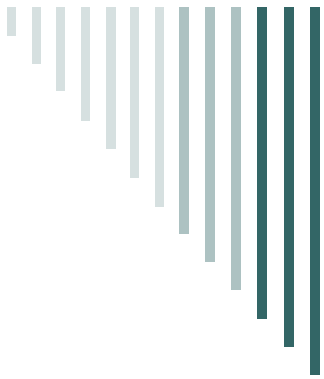




Instituti Shqiptar i Medias
Albanian Media Institute

Swedish Helsinki Committee

for Human Rights



Minority media in Albania in 2009

INTRO

The Albanian media landscape does not abound with surveys and studies, especially in the case of local media, and the situation on minority media is even worse. This is the main reason that the Albanian Media Institute, with the generous support of Swedish Helsinki Committee, implemented a monitoring research that followed up on previous monitoring done on minority media, aiming to monitor the progress of these media, as well as raise awareness on their situation, problems, and most immediate needs they face at the moment.

In order to establish a detailed database on minority media, AMI carried out the first survey on minority media in 2005. A questionnaire for both print and electronic minority media was drafted, with the main aim of gathering information on general data on these media, their needs for professional training, as well as the problems they face, financial or any other kind. The questionnaires were filled by owners, directors, or editors in these media.

A similar questionnaire, with some new aspects added, was drafted three years later and the data were collected from the minority media in early 2009, with the aim of comparing the situation in both years and assessing the progress or lack thereof of these media during this period. The data comparison from both years enabled an examination of the progress of these minority media along the way, as well as provided a way to identify problems they still face, along with potential solutions.

In order to present as full overview of minority media as possible, the description of the findings of monitoring are preceded by a general overview of the legal and institutional framework of minorities in Albania and their social, economic, and cultural situation, along with the main trends noticed in the minority media landscape.

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**GENERAL OVERVIEW ON LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF PROTECTION
OF RIGHTS OF MINORITIES IN ALBANIA**

I. INTRODUCTION

Albania is one of the countries where along with the native population live other ethnic and cultural minorities. Along the years, the problems of treatment of minorities have turned into an object of examination not only by the different international institutions in this area, such as ONU, OSCE, EU or CoE, but also by the very states where minorities are present. As the OSCE Copenhagen Declaration of June 29, 1990, states: "*protection of ethnic minorities is an essential factor for peace, stability, and democracy*".

Having in mind this definition, Albania has always shown attention to the treatment of minorities, being one of the few examples in the region of South Eastern Europe, which has a history replete with maltreatment in this aspect. This maltreatment has often been the cause for conflicts of an ethnic nature.

The international regime for protection of minorities' rights has gone through various development phases, which have determined the degree of care and awareness of the states where ethnical, religious, or linguistic minorities live. Particularly, Albania after the 90s has attempted to adapt its legislation to elements that stem from a series of legal documents and treaties, drafted by international and European organizations, with the aim of preserving the cultural diversity that minorities offer, as well as with the aim of guaranteeing peace and security.

II. MINORITIES IN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

In spite of the attempts of OSCE, Council of Europe, or European Union to establish a system as encompassing and supervised as possible for the protection of national minorities, a whole range of difficulties is still present in this area. These difficulties stem not only from the legacy of the different European states in treatment of minorities, but also from the revival of the new fears in different regions in the continent. Having in mind that a great part of the international texts do not provide a general definition of the concept of the minority, OSCE, Council of Europe and European Union are coordinating their efforts in order to develop a coherent system for the protection of national minorities.

The largest legal difficulty has been related to the definition of the term "minority." In fact, a great part of the existing international literature does not provide a general definition of the concept of minority, which would allow us to identify in abstract terms the groups (or other members) that

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must enjoy the rights related to this notion. However, the experience has shown that it is difficult to provide a definition that would include the entire categories of minorities, due to the large diversity of minority groups and the difficulties in classifying them in a homogeneous manner.

It is now a well-established fact that in general the states have accepted the idea of the need to protect the identity of minorities, but there are still disagreements regarding the extent of these rights. Domestic legislations vary from one state to the next, according to the ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural divisions of the respective minorities. In the framework of these difficulties, the only common platform for all states is composed of the rights acknowledged in the different international texts, approved by ONU and Council of Europe. These rights constitute a minimal standard, a basis on which has allowed reaching a general consensus. In this way, they are part of those rights that the international community considers rights of an essential importance to persons that belong to minorities and are found in the most diverse forms in national legislations.

Apart from the need to preserve and promote the identity of minorities, the states have assessed that the members of a minority should enjoy the rights that are acknowledged to the majority of the population, as well as an equal protection in front of the law. As the Permanent Court of International Justice rightly stressed, the minority members should be *"in all aspects in equal positions to the other citizens of the state where they live in.."* A series of international documents, related to the protection of international minorities, such as the ONU Declaration (14 December, 1992) as well as the OSCE Copenhagen one (29 June, 1990, paragraph 31) and the draft of the Additional Protocol of the European Convention of Human Rights (Article 4,) the draft of the Convention of the Democracy through Law Commission (8 February, 1991,) the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (10 November 1994, Article 4, paragraph 1) stipulate this principle. However, the principle of non-discrimination alone is not sufficient to preserve the identity and peculiarities of the minority groups. For this reason, a large part of these documents have persisted also in the obligation of the States to take *"positive measures"* not only to make sure that there is full equality among persons that belong to a minority and those belonging to majority in all areas, be it economic, social, political, and cultural, but also to enable the minorities to develop their identity. On this basis, specific rights should be acknowledged to the minorities, without considering these as measures that discriminate the majority.

III. MINORITIES IN ALBANIA

Compared to other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Albania emerged from the Communist regime with a positive legacy in relation to the respect of minority rights in Albania. Apart from other limitations of rights, which applies to most of the population and derived from the system, the recognized ethnic minorities, especially the Greek one, living in the south, enjoyed the right of being educated in their own language, as well as of preserving their traditions. The last official census carried out in 1989, which includes the number of minorities in Albania, has so far

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been the only official data and constitutes a well-accepted source on the percentage and ratios of minorities in the country.

During 2002, the Institute of Statistics carried out a survey on the minorities in Albania based on the data gathered during the census of 2001, as well as on the Living Standard Measurement Survey, completed with the assistance of the World Bank. According to the INSTAT observations, there was a significant drop in the population of the minorities as compared to the Communist period, as registered in 1989. According to INSTAT estimates, due to massive emigration after the 90s, now the ethnic minorities constitute only 1.4 percent of the population in the country.

Minorities in Albania are divided in these categories: “national minorities,” “linguistic minorities,” and “communities,” or communities that are not recognized by the state. The different definitions of minorities do not in themselves constitute any cause for rights or privileges that distinguish one minority from the other. The Constitution of Albania does not make any distinction in relation to their status. Article 20 of the Constitution determines that persons belonging to ethnic minorities can exert their rights and freedoms in full equality in front of the law. Furthermore, this article guarantees to minorities the right to express their cultural, religious, and ethnic rights. They have the right to preserve and develop their culture and language, as well as to follow different levels of mandatory education in their own language.

Until 2003, three national minorities enjoyed the status of minorities, namely the Greek, Macedonian, and Serb-Montenegrin minorities. In 2003, the Roma community officially received the minority status. The Aromanian minority received the status of “linguistic minority.” In addition, other groups, such as Egyptians, are recognized as communities, while the Union of Egyptians has demanded from official authorities to be granted the status of national minority. They claim to represent 200,000-250,000 Egyptians and that their origin is from Egypt, but the figures provided and their claims have been opposed by the respective institutions. One of the reasons that has led the Albanian state not to grant them the status of minorities is also related to the absence of their own language and to the fact that they have not shown to have any specific ethnic, cultural, or religious character.

