MEDIA DIVERSITY ACTIVISM IN SERBIA

Mapping actors and activities

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Efforts towards media pluralism and inclusive journalism, aiming at ensuring diversity of voices in the public sphere, are as old as the idea of socially responsible journalism. While modern civilisation – marked by the mediatisation of social and personal experiences more than any previous one – keeps revolutionising technological means of communication, it has not yet developed adequate structures, policies and practices that prevent social exclusion along the lines of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, social status or disability. This gap has given rise to the need for media diversity activism, promoting the right of all social groups to be fairly and authentically represented in the media accounts of reality and oriented towards building social cohesion.

In order to stimulate media diversity activism in the Western Balkans region, this report presents the model and results of mapping actors and their pro-diversity activities in Serbia.

METHODOLOGY

The mapping has been designed to identify the presence of media diversity-related activities in Serbia and the actors carrying them out. In particular, it has intended to notify the type of subjects in the field, their work domain, origin, geographical location and the degree of their engagement in diversity activism. In terms of activities, the mapping has been focused on registering their forms and types, dominant thematic areas and guiding ideas, diversity issues they tackle, their target groups and sources of finances.

The mapping included relevant activities carried out from January 2023 until October 2024 on the territory of Serbia and their carriers. It was based on the content analysis of online sources with information about activities and engaged actors.

Activities were considered relevant if centrally focused on media diversity issues, but also if they dealt with them along with a few others or many others, even if they tackled diversity issues implicitly, for instance in the framework of media ethics. Due to the vast meaning of the term, the activities related to media literacy were taken into account only if they directly referred to diversity, inclusion, or marginalised (minority/ /vulnerable) groups.

Regular work of media providing information about marginalised communities was not included in the mapping. These activities require a different methodological approach. Media outlets were registered as actors only if they were pointed out as performers of specialised activities beyond their routine work.

Three other types of activities are not included in this report, as they are analysed in separate reports. These are the teaching of diversity-related courses in the formal education system, awarding journalists or media to promote media diversity, and activities planned within the projects designed for applying for regular annual finances by the Ministry of Information and Telecommunication. These activities require different analytical categories and therefore are treated separately.

In addition, the report did not include ad hoc reactions to daily events, such as cases of hate speech directed at specific marginalised groups or public contestations and defences of the Law on Gender Equality, which came from many entities in the period analysed.

The main methodological problem in mapping activities was the availability of online information. Some activities, whose titles directly tackled a specific diversity issue, could not be included because the information was either completely missing or too scarce or could not be accessed (due to the infected website). In addition, the information found did not always make it possible to distinguish separate actions within the project outline and single out the activities of similar relevance. As a result, several simple activities with abundant information got the same treatment as complex activities with scarce information.

Taking into account the time limit of activities, the type of activities treated separately, as well as the reliance on secondary information sources with varying degrees of available relevant information, this report has to be taken as a limited insight into the activities of numerous actors relevant to the media diversity field. For example, none of the numerous organisations dealing with gender issues, especially the rights and position of women, was recorded as a relevant actor, because the greatest deal of their most important and pioneering work was done in a few previous years, until 2022, while their activities in 2023 and 2024 were limited to short public events or initiatives marginally dealing with media diversity issues and scarcely presented online. Similar is the case with some CSOs dealing with youth, which are engaged in developing media and digital literacy. The information on their activities related to diversity issues – usually indirectly – was not provided in their work accounts.

ACTORS

The field of activities related to media diversity included 25 actors who performed 44 activities.

Most often, the carriers of diversity activism are civil society organisations.

A typical actor is a civil society organisation, dealing with marginalised groups or with media development, Serbian by origin, situated in Belgrade, performing one activity a year, usually focused on one particular marginalised group or all of them taken together.

Types of actors

There was limited diversity in the types of pro-diversity actors.

They belonged to four kinds of organisations: civil society organisations, state bodies, media outlets or publishers and professional associations.

Civil society organisations – 14 – dominated the field, making up 56% of all the actors. They also carried out most of the activities. Somewhat more than half of actors, CSOs implemented almost three-fourths (72%) of all activities (32 in total).

CSOs were followed by state organisations (five) and the media industry (four).

State organisations comprised two international ones - the European Union and the Council of Europe, playing together in a joint activity, and three national institutions - the Parliament in its legislative role and two independent government bodies, one in charge of antidiscrimination activities and the other in the position of the regulator of electronic media.

Professional associations (two) displayed the least interest in media diversity of all actor types.

