documents in *Gorodskie Novosti*."

Regional and local authorities often push local businesses to place advertisements in state-affiliated media outlets. The Federal Antimonopoly Service, charged with oversight of advertising in Russia, does not control state media outlets as strictly as it does independent ones. "Therefore, state media publish ads that are officially prohibited—e.g. ads of fortune tellers and unregistered food supplements," said Koshman.

Many media outlets do not use market research. Some try to do it themselves. Very few use the services of market research companies. Allakhverdov expressed concern that tailoring media products to the interests of a particular audience could actually be detrimental to the quality of journalism: "All research shows that people need mindless entertainment... people rarely say they want information."

Broadcast ratings and readership of print publications are measured only in large cities. As a result, many local media remain invisible to national and regional advertisers that rely on ratings and readership data to allocate advertising budgets. In October 2010, several major national publishing houses, dissatisfied with the operation of the existing National Circulation Service—and because advertisers did not trust the data produced by the old service—launched an alternative circulation service. Komornikova warned, however, that many media outlets overstated their circulation numbers: "It is quite common to announce a print run of 50,000 copies and print only 3,000."

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

### Russia Objective Score: 1.64

Russia has many supporting institutions, but they are not always effective. However, this objective did show moderate growth this year, improving from 1.31 to 1.64. Two factors contributed to this growth in score. Indicator 1 (trade associations), indicator 2 (professional associations), and indicator 3 (NGOs) all received higher scores. Furthermore, to a lesser degree the addition of indicator 8 (ICT infrastructure) bumped the score upwards: without indicator 8 the objective score would have been 1.59. However, all indicators scored within half a point of the objective score, meaning panelists did not see any as particularly strong.

There are several trade associations representing media owners. The largest are the Guild of Periodic Press Publishers and the National Association of Television and Radio Broadcasters. The Guild has more than 380 members—most belonging to national and regional media outlets—that publish more than 3,000 newspaper and magazines.<sup>12</sup> The National Association of Television and Radio Broadcasters has more than 200 members. But there is only one trade association where membership is conditioned on adherence to principles of editorial independence—the Alliance of Independent Regional Publishers (AIRP). At the end of 2010

#### SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS FUNCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

##### SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:

- > Trade associations represent the interests of media owners and managers and provide member services.
- > Professional associations work to protect journalists' rights and promote quality journalism.
- > NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- > Quality journalism degree programs exist providing substantial practical experience.
- > Short-term training and in-service training institutions and programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- > Sources of media equipment, newsprint, and printing facilities are apolitical, not monopolized, and not restricted.
- > Channels of media distribution (e.g., kiosks, transmitters, cable, internet, mobile) are apolitical, not monopolized, and not restricted.
- > Information and communication technology infrastructure sufficiently meets the needs of media and citizens.

<sup>12</sup>The Guild of Periodic Press Publishers 2009 Report. [http://www.gipp.ru/zip/31713\\_report\\_2009\\_ppt.pdf](http://www.gipp.ru/zip/31713_report_2009_ppt.pdf)

AIRP had 48 members. Koshman, its executive director, considers the potential for recruiting new members very low.

"AIRP is five years old, and it is too early to talk about sustainability; we are just building our work systems. Still, we already have well-developed training services. We were among the first in Russia to start doing webinars. Every year we organize large forums, and over the last year we offered high quality legal support to our members. When there were attacks on our members, we tried to respond. At least our member publishers felt supported. We do lobbying. We are independent from the government, but membership fees do not cover all our expenses. Our fees are the highest in the industry, and we have few members. Therefore, we actively seek grants, both Russian and international, and cooperate with various international organizations. So far we have not faced any restrictions," said Koshman. Some webinar training topics offered in 2010 included investigative journalism, covering personal finance, use of infographics, revenue from Internet projects, and understanding the Law on Advertising and Media.

Panelists had some criticism for the Russian Union of Journalists. "Regional branches of the Union of Journalists are usually affiliated with authorities, get funding from them, and do not protect journalists," said Melnikov. The situation, according to Mikhail, differs in only a few regions—Sverdlovsk, Saratov, and Perm. Pavlovsky said that the Krasnoyarsk branch of the Union of Journalists is simply not active, and he could only get help from the Moscow Secretariat of the Union when he needed it.