Among the three recognized minorities in the country, the largest is the **Greek minority**, which lives mostly in Southern Albania, in the region of Gjirokastra, as well as in the districts of Saranda and Delvina. According to the last census in 1989, the Greek minority reached up to 60,000 persons. After the 90s, with the opening of the borders, a large part of them emigrated to Greece or in other countries and now their number has dropped significantly. The lack of an accurate register of the number of the population regarding minorities has become the cause for “*a war of figures*”, which is fought between the representatives of minorities or sometimes between their countries of origin and the Albanian state institutions and the public opinion in the country.

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Meanwhile, the **Macedonian minority** is focused in the area of Prespa, near Korça, in Southeastern Albania. The members of this minority reach almost 5,000 inhabitants, living in nine villages, which compose the county of Liqenas.

With regard to the members of the **Serb-Montenegrin minority**, they live mainly in the region of Shkodra. Those that are of the Orthodox faith are known as Serb-Montenegrins, while the ones of Muslim faith are considered “podgoricans”. According to INSTAT, this is a relatively small population, less than 2,000 inhabitants. However, they continue to preserve well their cultural and ethnic identity. They claim that the Albanian state should offer their children education in Serb-Montenegrin language, but the small size of this community does not fulfill the criteria for opening a minority school.

Meanwhile, the Roma and Aromanian/Vlach communities are ethno-cultural minorities, with their distinctive features. The Roma minority is spread all over Albania in several tribes, which were established here several centuries ago. The Roma tribes in Albania include the Meçkars, the Kalbuxhinjs, the Cergars and the Kurtofs. The first two rank among the largest in the Roma minority. The life of Roma community in Albania continues to be characterized by the Nomad style and the main activities include trade and crafts. This community is characterized by a low education and poor economic level and it faces numerous hardships, which resemble to a social exclusion, or more specifically, social self-exclusion from the rest of the population. They speak numerous dialects of their native tongue, while 60-70 % of the Roma that have been established in the central part of the country speak Albanian as their first language.

The Vlach/Aromanian minority is a linguistic and cultural minority in Albania. According to the different sources and their representatives, they settled in Albania in the seventeenth century. Since then, they have been fully integrated in the Albanian society, to the point that the number of persons speaking Vlach language has dropped significantly. However, apart from the language, the Vlachs have preserved many of their rituals and traditions. Most of members of this community are established in central and southern part of the country. This community has provided a distinct contribution through some of its representatives in the cultural, scientific, social, and political life of the country. They try to preserve their language through self-financed initiatives, while the Romanian government has assisted in the education of Aromanians through the scholarships given in the universities of this country.

IV. ALBANIAN LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

After the social-political changes of the 90s, the Albanian governments in power have devoted specific attention to the establishment of a legal framework related to the protection of minority rights in the country. This trend was further reinforced after Albania's membership in European organizations such as OSCE and CoE, which stipulate a series of obligations, international acts

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and monitoring mechanisms that would enable the direct supervision of the Albanian state in this area. In particular after the approval via referendum of the Constitution of Albania in 1998, the rights of minorities in the country were reflected not only as part of the universal rights for the rest of the population, but also beyond.

In this framework, the freedom to use the native language is a right that is also guaranteed to the members of the minority, but its application varies in accordance with the compelling power of the respective international texts. The latter define the right that the persons belonging to linguistic minorities have to use their own language freely, both in their private and in their public life. The Document of Copenhagen and later the Framework Convention have recognized the principle of using the minority languages in relation to administrative authorities. Following the fulfillment of this obligation, the Albanian Constitution, in article 20, paragraph 2, states that "*persons belonging to minorities have the right to learn and study in their own language.*" This act of the constitution has been further enriched by the addition in Article 3, law no.7952, date 21.06.1995 on Pre-University System, which guarantees the equality of all citizens "to be educated," as well as by Article 10, paragraph 1, which states regarding the minorities that they "have the right to study and learn in their own language".

At the same time, freedom of information is unanimously recognized by the international community as one of the fundamental rights that belong to a minority. It means that minorities can express and disseminate information beyond the borders with groups of other states, related to them by their own ethnic origin, language, or religion. This freedom is guaranteed in Article 2, paragraph 1 of the ONU Declaration, in the Document of Copenhagen, from article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights, as well as by Article 9 of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe. In Albania, the freedom of expression is also guaranteed through Article 22 of the Constitution. Meanwhile the law on press, after amendment no. 8239 of September 3, 1997, has only an article that states: "the press is free and press freedom is guaranteed by law". In addition, law no. 8410 of September 30, 1998 "On Public and Private Radio and Television", guarantees to minorities the space for electronic media, by allowing usage of their own language based on article 37.

One of the rights guaranteed to ethnic minorities in international documents is the right to collective organization. This rights is stipulated in Article 2, paragraph 4, of the ONU Declaration, in Article 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights and in Article 7 of the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities. The Copenhagen Declaration adds to these the right to organize in NGOs. In Albania, the highest degree of collective organization of minorities is the transformation of the Greek minority organization Omonia into a political party, the Party for the Union of Human Rights. Since the parliamentary elections of 1992 and on, this party is regularly represented in the Albanian parliament and has participated in all governing coalitions, be it right or left ones.

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Even the rights of minorities to participate in public affairs are recognized by the Document of Copenhagen, (paragraph 35,) the same way as the ONU Declaration (article 2, paragraph 3). The Document of Copenhagen (paragraph 35) states that member States should respect the right of persons that belong to national minorities to effectively participate in public affairs, especially in the affairs related to the protection and development of their identity. On the other hand, the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe (article 15) determines that the parties “*commit to enable the necessary conditions for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the cultural, social, and economic life, as well as in the public affairs related to these issues*”. The Law for Civil Service in Albania does not pose any limits in this aspect and enables the minorities in the country to be regularly involved in public and administrative life. However, there are no accurate statistics in this aspect yet, and especially related to the Roma this aspect is far from reaching a satisfactory level, due also to the scarce qualified human resources in this community.

Albania, for its part, after the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1999, is subjugated to the control of Council of Europe institutions regarding the implementation of the convention. Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe carries out monitoring visits in order to examine the implementation of the Framework Convention for Protection of Minorities. The Committee assesses the progress Albania has made, along with the legal initiatives, based also upon previous recommendations that this Advisory Committee has expressed in its Opinion. On the other hand, the European Partnership Agreement between Albania and EU determines a series of elements for meeting Albania’s obligations vis-à-vis the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities, especially with regard to the use of minority language with the authorities, the display of local names and education in the language of minorities, along with accurate statistics in this area.

One of the elements that continue to remain a concern in the area of minorities is the absence of statistical data on national minorities and issues related to them, thus constituting a serious obstacle in monitoring and implementing the policies related to national minorities. For this reason, in the 18th meeting of the Consultative Task Force Albania-EU, on June 26, 2008, in Brussels, the Commission encouraged Albania to mark greater progress in registering the accurate number of minority population and in furthering cooperation with representatives of the minorities.

However, the latest progress report of the EU on Albania appreciates the fact that with regard to cultural rights, the constitution stipulates the protection of civil, economic, social, and political rights of minority groups and that the law forbids any discriminatory treatment. Since Albania recognizes three ethnic minorities (Greek, Macedonian, and Serb-Montenegrin) and two ethno-linguistic minorities, (Roma and Aromanians), the Egyptian community is attempting to join this group, by demanding the status of an ethno-cultural minority.