Among numerous professional organisations (unions of journalists, media, media employees, professional networks) only journalist associations were active in the field. Two of them – the Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS), and the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) carried out four activities, although not in highly prominent roles.

Types of actors		
Civil society organisations	**14**	
State bodies	**5**	European Union Council of Europe National Assembly of Serbia Commissioner for Protection of Equality Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media
Media industry	**4**	Newspaper Publishing Society "Sremske Novine" Publisher of the community portal Storyteller Community print magazine Liceulice Community portal Factory of Creativity
Professional organisations	**2**	Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS) Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)

The majority of registered civil society organisations are equally focused on two working areas – five in media development and five in the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups.

Most CSOs dealing with media and journalists are widely known organisations, with quite a long tradition and impressive track record in promoting media freedoms, media independence and ethical journalism, with a wide range of activities. They included a regional group South East European Network for Professionalisation of Media (SEENPM), a Western Balkan branch of the international Media Diversity Institute, and important media development players in the north and south of the country, Novi Sad Journalism School and Media&Reform Centre Nis. The fifth is a young and small organisation, devoted to the development of Roma media, Roma Media Service.

Types of civil society organisations		
Dealing with		
Media/journalists	**5**	SEENPM Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans Novi Sad Journalism School Media&Reform Centre Nis Roma Media Service
Marginalised group	**5**	National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS) Prijepolje Women Forum Club for Youth Empowerment 018 (KOM18) Academic Inclusive Association Psychological Centre for Community Mental Health „MentalHub"
Other	**4**	Share Foundation Belgrade Open School Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation Centre for Development Support and Initiative „NOVITAS"

Relevant CSOs dealing with vulnerable groups come from the ranks of less established and known organisations, except for the National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), an association of 109 youth and for youth organizations and Prijepolje Women Forum, the founder of the first Serbian community TV station and a pioneer in advocating gender equality in the south-west part of the country. They included three specialised organisations – the Academic Inclusive Association (former Association of Students with Disabilities), the recently established Psychological Centre for Community Mental Health „MentalHub" focused on youth mental health issues and the Club for Youth Empowerment 018, involved in several international projects concerning youth.

The general work of the four remaining CSOs only partially or indirectly tackles the media or marginalised groups. The Share Foundation is centred on digital rights and freedoms, Belgrade Open School on education, Centre for Development Support and Initiative „NOVITAS" on local development and Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation on humanitarian work.

Actors' origin and location

The overwhelming majority of actors (84%) are Serbian organisations, founded and located in Serbia and staffed with local people.

Among 25 actors, four are of international, i.e. European origin. These are the European Union and Council of Europe and region-centred civil society organisations South East European Network for Professionalisation of Media (SEENPM) with 19 members from 10 countries in Southeast Europe, and Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans.

A majority of Serbian actors (68%) are located in the three largest cities. Belgrade is a home for 12 out of 21 actors, Novi Sad for three and Nis for two.

Other actors' headquarters include the Vojvodina town Sremska Mitrovica and village Maglic (known for its multi-ethnic population including the Slovak ethnic minority) and two underdeveloped towns, Pirot in the southeast and Prijepolje in the southwest of the country.

Actors' engagement

Actors displayed a different degree of engagement. On average, each actor carried somewhat less than two activities, while actually, this number ranged from 1 to 7.

Regardless of the number of their activities, they focused on one, sometimes two diversity issues, related to a particular marginalised group or all of them.

Most active by far were the Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans and Novi Sad Journalism School, initiators of seven and six activities respectively, both devoted to media development. They both focused on gender and sexual orientation issues in addition to some others.

The Academic Inclusive Association and Psychological Centre for Community Mental Health „MentalHub" were also active much above average, with four activities each. Representing the interests of particular vulnerable groups – people with disability and the youth with mental health issues, respectively – they both centred their actions on the needs of these groups. Both organisations were partners in the same long-term project oriented towards youth.

Two organisations performed three actions each – the Commissioner for Protection of Equality and the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS). In all three cases, the state body Commissioner dealt with all minority groups. The journalist organisation UNS acted as a co-partner, rather than a sole action initiator and dealt with disability in two instances and with all vulnerable groups, in another.

Three actors were involved in two activities: the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), the National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS) and Roma Media Service. Their two actions always dealt with the same, single issue, be it ethnicity, youth or all minority groups treated as a whole.