Russian NGOs have a rather lengthy history and a good record with the media community. "We have been working for 15 years, noted Arapova. Glasnost Defense Foundation has been working for 20 years; in Central Russia we have even managed to change judiciary practices considerably. We work on about 100 cases every year. We also managed to ensure that provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights are consistently applied to court cases involving journalists. If you work consistently, sooner or later authorities begin to regard you not just as a human rights advocate, but as an expert."

Eismont cautioned that NGOs have a limited ability to influence media: "We don't impose anything, we just try to expand the mental outlook of media people. We understand that they have to earn their living in a very tough and unfair market, dominated by state media that receive all possible subsidies and can sell advertising at dumping prices. Furthermore, every person has his or her own limits of courage."

*Eismont cautioned that NGOs have a limited ability to influence media: "We don't impose anything, we just try to expand the mental outlook of media people... Furthermore, every person has his or her own limits of courage."*

Thinking of the investment dollars that NGOs have poured into journalism training, Allakhverdov expressed concern that the high turnover of journalists undermines the educational efforts of NGOs. "We have trained people, made them think. But then they leave: some become editors-in-chief, some take jobs at PR offices, some leave the profession. And the new arrivals seem to know nothing. There is no continuity." Eismont noted that in 2010, the Russian Independent Media Program, which helps independent newspapers improve their journalism and management skills, ran into difficulties recruiting new participants: "It seems that we have already involved all worthwhile media outlets."

NGOs face the challenge of an ever-shrinking grant pool. There are Russian-based NGOs that support the freedom of speech and media independence, but they are few. Veronica Dmitriyeva, regional program director of the CIS Media Development Loan Fund, noted that a replacement has not filled the void left when Internews-Russia closed in 2007. Many international organizations have cut their media grant programs in recent years. Melnikov said that Russian authorities are expanding their grant programs, but he is concerned that sometimes these grants are used to influence NGOs. Private foundations set by Russian businesses and businessmen offer little support to media NGOs.

The lack of available grants forces NGOs to curtail the scope of their work. For example, according to Boris Timoshenko, head of monitoring for the Glasnost Defense Foundation, his organization used to have at least three major grants in a year, and could afford a staff of 20. In 2010 it secured just one grant, and had to cut its staff in half.

Journalism degrees are offered in more than 100 universities and higher education institutions, which graduate about 4,000 to 5,000 students a year. Journalism students are required to do internships at media outlets, and some universities offer their students opportunities to study abroad. For example, according to Aliev, Chechen State University sends journalism students to study at a journalism school in Denmark, and off to major Moscow media outlets

*The coverage of 3G mobile networks is rapidly expanding. For example, according to Aliev, 3G Internet is now available all over Chechnya.*

for internships. Yet this hardly seems to improve the skill levels of graduates.

Media outlets are dissatisfied with the quality of journalism graduates. "Our higher education institutions release semi-finished journalists," said Pavlovsky. "For two years I used to sit in the graduation exams at the Journalism Department of our university, and saw that young men and women who received journalism diplomas want, at best, jobs in television. Most of them plan to take jobs in the press offices and become state officials, where they have more benefits and more stability than in media. And less responsibility."

Ponomarev attributed the poor quality of journalism graduates to the fact that professional courses, at least in Rostov-on-Don universities, are often taught by people without any experience working in media outlets. Allakhverdiv, who also teaches radio journalism at Moscow State University, expressed concern that the training program is overloaded with courses unrelated to journalism. For example, radio journalism students must take courses in music programming and radio DJ work. Panelists are also concerned that many young people entering schools of journalism are poorly educated, and university education does not fill the gaps in their knowledge base. As a result, many graduates cannot even write a short text without making mistakes, have a poor grasp of history, and have very a narrow mental outlook.

Komornikova, who is from Berdsk, said that teachers of a journalism program at a local university discouraged students from doing internships at independent media outlets, saying that they were trained for media outlets of municipal authorities.

NGOs do attempt to fill in the education gaps, offering short-term training opportunities to journalists. However, the economic crisis forced media outlets to cut training budgets. Pavlovsky said that now, he cannot send his staff off for training unless an organizer covers all expenses.