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Due to the obligations that derive from Albania's membership into the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for Protection of National Minorities, especially with regard to the use of language and education, further progress is still needed. However, it has to be stressed that the schools, especially in the cases of the Greek and Macedonian minorities, enjoy a significantly higher percentage of teacher-students ratio as compared to the national overall average. The teacher-students ratio is approximately 6.9/1 for the Greek minority and 12.6/1 for the Macedonian one, as compared to the national ratio, which is 18/1.

Due to budget problems, Albania has not yet signed the European Card for the Regional Language of Minorities. On the other hand, Albania joined the initiative the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, in April 2008. An Action Plan is in the drafting process, while in December 2007, the first Progress Report on the implementation of the National Strategy for the Improvement of Living Conditions of the Roma community was published. This report notes that the human and financial resources to implement the strategy are still insufficient. In an attempt to reinforce and oversee the implementation of this strategy, a Technical Secretariat was established near the Ministry of Labor, Social Issues, and Equal Opportunities. One member of the Secretariat is member of the Roma community. The Secretariat is expected to further coordinate its activity with the Action Plan for the Roma Decade, attempting to increase the degree of involvement of this community in socio-economic life. At the same time, the level of school attendance of Roma children remains low, in spite of government attempts and the implementation of the project "Second chance." The Roma continue to face numerous economic difficulties, prejudices, as well as low access to public services, such as shelter, employment, etc. From the publication of the Third Report on Albania of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Framework Convention for ECRI (in 2004) several positive amendments have been made to the penal legislation, considering as a grave circumstance the commitment of the offense pushed by reasons related to gender, race, religion, nationality, language, political, religious or social convictions. However, Albania so far still has no special law against discrimination. The initiatives taken so far in drafting the bill have not succeeded yet. In general, a spirit of tolerance reigns in Albania and the reported cases of threatening, or of discrimination, maltreatment, or violence based on ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious reasons are extremely few.

LEGAL BASIS ON PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

(Approved 1991-1998)

Law No. 7491, date 29/04/1991 "On the main constitutional dispositions (Official Gazette, No. 4, 1991, p.145)

Article 4 of the General Dispositions is devoted to the rights of national minorities.

Law No. 7959, date 11/07/1995, "On Albania's membership in the Statute of the Council of Europe (Official Gazette, No. 17, 1995, p.713)

Law No. 8137, date 31/07/1996 "On ratifying the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms (Official Gazette, No. 20, 1996, p. 724)

Unpublished Acts in 1996: Ratification of the Protocol No. 1 of the European Convention for the Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms (Official Gazette, Extra 28, 2008, p.3)

Unpublished acts in 1996: Ratification of Protocol No 2 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, which attributes the European Court of Human Rights the competency to provide advisory opinions (Official Gazette, Extra 28, 2008, p.19)

Unpublished Acts in 1996 : Ratification of Protocol No 4 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms , which guarantees several rights and freedoms, other than the ones already included in the Convention and in Protocol 1(Official Gazette, Extra 28, 2008, p.21)

Unpublished Acts in 1996: Ratification of Protocol No. 7 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms (Official Gazette, Extra 28, 2008, p. 23)

Unpublished Acts in 1996: Ratification of Protocol No 11 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, on reviewing the control mechanism determined (Official Gazette, Extra 28, 2008, p.26)

Law No. 8417, date 21/10/1998, Constitution of the Republic of Albania (Official Gazette, No. 28, 1998, p.1073)

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Part II – Fundamental human rights and freedoms (Article 18 on non-discrimination) Article 20, paragraph 1 and 2 (education) – the article on national minorities and the rights they enjoy. Articles 22, 23, 24- freedom of expression, information, freedom of conscience.

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms , amended with Protocol Nr 11 (Roma , 04/11/1990) (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p.3)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of the Protocol of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, amended with Protocol No. 11 (Paris , 20/03/1952) (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p. 17)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No 2 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, which attributes to the European Court of Human Rights the competency to provide consultative opinions (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p. 19)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No. 3 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, amending Articles 29,30, and 34 of the Convention (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p. 21)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No. 4 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees rights and freedoms other than the ones already included in the Convention and in Protocol No.1 of the Conventions, amended with Protocol No.11 (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p. 23)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No. 5 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, changing Articles 22 and 40 of the Convention (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p. 27)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No. 6 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms in relation to abrogation of death penalty, amended with Protocol No. 11 (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p. 27)

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Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No. 7 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, amended with Protocol No. 11 (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p.29)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No. 8 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, changing Articles 22 and 40 of the Convention (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p.32)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No.11 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms on restructuring the control mechanism (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p.36)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No.13 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, related to the abrogation of the death penalty in any circumstance (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p. 47)

Unpublished acts in 1998: Ratification of Protocol No.14 of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms, changing the checking system of the Convention (Official Gazette, Extra 29, 2008, p.49)

Law No. 8456, date 11/02/1999, "On the function of the legal representative near international organisms on human rights (Official Gazette, No. 7, 1999, p. 220)

Law No. 8454, date 04/02/1999, "On People's Advocate" (Official Gazette, No. 5, 1999, p. 152.

Law No. 8496, date 03/06/1999, "On the ratification of the Framework Convention on Protection of Minorities in the framework of the Council of Europe (Official Gazette, No.21, 1999, p. 672)

Law No. 8641, date 13/07/2000, "On the ratification of Protocol VI of the European Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms (Official Gazette No. 22, 2000, p.1084)

Law No.8942, date 19/09/2002, "On the ratification of the European Convention for Citizenship (Official Gazette, No. 67, 2002, p.1872)

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Council of Ministers Decision (CMD) No.633, date 18/09/2003, "On the approval of the Strategy for Improvement of Living Conditions of the Roma Minority,"(Official Gazette No.85, 2003, p.3738)

CMD No.127, date 11/03/2004, "On the establishment of the State Committee of the Minorities," (Official Gazette No.13, 2004, p.547)

Law No. 9262, date 29/07/2004, "On the ratification of the additional Protocol of the convention on Cybernetic crime, on penalizing acts of racist and xenophobic nature, carried out through computer systems, (Official Gazette No. 56, 2004, p.3670)

Law No. 9264, date 29/07/2004, "On the ratification of Protocol No.2 of the Convention for Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms (Official Gazette No.56, 2004, p. 3709)

Law No. 9613, date 21/09/2006, "On Albania's membership into UNESCO Convention "On the protection and development of the diversity of expression of cultures (Official Gazette No. 110, 2006, p. 4328)

Parliament Decision No.148, date 10/12/2007, "On the establishment of Parliament Sub-commission on Human Rights," (Official Gazette No. 172, 2007, p. 5274)

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LANDSCAPE OF MINORITY MEDIA

From the very beginning it must be said that the minority media in Albania is indeed a minority, facing mainly financial problems, which they share with most local media outlets in the country. While the situation showed the same traits in 2005, the last time this part of the media landscape was monitored, the situation appears to be more problematic four years later, when the same monitoring was repeated. At the end of 2005, there were a total of 11 minority media that the survey registered. This figure included nine newspapers of different periodicities, one magazine, and one radio.