Number of activities	Actors' engagement	
		Marginalised group
7	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	All, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion
6	Novi Sad Journalism School	All, gender, sexual orientation
4	Academic Inclusive Association	Disability
	Psychological Centre for Community Mental Health „MentalHub"	Youth mental health
3	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	All
	Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS)	All, disability
	Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)	All
	National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS)	Youth
	Roma Media Service	Ethnicity
1	European Union	All
	Council of Europe	All
	Share Foundation	All
	Media&Reform Centre Nis	All
	Agency for Consulting and Management in the Media Storyteller	All
	National Assembly of Serbia	Disability
	Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media	Disability
	Newspaper Publishing Society "Sremske Novine"	Disability
	SEENPM	Gender
	Prijepolje Women Forum	Gender
	Centre for Development Support and Initiative „NOVITAS"	Gender
	Belgrade Open School	Youth
	Club for Youth Empowerment 018" (KOM18)	Youth
	Liceulice	Youth mental health
	Factory of Creativity	Youth mental health
	Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation	Gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity

Each of the additional 16 actors performed one activity. They put focus on issues related to gender, youth, disability, or youth mental health, or all minority groups taken together, with the exception of Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation, involved in humanitarian work, which singled out three vulnerable groups based on gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity.

ACTIVITIES

In the period from January 2023 to October 2024, 44 activities related to media diversity were completed or were taking place in Serbia.

With the exception of four, these activities were performed within the frameworks of donor-assisted programs or projects. The main source of donations was the European Union, alone or in collaboration with other European entities.

The activities often dealt with the rights of many underrepresented groups, without identifying them. Individual minority groups addressed included women, sexual minorities, persons with disability and youth. The explicitly tackled multiple disadvantaged group was youth with psychological problems, and implicitly youth with disability.

The activities were set out within diverse thematic areas. Yet, only two were assessed as innovative, while most activities centred on a single theme - education and training for journalists as potential creators of more inclusive media content. Other elements of the media structures were tackled rarely.

Apart from journalists, the main protagonists of desirable changes were seen in civil society organisations and youth.

Thematic areas

The mapping was led by the intention to single out one thematic area for each activity. It was not always easy in the case of complex multi-action projects. In such instances, after registering thematic areas of separate activities which were parts of the project, the project as a whole was ascribed to the thematic area not covered by the project parts.

Activities were organized around a considerable variety of thematic issues. They were classified into the following thematic areas: media monitoring and research, training and education for media professionals, media literacy and public awareness, inclusive content creation, legislation and regulation, support to new project initiatives, countering hate speech and innovative approaches.

	Media monitoring and research	Training and education for media professionals	Media literacy and public awareness	Inclusive content creation
Number of activities	4	15	7	6
%	9	34	16	13

Thematic areas of activities (1)

	Legislation and regulation	Support to new project initiatives	Countering hate speech	Innovative approaches
Number of activities	4	4	2	2
%	9	9	5	5

Training and education for media professionals,
Media monitoring and research

A dominant theme of registered activities was education and training for journalists (15, i.e. 34%). In several cases, it was connected to media monitoring and research. These two groups of activities both were related to the media content and shared the objective of stimulating changes in dominant media narratives by influencing the professional awareness of journalists.

The core of the pro-diversity activities consisted of the identification of the characteristics of media representation of marginalised communities and providing content creators with resources to counteract discriminatory, biased and stereotyped reporting in favour of more inclusive patterns. The ideas collected by monitoring, research or expert analysis were disseminated through newly written and published handbooks and manuals on how to make changes in the media portrayals of minorities, through training of target groups and public discussions on the topic.

Altogether, this area of pro-diversity activism accounted for nearly half of all activities (19 out of 44, i.e. 43%).

Analysis of the media content was the thematic area of four activities, which unveiled media representation of young people (National Youth Council of Serbia), stigmatisation of young people with mental health issues (Psychological Centre for Community Mental Health), characteristics of hate speech in the media (Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans) and cases of attacks in the online sphere along lines of ethnicity, gender, religion etc. (Share Foundation). The last two actors make regular monthly or quarterly monitoring reports, in addition to annual ones, although here were recorded as carriers of a single activity.

	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
Media studies	Monitoring report on hate speech in Serbia	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	Gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, political opponents
	Youth in the Media Mirror	National Youth Council of Serbia	Youth
	Dashes and shadows: Monitoring mental health reporting	Psychological Centre for Community Mental Health	Youth mental health
Database and reports	Violations of digital rights and freedoms	Share Foundation	All

The other thematic group of activities related to the media content, to empower content producers, consisted of publishing six handbooks and manuals for journalists, seven trainings for journalists and two public discussions, with journalists as important participants. They all often combined presentation of monitoring and research results with recommendations on how to incorporate inclusive and diverse perspectives into their work.