Media outlets have unrestricted access to sources of media equipment and printing facilities. Smaller media outlets often cannot afford to buy software licenses, which puts them at risk of prosecution. The Alliance of Independent Regional

Publishers spent several years negotiating the possibility for discounted licensing for independent newspapers, and in December 2010 Microsoft announced that it would grant licenses to smaller independent newspapers until the end of 2011 for free.

Distribution of print media remains problematic. The Federal Post Service is slow and expensive, which restricts newspaper distribution by subscription. Distribution networks impose high entrance and newsstand placement fees. Pavlovsky said that one kiosk network refused to take his newspaper for a year after it criticized the kiosk network's chief. Koshman told a story that happened to *Zolotaya Gorka*, in the small city of Berezovsk in the Urals, in 2010. The new head of a local investigatory committee launched several corruption cases against the mayor's office. The mayor characterized the cases as politically charged and unfair. The editor-in-chief of *Zolotaya Gorka* devoted an editorial column to this situation. The mayor's office thought that this material was supportive to his foes, and the very next day after this publication went out, all private kiosks refused to take the newspaper. With *Zolotaya Gorka* on the verge of closing, journalists sold copies themselves. The situation continued for six months, until the head of the investigatory committee was transferred to another city. Private kiosks are located on municipal land, so authorities can easily influence them, noted Koshman.

Allakhverdiv mentioned suspicious equipment failures during the broadcast of Echo of Moscow radio station in Omsk. On October 27, 2010, the anchor of the live program called officials in Omsk and asked them to comment on reports that several veterans in the Omsk region received ridiculously small government pensions. For example, one person received RUB 0.80, another got RUB 5.65 (less than \$0.20). While an anchor in the Moscow studio was trying to reach the Minister of Labor and Social Development of the Omsk region, broadcast of the Echo of Moscow in Omsk was cut off—and resumed only after the program was over.

Access to the Internet is unrestricted, and ICT infrastructure is developing rapidly. People in urban areas still have more options than people in smaller cities, but the gap is diminishing. In 2004, only two of 100 households had broadband connections, and in 2009 this number has reached 29.<sup>13</sup> There are 148.8 mobile connections per 100.<sup>14</sup> The coverage of 3G mobile networks is rapidly expanding. For example, according to Aliev, 3G Internet is now available all over Chechnya.

<sup>13</sup> Ofcom International Communications Market Report 2010. [http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/753567/icmr/ICMR\\_2010.pdf](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/753567/icmr/ICMR_2010.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

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## List of Panel Participants

**Andrei Allakhverdov**, chief editor, Foundation for Independent Radio Broadcasting, Moscow

**Tamerlan Aliev**, aid to the president of Chechnya; former chief editor, *Chechen Society*, Grozny

**Galina Arapova**, director and leading attorney, Center for Protection of the Rights of Media, Voronezh

**Veronica Dmitriyeva**, regional program director, Media Development Loan Fund, Moscow

**Maria Eismont**, director, Russian Independent Media Program, The New Eurasia Foundation, Moscow

**Mikhail Melnikov**, analyst, Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, Moscow

**Boris Timoshenko**, director of monitoring, Glasnost Defense Foundation, Moscow

**Anna Kachkaeva**, associate professor and chair of radio and television, Journalism Department, Moscow State University; observer, Radio Liberty, Moscow

**Galina Komornikova**, chief editor and director, *Courier. Sreda. Berdsk*, Berdsk

**Anna Koshman**, executive director, Alliance of Independent Regional Publishers, Moscow

**Fedor Kravchenko**, managing partner, Media Lawyers Collegium, Moscow

**Vladimir Pavlovsky**, chief editor and director, *Krasnoyarsky Rabochiy*, Krasnoyarsk

**Andrei Ponomarev**, correspondent, Interfax-South News Agency, Rostov-on-Don

**Elena Vartanova**, dean, Journalism Department, Moscow State University, Moscow

## Moderator and Author

**Natalia Kosheleva**, director, Inter-Regional Institute of Media Consulting, Moscow

*The panel discussion was convened on November 22, 2010.*