Print media (2005):

No.	Name / Year of publication	Affiliation	Frequency of publication	Circulation per issue	Profile	Format	Number of pages
1	I foni tis omonias / 1991	Democratic Union of Greek Ethnic minority "Omonia"	Weekly	3000	General	A4	12
2	Llaiko Vima / 1945	Vasil Iatru	Weekly	2500	General	A4	12
3	Romiosini / 1998	A.M.I. j.s.c.	Weekly	2500	General	A2	12
4	Fratsia / 1992	Aromanians of Albania	Monthly	1000	Culture, Literature, Linguistics	A3	8
5	Orama / 1997	Thodhori Bezhani	Monthly	1500	General	A4	8
6	Pirros / 2003	Jorgo Mitili	Bimonthly	500	General	A5	4
7	Dhrys / 1999	Vasilis Kalivas	Quarterly	1500	General	A4	8
8	Farsarotu / 2002	Association for vlach Culture, Gjirokastër	Quarterly	600	Culture	A3	16
9	Dhimiotiki Foni / 2002	Enosis Elinon Ephaphon	Irregular	1000	General	A4	8
10	Të barabartë / 2001	Multi-ethnic society "Të barabartë (Equal)"	Monthly	1000	culture	A4	32

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Electronic Media (2005):

No.	Radios / Broadcasting year / Frequency	Affiliation	Weekly broadcasting hours	Coverage area
1	Radio Prespa / 2001 / FM 100.8	Private radio	168	Liqenas, Djellas, Lajthizë, Zaroshkë

Along the years, the landscape of minority media has been rather unstable, with newspapers that ceased publication for a while, or in the worst case even shut down their activity once and for all. In fact, if we have a look at the development of this media landscape aspect, we will notice that the number of media outlets has been halved, reaching 6 compared to 11 in 2005. So, in 2009, six newspapers of different periodicities that belong to minorities were registered, while the only minority media has also disappeared.

Minority media (2009):

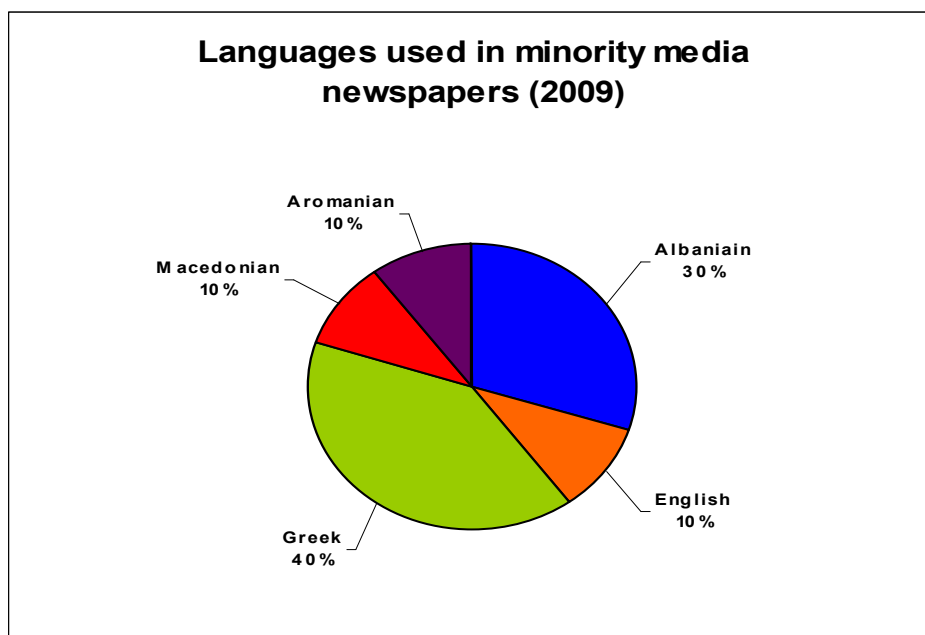
No.	Name / Year of publication	Affiliation	Frequency of publication	Circulation per issue	Profile	Format	Number of pages
1	I foni tis omonias / 1991	Bashkimi Demokratik i Minoritetit Etnik Grek "Omonia"	Biweekly	2000	General	A4	16
2	Llaiko Vima / 1945	Vasil Latro	Biweekly	2500	General	A3	16
3	Elinismos / 2007	Association "Elikranon 3A"	Biweekly	6000	General	A3	16
4	Fratsia / 1996	Association "Aromanians of Albania"	Monthly	1000	Culture, Literature, Linguistics	A3	8
5	To Orama - 2000 / 1997	Thodhori Bezhani	Monthly	1200	General	30,5 x 43	12
6	Prespa / 1994	Association "Union of Macedonians in Albania"	Monthly	2000	General	A4	8

Reflecting also the general fabric of population regarding minorities in the country, the Greek minority continues to possess most of the minority media in Albania. In 2005 there were seven newspapers published by this minority, two from the Aromanians, one magazine for the Roma minority and the only electronic media belonged to the Macedonians. Meanwhile, in 2009, there are four newspapers belonging to the Greeks, one to the Macedonians and one to the Aromanians. Naturally, this trend is also mirrored in the languages used in these media, some of

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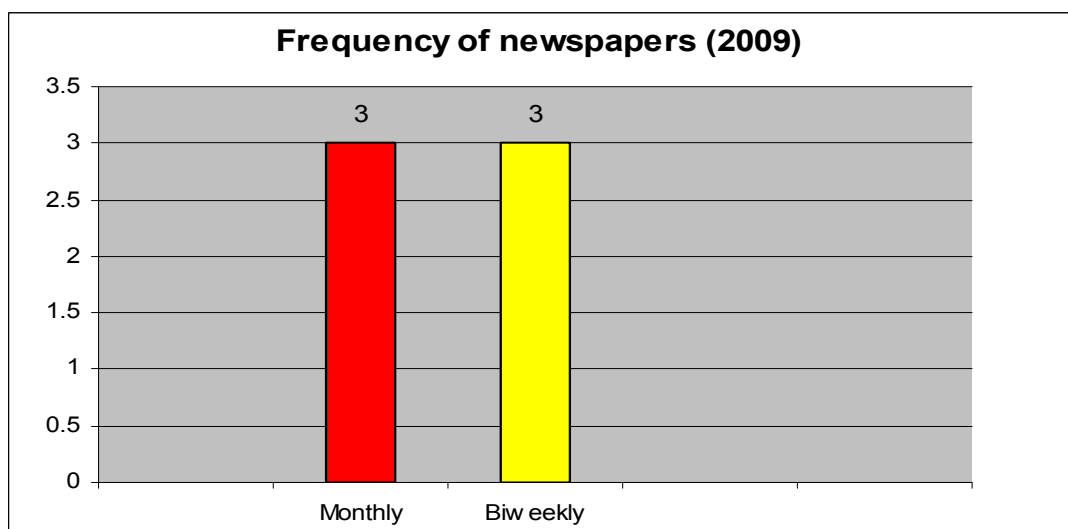
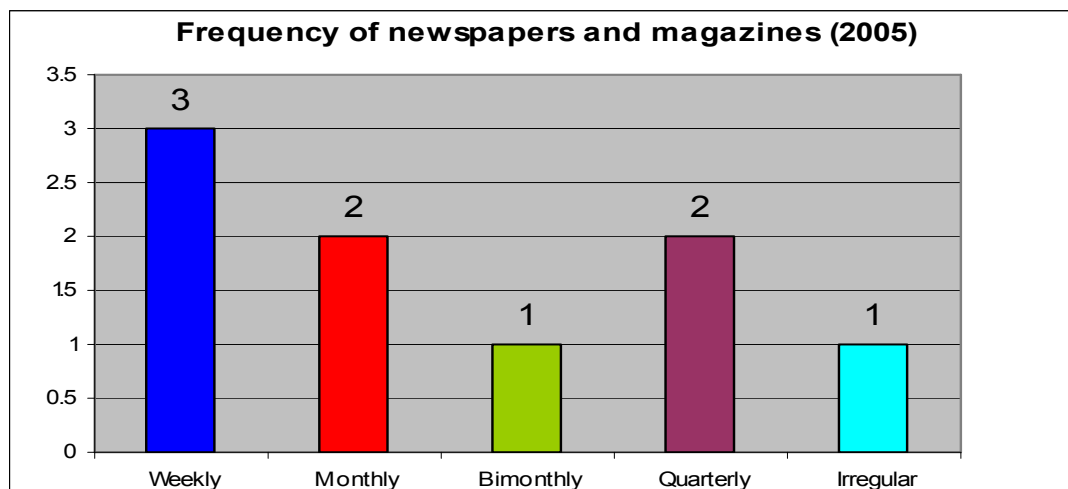
which are bilingual (the respective minority language and Albanian) or trilingual (the language of the respective minority, English, and Albanian). So, in 2005, 40 percent of the space of minority media was occupied by Greek, 24 percent from Albanian, and Aromanian and English each occupied 12 percent, and Roma language and Macedonian had the remaining 6%.