Handbooks and manuals entailed guidelines for a fairer and more nuanced journalistic treatment of mental health issues (two publications), gender and various gender identities (two publications), people with disabilities and vulnerable groups in general. They differed in size (from 7 to 204 pages), as practical recommendations were accompanied by a variety of additional contents.

For example, the longest handbook on discrimination and equality by the Commissioner for Protection of Equality has 14 chapters, providing theoretical explanations of the concept and elements of discrimination, analysis of international and domestic legal anti-discrimination frameworks, mandate of the Commissioner and review of research findings about the presence of discriminative reporting in Serbian media and the digital space.

Besides journalists in general, these activities were oriented towards young journalists and students of journalism. Once the target group was named "media representatives".

	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
Handbooks	Handbook for journalists – Discrimination and equality 204 pages	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	All
	Handbook for ethical media reporting on youth mental health 34 pages	National Youth Council of Serbia	Youth mental health
	How to report on mental health: Handbook for journalists 32 pages	Psychological Center for Community Mental Health "	Youth mental health
	Handbook for reporting on people with disabilities 29 pages	Academic Inclusive Association	Disability
	Gender disinformation: concept and recommendations 16 pages	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender, sexual minorities
	Guidelines for professional, credible, and ethical reporting on the LGBTIQ+ community 7 pages	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	Sexual minorities
Trainings	Workshop on media representation of persons with disabilities	Academic Inclusive Association	Disability
	Training on analysis and fact-checking of gender disinformation	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender
	Training on gender-responsive budgeting for journalists	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender
	Training for journalists on discrimination and hate speech	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	All
	Training for Media Representatives on Human Rights, Discrimination, and Hate Speech	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	All
	Workshop "Young Roma males ad females in the media mirror"	Roma Media Service	Ethnicity
	Workshop „Framing the story: How to report on the queer community"	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	Sexual orientation
Public events	Conference - Marking the International Day for Countering Hate Speech	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	All
	Media coverage of persons with disabilities	UNS	Disability

Media literacy and public awareness

The mapping registered seven activities in the thematic area of media literacy and public awareness. Although sharing the same objectives – equipping individuals for critical analysis of media reporting, combatting its negative effects and developing awareness of the importance of ethical journalism – these activities varied a lot in many aspects.

They tackled different diversity issues – related to women, ethnicity, disability, youth, and gender identity – but diverged from each other more significantly in the way of achieving the desired results.

Most comprehensive of all was the activity of the Club for Youth Empowerment 018, which resulted in the creation of the handbook "Media Literacy Empowered" (110 pages). The handbook is designed for the young, but not so much as a marginalised group as recipients of the messages on how to recognize and challenge biased media content presented in a "youth-friendly" way. It was published simultaneously in Serbia, Italy and Spain, being the product of a joint international project, and tackles the media literacy issues of interest to the young in the digital era in all three countries. The handbook does mention the representation of marginalised groups, including youth, but its aim is much more to raise awareness about the importance of media literacy among young people than to empower the young to challenge the media images of themselves. Besides youth, its potential audience is educators and youth workers who are provided with designs of thematic workshops that can be used in developing media literacy.

Two activities dealt with the media literacy of women, initiated by the Centre for Development Support and Initiative „NOVITAS" and Prijepolje Women Forum. The former organised a series of workshops for women in the district of Pirot. They presented the results of the Centre's survey on women's satisfaction with their representation in the local media and instructed how to identify biases and stereotypes in dominant public narratives about men and women and how they can be challenged.

Prijepolje Women Forum, a women CSO running a non-commercial TV station and a portal, took a different way. It did hold a short workshop on the media treatment of women (conducted by an experienced researcher of media content), but the focus of its activity was the production of a series of multi-media texts and video reports with highly educative content: how the media promote gender imbalance, what are the inappropriate patterns in media images of gender roles and experiences, what are the individual and social consequences of women underrepresentation and misrepresentation, what is the significance of the critical attitude towards dominant media portrayal of women, how professional ethics can help change the situation. The educational material featured prominent human rights experts, women activists, media researchers, journalists and other relevant speakers, who addressed not only women but also the general audience.

Two activities dealt with people with disability. They aimed to empower marginalised groups, either as audiences or information sources or both. The Academic Inclusive Association organised workshops for its members, and students with disability, and instructed them how to act when approached by journalists and in front of a camera. This media literacy activity aimed to enable people with disability to challenge media strategies of "heroization" and "victimisation" in favour of presenting people with disabilities as ordinary members of society, with diverse experiences and capabilities.

The publisher of the portal Sremske organised a kind of journalism school for people with disabilities in three towns of the Srem district, teaching them not only how to communicate with the media but also how to produce a news piece about topics relevant to them on their own. It also opened a new section on its portal for publishing the news made by these new correspondents.

	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
Media literacy and public awareness			
Handbook	Media Literacy Empowered	Club for Youth Empowerment 018	Youth
Training	Women and media literacy	Prijepolje Women Forum	Gender
	Women in focus – support for media visibility	Centre for Development Support and Initiative	Gender
	Training for persons with disabilities to appear in the media	Academic Inclusive Association	Disability
	Towards equality - Srem without prejudices	Newspaper Publishing Society "Sremske Novine"	Disability
	The way out of the media darkness	Roma Media Service	Ethnicity
Case studies	Equally and truthfully: deconstructing gender disinformation in the media	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender

The Roma Media Service, within its project "The way out of the media darkness" trained young Roma people on practical skills for behaviour "in front of and behind the camera", i.e. in the role of interviewees and interviewers. It also taught them about the aspects of Roma culture and tradition they should promote in both roles (cuisine, global celebrities of Roma origin).

Novi Sad Journalism School engaged in raising the media literacy of a variety of target groups on the rarely discussed topic of gender disinformation by making nine original case studies. They deconstructed media disinformation strategies in the reporting of specific events related to gender-affirming surgeries, trans people in sports, HPV vaccine, defence against charges for sexual assaults, etc. These analytical texts were published on the actor's website.

Inclusive content creation

Six activities consisted of a new, inclusive content creation. The shared objective of these activities was the production of the type of content showing a wider range of identities, experiences and viewpoints of marginalised groups in comparison to the dominant ones.

In two cases, both oriented to young content producers, the focus was on a brief explanation of what is wrong with media coverage and on mentorship guidance throughout the production process. In other cases, the instruction of journalists through workshops was a separate activity, followed by the long-term creation of new material.

Mentored production was applied by Ana and Vlade Divac humanitarian foundation, within a project supported by several UN agencies. The activity included a short training and a four-month mentorship for 40 participants (students, media professionals, members of youth organisations), provided with necessary production resources (finances, technology and distribution channel). It resulted in the creation of a series of texts on gender equality, episodes of podcasts on gender-based violence and on Roma women's life experiences, a documentary film on the life of immigrants in Serbia as well as in several media campaigns on topics of youth interests. The content produced was posted on the YouTube channel of the Foundation Divac, who is a very popular Serbian sports star, as well as on the project profile on Instagram.

			Inclusive content creation
	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
Mentorship production	Community journalism for young reporters in local and youth media	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	All
	Media literacy of young people	Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation	Gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity
Multi-media production	A day in minority shoes	Publisher of community portal Storyteller	All
CSO + media partnership-initiated production	Young people and journalists for a better media approach to the inclusion of people with disabilities	Academic Inclusive Association + UNS	Disability
	Mental health on air	Psychological Center for Community Mental Health + community media Liceulice	Youth mental health
	Destigmatizer: media for youth mental health	Psychological Center for Community Mental Health + community media Factory of Creativity	Youth mental health

In the second case, the focus was on community reporting for the young about the young. The activity was led by the Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans as a part of an international project, including partners in another six European countries. It consisted of a three-month mentorship in media production on local community issues, preceded by a short training about media ethics, bias in reporting and characteristics of community journalism. The resulting work was to be published in local and youth media.

The publisher of a community portal Storyteller which runs simultaneously in Slovak and Serbian language, within a project "A day in minority shoes" created new content in multimedia forms, depicting marginalised groups in a variety of roles and identities. It also produced documentary films on several persons with disabilities emphasising their talents instead of their disability. These documentaries were shown to the general public, during a public event, involving the discussion on the position of minority groups and their media portrayal. Another part of the activity, which was not registered as a separate one, was the list of recommendations addressed to local authorities on how to improve the lives of marginalised groups, based on the insights into their problems gained during the work on new media production.