Of course, such a representation needs to be viewed with some reserve, since the media are not accurately comparable, due to the different kinds of media (print and electronic) as well as the extent of space available to them (4 to 16 pages, in different formats.) However, these percentages assist to have a general idea of the distribution of media among the minority groups. In this context, it should also be underlined that there are minorities that do not own their own media, such as Serb-Montenegrins, Bosnians, or Egyptians, indicating again the weakness of minority media in the country. Even the only media in Roma language that existed in the survey of 2005, was prepared by representatives of the majority and not by the Roma community itself.



With regard to the frequencies of the print media, it has been a volatile one, if we compare the data of 2005 to those of 2009. First, none of the newspapers is a daily one, neither in 2005, nor in 2009, which shows the relatively small opportunities and importance that these media have for their communities. In 2005, these publications varied from weeklies to quarterlies and to irregular periodicities. In 2009, this periodicity is more consolidated, since the newspapers are divided in two groups: three monthlies and three biweeklies. However, the irregular frequency of this publication remains a permanent trait of the landscape of minority media.

Minority media in Albania in 2009

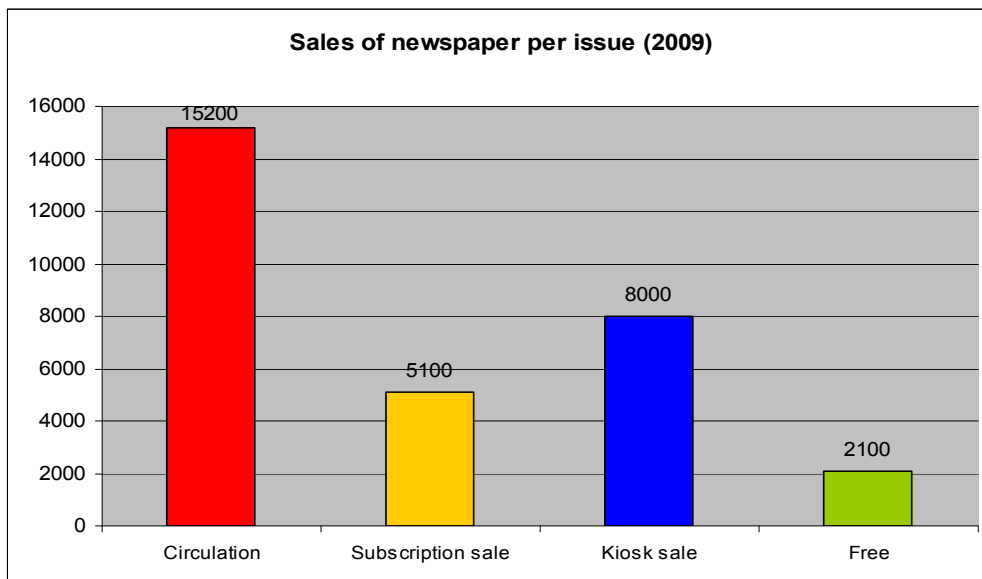
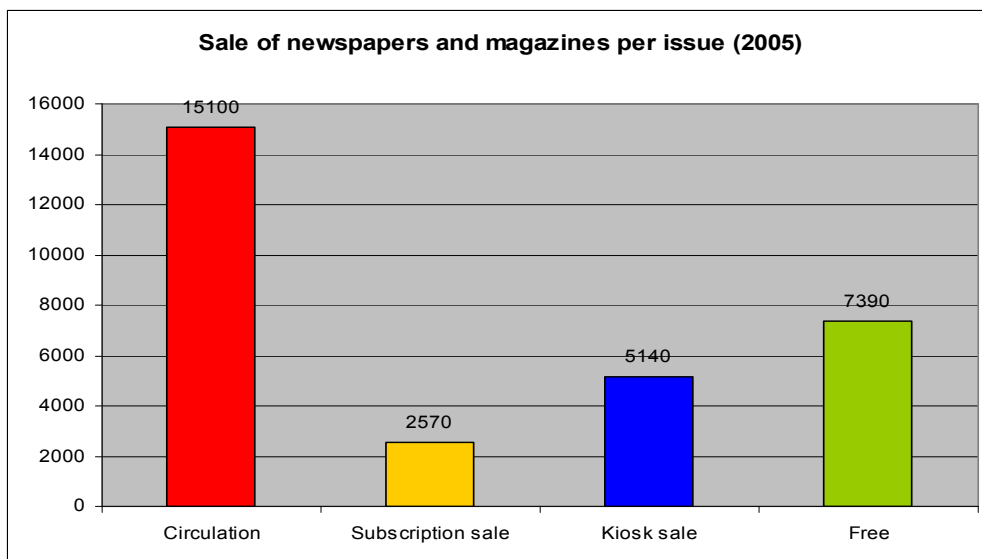


Among the general problems minority media faces, the most acute one is financial hardship: none of these media is financially self-sustainable. They mainly rely on occasional donations or grants. As a result, the regularity of their periodicity is endangered, along with their chance to improve professionally and better serve their communities.

For example, if we consider year 2005, we have an average circulation of 15,100 copies per issue, where almost half of them or 7,390 were distributed for free. Meanwhile, the average total circulation in 2009 is reported to be 15,200 copies, hence almost the same as 2005. However, the

Minority media in Albania in 2009

situation seems to be improved if we consider that four years ago, this number included 10 publications, whereas now, it includes only six, almost half of them. The reported figures are encouraging in another aspect: while in 2005 almost 49% of the copies were given for free, in 2009 this figure amounts to 2100 copies or 14% of the total circulation. The figures show a significant improvement in the sales of these publications.