New inclusive content was also created within three partnership projects between CSOs oriented towards marginalised groups (people with disability and people with mental health issues) and organisations running media channels (UNS, Liceulice, Factory of Creativity). They followed the same pattern: the first partner trained the journalists how to produce the content according to the needs of marginalised groups, while the other helped produce and publish the created new content.

As a result of this type of cooperation, the Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS) introduced a new section on its website, Media and Inclusion, where it publishes the texts of journalists engaged by its partner, Academic Inclusive Association, as members of the newly established Journalist network for inclusion of persons with disabilities, to report on disability issues.

The community portal Factory of Creativity and the community magazine Liceulice published the multi-media content and written texts resulting from their cooperation with the Psychological Centre for Community Mental Health „MentalHub", the former in 2023 and the latter in 2024. The Psychological Centre created a network of over 100 psychologists from 15 Serbian cities willing to communicate with journalists and provide them with expert opinions and explanations about youth psychological problems. These community media initiated and publicised the journalists' work entailing expert assistance.

Legislation and regulation

In the area of legislation and regulation, there were four activities. Two of them were carried out by the state institutions. They brought changes in the legal framework of the media work and regulation of electronic media. At the same time, the initiatives for another two came from the professional and civil society sectors and dealt with journalists' self-regulation.

In 2023, the National Assembly adopted the new Law on Electronic Media, which dealt with the protection of the rights of people with disabilities in more detail than the previous law from 2014. In addition to the existing obligation of electronic media to make their content accessible to people with impaired hearing or sight, the Law obliged the media to "constantly work on the inclusion of Serbian sign language, open and closed captioning and audio descriptions". Electronic media are in particular required to make accessible urgent information of importance for life and health. Furthermore, they have to inform the Regulator about the accessibility measures taken once a year.

Although these legal changes seem important, the Law kept the formerly established formulation that the media tasks towards persons with disability are taken "in accordance with (their) financial and technical capabilities". In addition, no mechanisms are prescribed for monitoring compliance with the new obligations nor potential sanctions for non-compliance.

	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
Regulation	New Law on Electronic Media	National Assembly of Serbia	Disability
	Rulebook on the accessibility of programme content to people with impaired hearing or vision	Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media	Disability
Self-regulation	Amendments to the Code of Journalists of Serbia	Press Council, UNS, NUNS	All
	High professionalism with limited reach: Self-regulation of the media in Serbia	Novi Sad Journalism School	All

The obligations from the Law on Electronic Media were further elaborated in the Rulebook on the availability of content to persons with hearing or vision impairments, adopted by the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media in 2024. The Rulebook replaced the previous Regulator's non-binding recommendations with legally binding rules, promoting the right of people with disabilities to information. In addition to obligations already listed in the Law on Electronic Media, the Rulebook obliged the media broadcasting on the whole Serbian territory to make accessible the election programming shown in their central news broadcasts to people with impaired hearing or sight. Regional and local media are expected to do at least one news programme during the day. Regarding the accessibility of urgent information of importance for life and health, the Regulator prescribed this obligation along with the media broadcasting in minority languages.

In the self-regulation field, two activities involved amendments to the Code of Journalists of Serbia and a review study of the strong and weak sides of journalists' self-regulation in Serbia.

The changes of the Code were initiated by the two largest journalists associations, UNS and NUNS, which adopted the original Code in 2006, along with the self-regulation body Press Council. The Code amendments brought more precise regulation of the basis of discrimination and the position journalists should have towards discrimination. They introduced the obligation of journalists to use gender-sensitive language and for the first time tackled the issue of social diversity. Namely, the Code now requires a responsible approach of journalists to diversity in society and equal inclusion of interlocutors from different groups relevant to the topic (gender, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation).

The review study of self-regulation was made by Novi Sad Journalism School, along with studies in other Western Balkan countries, following the same model, within a SEENPM complex project. It pointed out the missing areas of self-regulation, some of which were filled up with the already mentioned amendments to the journalist code of conduct.

Support to new project initiatives

Four activities were registered as support to new initiative in the field of media diversity.

The first two contained an administrative and financial stimulant for launching new projects injected yearly by the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia (NUNS) and Reform&Media Center Nis, as part of the long-term programme financed by the US Embassy in Serbia. The programme promoted "diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the Serbian media space" as one of three thematic areas.

The third was financial and mentoring support to building a partnership between a youth CSO and a media channel for strengthening the youth sector, youth and the media in the area of human rights and the rule of law. It has been provided by the Belgrade Open School every year since 2021 for different couple-partners. As mentioned before, the activity resulted in cooperation between the Academic Inclusive Association and UNS, and between the Psychological Center for Community Mental Health „MentalHub" and community media Liceulice in 2024 and the same Center and community portal Factory of Creativity in 2023.