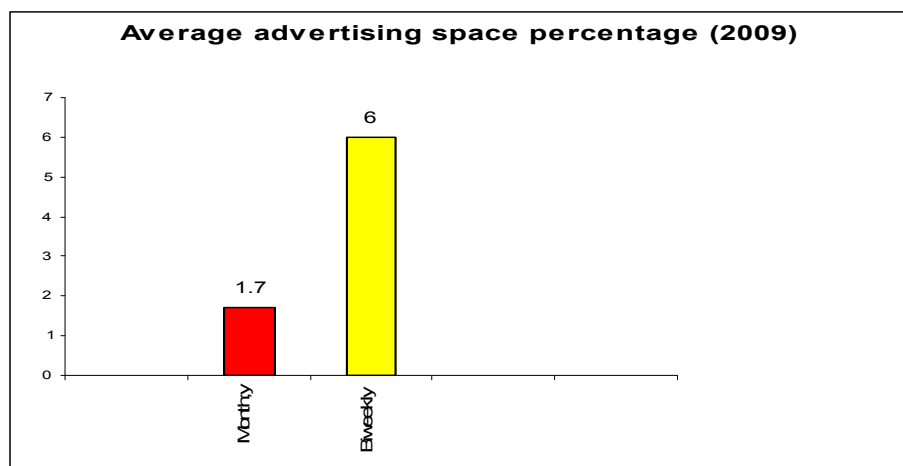


Minority media in Albania in 2009

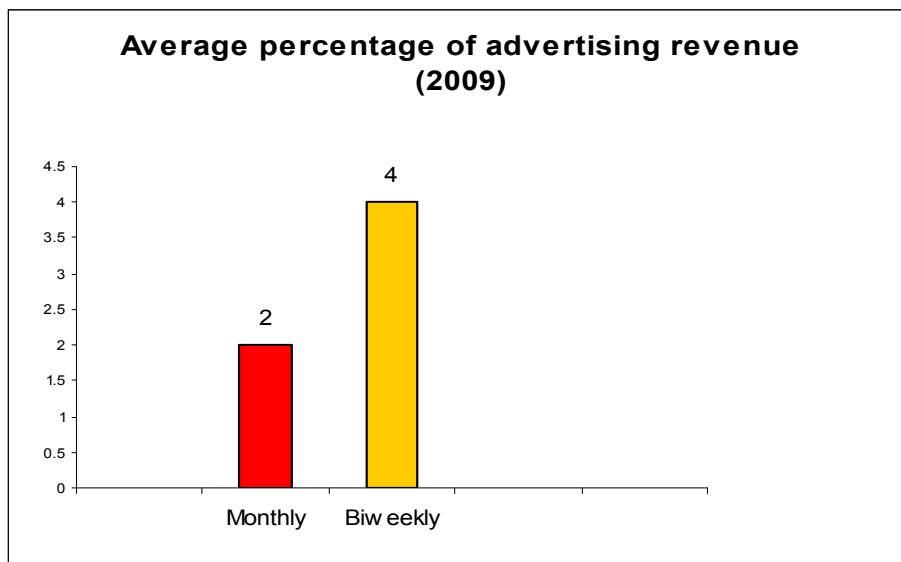
However, we need to bear in mind that the figures are provided by the owners/editors/directors of these publications. There is no other way of verifying the accuracy of these figures and as such, they need to be considered in the given context.

In order to shed more light on the financial dynamics of the minority newspapers, in both monitoring periods, they were asked some data on advertising, such as percentage of advertising space and percentage of advertising revenue in the overall newspaper revenue. As it was said above, many print media in 2005 were distributed for free and some of them did not contain any advertising at all. For example, a newspaper that was published every two months did not carry any advertising; the same was as the only minority radio. In the other publications, the percentage of advertising space ranged from 6 to 10 percent, while the percentage of advertising revenue ranged from 15 to 20.

If we compare these data to those of the same indicator for 2009, the situation seems to be worse. So, whereas in 2005, the advertising space ranged from 6 to 10 percent, in 2009 this space constitutes 2-4 percent of the total space of the publication. This indicates a significant decrease of the advertising space compared to the figures reported four years ago. Consequently, this diminution of the advertising space is also reflected in the advertising revenue, which in 2009 ranges from 1.7 to 6 percent of total revenue. Having in mind that there were newspapers that in 2005 reported 15-20% of revenue from advertising, this drop marks a significant decrease of advertising revenue for minority newspapers. Hence, the minority media is far from being commercial in this aspect, reflecting also the relatively low development of some of the areas where this media is located, along with the lack of interest and support for these media.



Minority media in Albania in 2009



Staff of minority media

During monitoring and assessment of the situation of minority media, data on the staff of these media were also collected, having in mind the importance of newsroom dynamics in the quality of information conveyed to the public. In general, the same as in 2005, in 2009 the minority media continues to suffer lack of staff, as well as insufficient professional skills.

- **Division according to employment positions and time**

So, in 2005, there were 63 employees in 11 media outlets, and only 24 percent of them were employed at full time. They mainly work with the assistance of correspondents in the country or abroad, usually in their country of origin. So, out of 63 persons that was the total staff of minority media, 31, or 49% were correspondents, and not all of them working on a regular basis. It was also noticed that there was a shortage of administrative staff: only seven out of 63 were classified as technical or administrative staff.

Meanwhile, in 2009, the total staff of the newsrooms was reported to be 71 persons. This marks only a slight increase compared to 63 persons employed in 2005. However, having in mind that this figure now only covers six media outlets as compared to 11 in 2005, then the total staff number has certainly marked an increase. Despite this positive aspect, the structure of employees according to time and functions in these media proves that the trend is the same as

Minority media in Albania in 2009

four years ago: most of the staff works part time or as foreign correspondents, while the newsrooms only have a minimum number of full-time employees.

So, out of 71 persons, only 23 or 32% of them are employed full-time, while the remaining 48 or 67% of the staff works part-time. Out of a total of 71 persons, 22 or 31% of the staff are correspondents. As the figures show, the percentage of part-time staff and correspondents is very high. Also, it should be noted that compared to 2005, where the technical staff or administration were only 7, this year this category is reported to include 19 persons, which marks an increase in technical assistants employed.

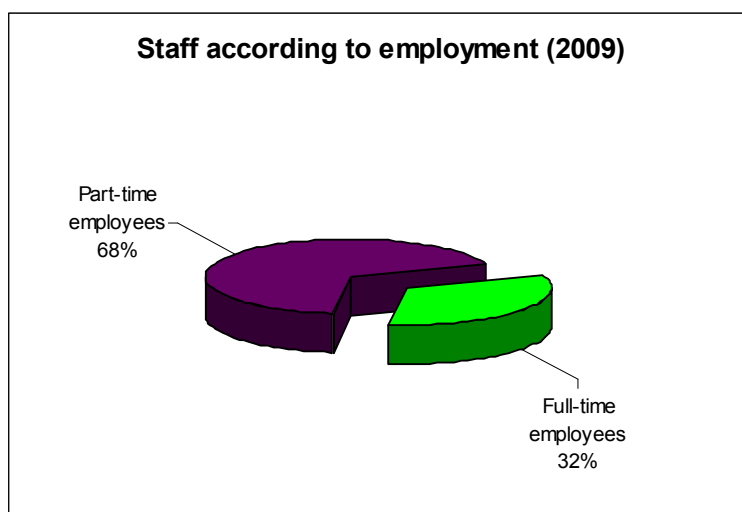
Structure of employees in minority media according to function:

Full-time employees	15
Out of which directors, managers, etc	3
Editors-in-chief, journalists, editors, reporters, etc	7
Technical assistants	3
Administration service and staff	3
Other	1
Part-time employees / of which correspondents	48/ 31
TOTAL	63



Minority media in Albania in 2009

Full-time employees	23
Out of which directors, managers, etc	3
Editors-in-chief, journalists, editors, reporters, etc	6
Technical assistants	9
Administration service and staff	2
Other	3
Part-time employees / of which correspondents	48/ 22
TOTAL	69



The data on staff were also analyzed having in mind the education aspect, in order to consider how this can affect the final product, namely the papers sold to the public. So, in 2005, the overwhelming majority of the staff working in these media had a degree: 52 out of 63. However, only 10 of them had a journalism degree, meaning that their education did not exactly match the aim and mission of a professional media.

If we compare these figures with those of 2009, the figures are similar. So, out of 71 employees in these media, 61 of them have higher education, and four others have post-graduate degree. However, out of these 65 persons with a degree, only five of them have a journalism degree, which marks a decrease as compared to 2005.

Minority media in Albania in 2009

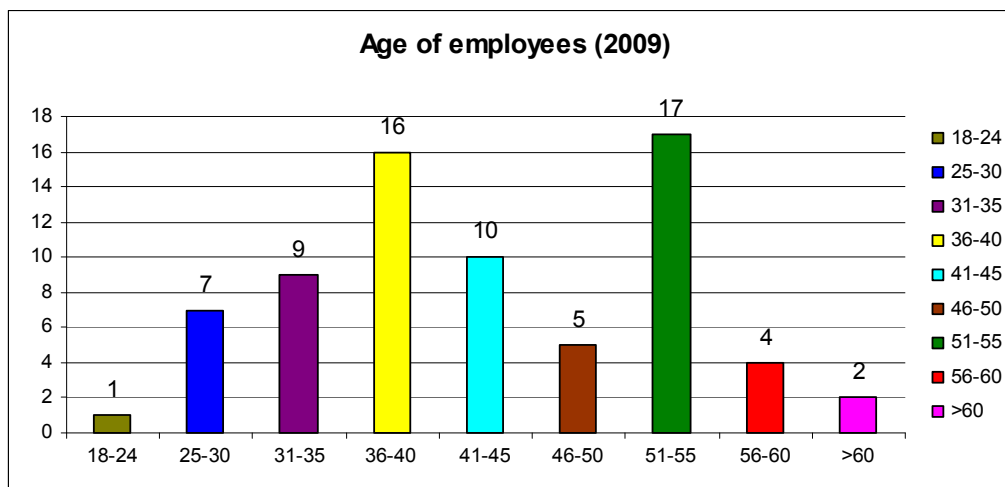
Education of minority media newsroom employees (2005)	No
Post-graduate degree	0
Graduate degree (of which journalism)	52 / 10 /
High school	3
Still students	0
N.A.	8
Education of minority media newsroom employees (2009)	No.
Post-graduate degree	4
Graduate degree (of which journalism)	61 / 5 /
High school	6
Still students	0
N.A.	0

Unlike most of the media in Albania, the age of the staff working in the minority media is somewhat older than the national average. So, the journalism community in Albania is rather young, with the age group 18-24 constituting a sizable percentage, followed by the age-group 25-30. When talking about minority media, in 2005 the age-group 36-40 had the largest number, 10 employees, while the age groups between 41 and 60 had each seven or eight employees, or 29 persons altogether. It should also be noted that the age group 25-30 had a total of 9 persons. However, in general, the staff of minority media is somewhat older compared to other media in the country.

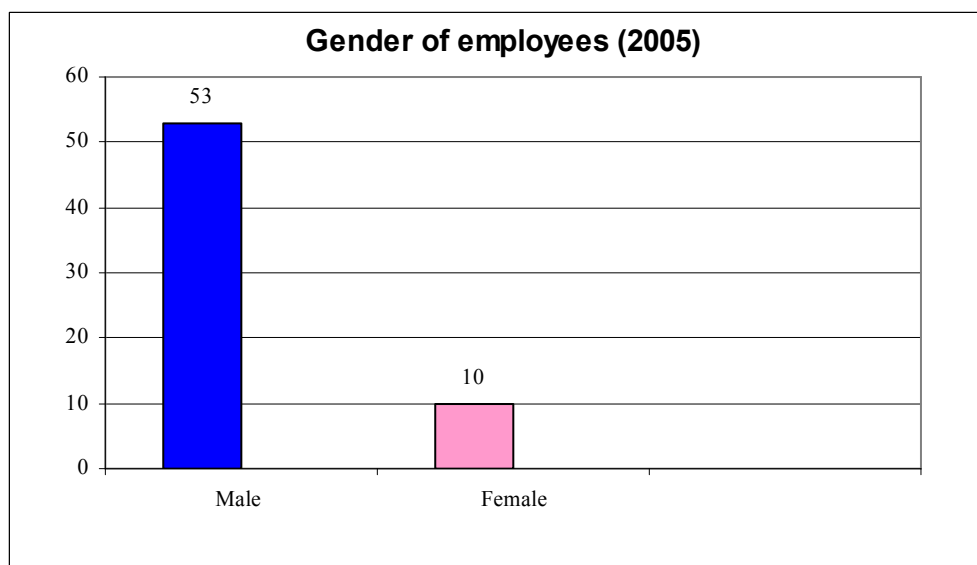
What are the figures in 2009? According to the data received from the survey, the age of employees in these media has grown even older: the age groups 51-55 and 36-40 have the

Minority media in Albania in 2009

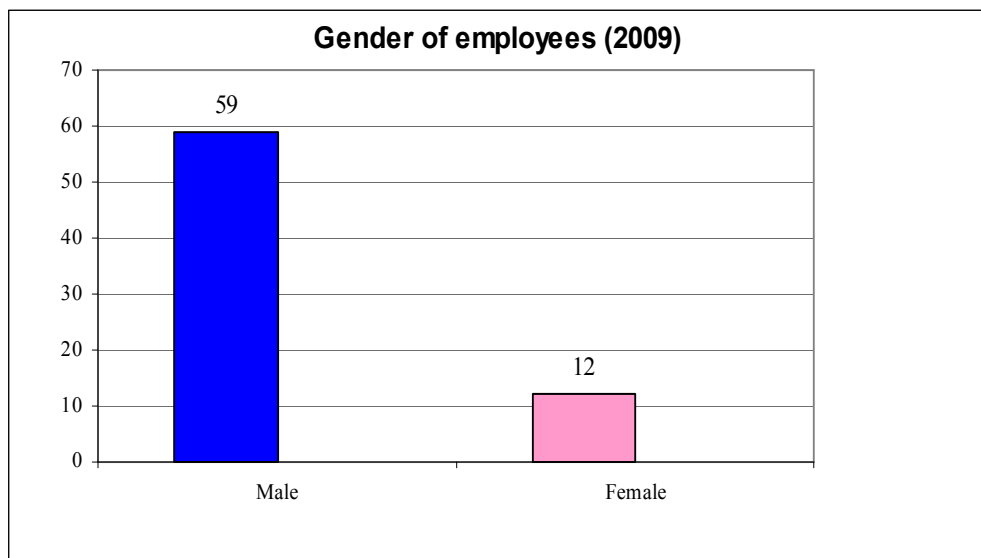
largest number of persons, respectively 17 and 16. In addition, it should be noted that unlike four years ago, the staff included two persons over 60. However, it should also be noted that the age groups 25-30, 31-35 and 41-45 have respectively 7, 9, and 10 representatives. So, even though it can be said that there is an increase in the age of employees in these media compared to four years ago, it cannot be unhesitatingly said that older employees entirely prevail in these media.



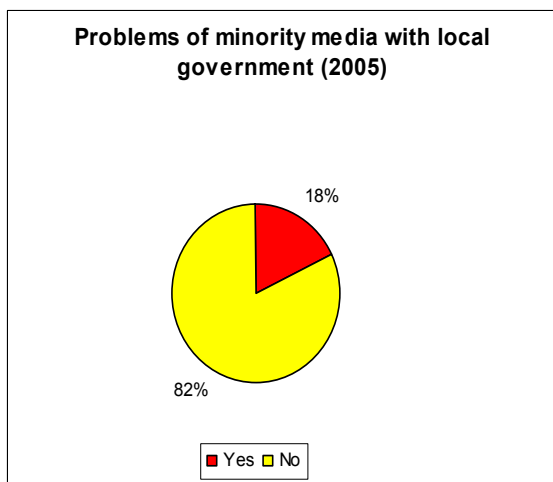
Similarly, the gender ratio is different from the rest of the media in the country. While in a national scale the female-male ratio is almost equal and in some cases the number of females is even higher than that of the males. In the minority media in 2005 only 10 employees were females out of a total staff of 63 persons. The data for 2009 do not show any significant change in this aspect: out of 71 employees, only 12 are female. Hence, it can be concluded that this trend has registered almost no change at all.