The last one was the administrative and financial support of Novi Sad Journalism School to CSOs focused on promoting media activism and countering disinformation in several thematic fields, including gender equality.

Support to new project initiatives and countering hate speech			
	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
Support to new project initiatives	Small Media Grants Programme	NUNS	All
	Small Media Grants Programme	Reform & Media Center Nis	All
	Youth and media for democratic development	Belgrade Open School	Youth
	Grant distribution scheme for CSOs focused on promoting media activism and countering disinformation	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender
Countering hate speech	Combating discrimination and promoting diversity in Serbia	European Union Council of Europe	All
	Reporting Diversity Network – The New Agenda	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	Gender, ethnicity, religion

Two activities were classified as tackling the thematic area of combating hate speech. They are characteristic of two complex, four-year projects involving multiple actions. The first, entitled Combating Discrimination and Promoting Diversity in Serbia, is a joint initiative by the European Union and Council of Europe, concerned with discrimination in other areas apart from media. The second is the project Reporting Diversity Network – The New Agenda, carried out by the Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans. It involves a variety of actions performed across the region, most of which deal with identifying the presence of hate speech in the public space and empowering various target groups to recognise and prevent it.

	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
Civil society movement	"Our Media": Civil Society Movement for Multiplying Media Literacy and Activism, Preventing Polarization, and Promoting Dialogue	SEENPM	Gender
Alternative narrative	Get involved: Take part in our campaign	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	

Two activities were assessed as innovative, both of a regional nature.

The first is the initiative by the SEENPM association for the creation of a civil society movement for developing media activism. Media activism is a new term in the Serbian civil society and media sector, although it has been practised for a long time in both sectors. New ideas in this activity involve the establishment of a wide and coordinated regional front of organisation devoted to the common struggle for media freedoms and a priority given to young leaders as main media activists, who will be trained for this role in the Regional Academy for future leaders of change, yet to be launched. The main objectives of the activity tackle the issues of media sustainability and media literacy, as well as social polarisation and need for a public dialogue. Parts of its complex actions include the stimulation of young media activists to challenge harmful policies and practices and counter discrimination and gender inequalities in the media.

The other is the activity conducted by the Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans within its Reporting Diversity Network which gathers 16 organisations from the region. It consists of spotting the prolonged spreading of hate speech related to particular events or topics, monitoring the media coverage, filing complaints against media to relevant state institutions and self-regulation bodies and providing explanations of prejudices, biases and law violations by creating alternative narratives. Another part of this activity is the stimulation of citizens and other actors to inform the MDI about cases of hate speech, themselves counteract it or support the MDI counter-actions.

It seems worthwhile to mention here two other novel initiatives, although they were only by-side elements of activities with another focus. These are the creation of the Network of Journalists for Inclusion, by the Academic Inclusive Association, and the network of psychologists (Psychological Center for Community Mental Health „MentalHub"), ready to offer expert assistance to journalists reporting about mental health issues.

Forms and types of activities

As a rule, activities were performed as implementation tasks within donor-assisted programmes or projects.

Regarding a form, activities were classified into three groups, with according categories and subcategories.

The main form category in the first group was a long-term programme, which was treated as an activity by itself. Programmes had their carrier, thematic area, type, financing source, target groups, etc. Programmes were usually multi-actions because they entailed at least one project, treated as a subcategory (a project within a programme). If a project within a programme consisted of several separate activities, they were registered as its subcategories, in the form of a part of a project within a programme.

The second group included individual projects that were not part of a programme or were not part of a relevant programme (which tackled diversity issues in any way). These projects were recorded as another category (a project), with a subcategory (part of a project) designating the elements of the project.

The third group included single actions, outside of a project framework. They always consisted of a single, easily recognisable activity.

The mapping recorded four relevant long-term programmes – one launched in 2014 (Share Foundation), a four-year one initiated in 2021 (Belgrade Open School) and two programmes run anew each year (NUNS and Media & Reform Center Nis).

These programmes comprised seven projects, while eight specific activities were performed as parts of these projects.

Individual projects (6) were initiated by the European Union and Council of Europe, SEENMP, Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans, Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation, Roma Media Service and two professional organisations UNS and NUNS. They made frameworks for seven particular activities.

An additional eight activities were performed as parts of some other projects, not included in this study because they did not tackle diversity issues.