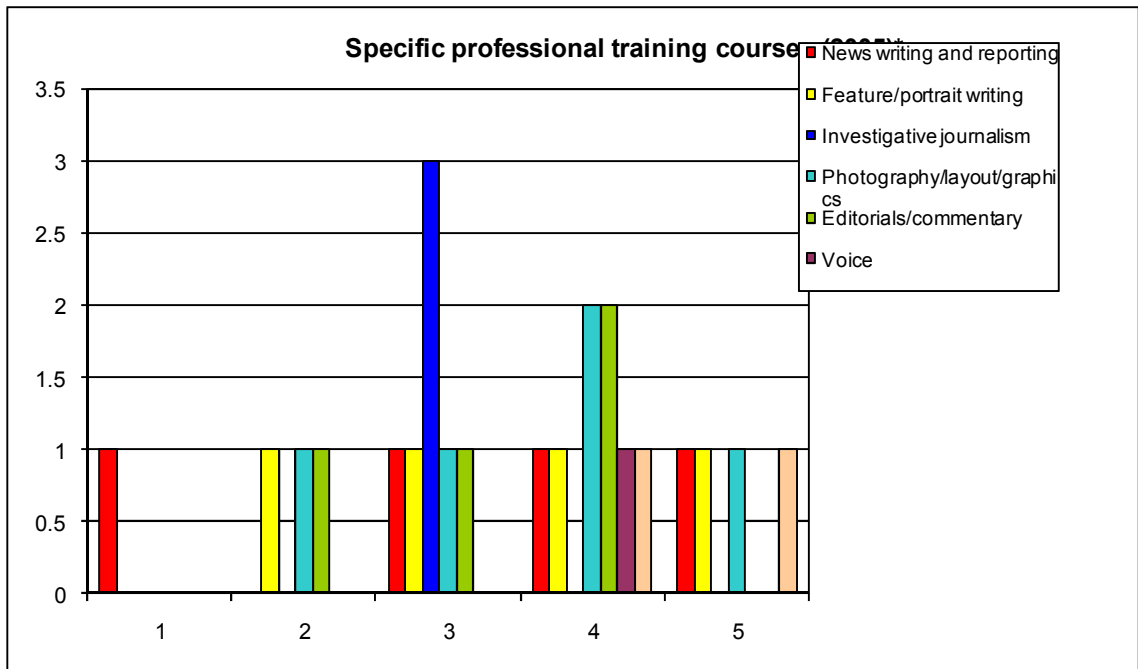
Minority media in Albania in 2009



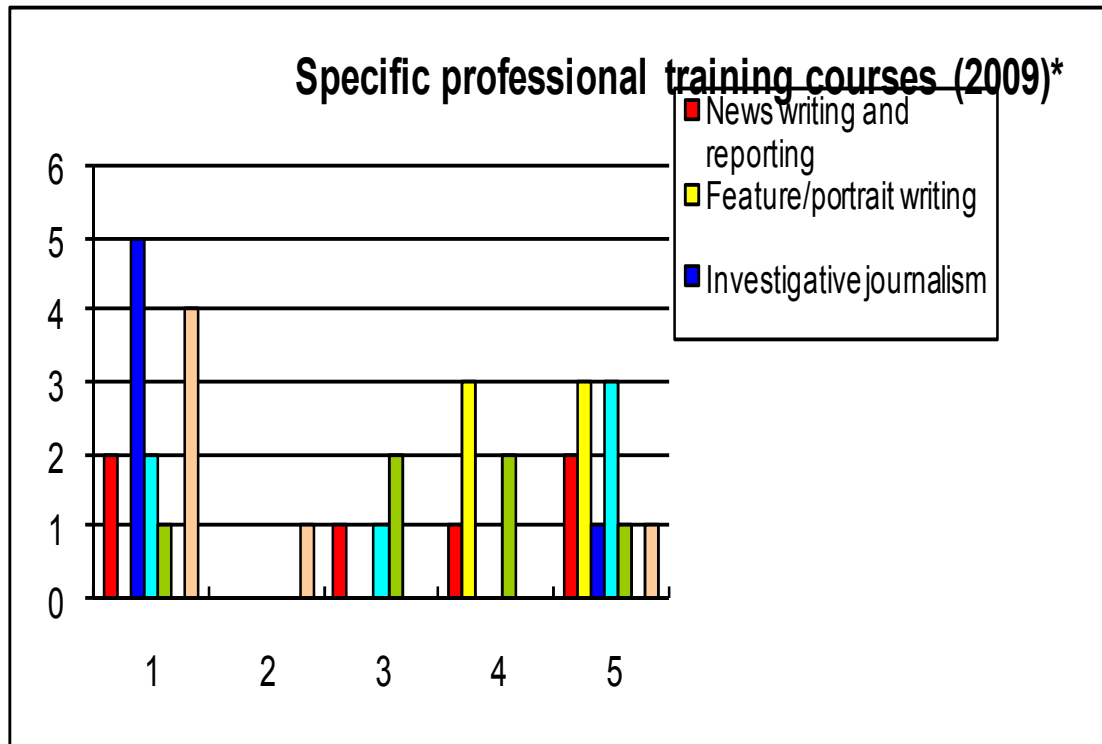
In order to address in a way the potential of discrimination of these media compared to the local media of the majority, one question asked to the minority media, in both surveys, was whether they had experienced any problems with the local media. In general, it is a very good sign that the minority media very rarely reported to have had a problem with the police, the court, or the local government. So, in 2005, only one of the media had gone to trial. The situation seems to be completely calm in 2009, when none of the media reported any problems with the local government.



Minority media in Albania in 2009



*1- less, ..., 5-more



* 1- less, ..., 5-more

Minority media in Albania in 2009

A question asked in both survey years was related to the participation of these media outlets in professional trainings. While in 2005 the percentage of participation in training was 64%, in 2009 this percentage reached 100%.

This figure testifies to the inclusion of all existing minority media in the country along the years in several professional trainings organized in the framework of projects related not only to minorities, but also to other topics. According to the interviews with the representatives of minority media, the overall conclusion was the continuous need for training, with the respective preferences expressed in the above tables.

However, rather than from further professional qualification, the minority media suffer more the financial hardships, their representatives reported. The same way as in 2005, in 2009 they were asked whether they received any donations or sponsorships and what was the latter's ratio to the other revenues they had. In both years, the media refused to answer or denied they received any sponsorship at all. These data are not exactly credible, having in mind that sponsorships or donations are a necessity and permanent trait not only in weak local media outlets, but also in the most powerful national media in Albania. This is also confirmed by the priorities the interviewees assigned: asked what their needs were according to priorities, financial support came first, followed by further professional training.

In general it can be said that the minority media's path to consolidation is still a long and difficult one. The economic difficulties and the achievement of a satisfactory financial sustainability remain the key obstacles for these media to overcome. The future of minority media seems even more insecure having in mind its urgent needs for training coupled to the lack of a clear vision on what constitutes community media, which in this case would contribute to strengthening of position and the role of these media within their communities. A quick analysis of the content of these media show that the content leans more towards the past of these communities rather than to their future. For this reason, a re-conceiving of these publications, along with further professional staff training in these media could assist the further development and empowerment of minority media.