Single actions were rare (3). They included the publishing of the Handbook for journalists by the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, training on reporting about the queer community by the Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans and the adoption of the new Law on Electronic Media by the national parliament.

Type	Multi-action	Training	Publishing	Project management	Other	Other
Form	**Number of forms**					
Programmes	4				Project administration (3)	Monitoring (1)	
Project within a programme	7	Multi-action (5)	Training (2)				
Part of a project within a programme	8		Training (3)	Publishing (2)		Monitoring (1) Expert study (1)	Advocacy (1)
Individual project	6	Multi-action (3)	Training (1)			Content production (1)	Legislative change (1)
Part of a project	16		Training (5)	Publishing (3)	Project administration (1)	Monitoring (2) Content production (1) Expert study (1)	Advocacy (2) Legislative change (1)
Single action	3		Training (1)	Publishing (1)			Legislative change (1)
Total	**44**	**8**	**12**	**6**	**4**	**8**	**6**

The types of activities were modestly diverse.

In eight cases, which included some complex programmes and projects, the type of activity was categorised as "multi-action" because it was not possible to single out one activity type.

The most common activity types were training and capacity building (12) and publishing (6). Except for programmes, training was performed in every other activity form, while publishing was always a part of a project as a bigger whole.

Project administration was a type of activity in four cases. Other types were quite rare, including monitoring and reporting (4), legislative change (3), and three cases of advocacy, content production and expert study.

The prominence of diversity issues

The mapping registered activities with diverse dealings with media diversity issues. Diversity could be the activity's central focus, one of a few, one of many others, or only implicit.

In the overwhelming majority of all registered activities – 73% – diversity was given the highest priority.

In an additional 11%, a diversity issue was one of a few topics guiding the activity. For example, two organisations, NUNS and Media & Reform Center Nis defined the promotion of "diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility" in addition to the objective to support media freedom and journalist safety and strengthen digital platforms and online media. In the joint initiative of the European Union and Council of Europe, the promotion of "anti-discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable social groups, including youth, Roma, and LGBTI persons" was equally valid if taking place in the legislative, policy or media sphere. Novi Sad Journalism School put gender equality in the same line with freedom of expression, digital technologies, education and human rights as desirable activity areas.

			Prominence of diversity issues	
	Central focus	One of a few	One of many	Implied
Number of activities	32	5	5	2
%	73	11	11	5

In another 11% of cases, diversity topic was one of many outlined. For example, Share Foundation's monitoring of violations of digital rights and freedoms registers seven aspects of these violations (with many subcategories), and in the eighth records attacks based on gender, racial, religious, ethnic or sexual affiliation. Amendments to the Code of Journalists concerned two or three paragraphs in a 20-page document.

Finally, in 5% of activities, diversity issues were not mentioned directly but were implied. The training by Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans for community journalism included topics like media ethics and unbiased reporting, indirectly treating the representation of social diversity. The Novi Sad Journalism School study of self-regulation of the media in Serbia analysed journalist Code of Ethics, challenges and examples of sanctioning bad practices in media coverage.

Marginalised groups addressed

More than half of the activities (56%) addressed diversity issues related to a single marginalised group. In 6% of cases, they treated two connected groups (women, sexual minorities), and in another 6% three or four non-connected ones. One-third (32%) dealt with all underrepresented groups, or with many, without identifying them.

Orientation to a single marginalised community as a rule meant that it was the central focus of the activity. Tackling all groups without differentiation meant the opposite: usually, diversity was one priority among a few or many, or only implied.

The activities related to one or two marginalised groups problematised media representation across four personal attributes, in the following ranking by frequency: gender, disability, age and ethnicity.

| | | | *Marginalised groups addressed* |
Marginalised group	Number of activities	Central focus	Actor
All	**14** 32%	**5**	MDI Western Balkans (2 times) Commissioner for Protection of Equality (2 times) Publisher of the portal Storyteller European Union, Council of Europe NUNS Commissioner for Protection of Equality Media & Reform Center Nis Share Foundation UNS, NUNS Club for Youth Empowerment 018 MDI Western Balkans Novi Sad Journalism School
Gender	**10** 23%	8	
Women	**3**	3	Novi Sad Journalism School Prijepolje Women Forum Center for Development Support and Initiative
Gender identity	**7**	3	Novi Sad Journalism School
		2	MDI Western Balkans
			SEENPM Novi Sad Journalism School
Disability	**8** 18%	7	Academic Inclusive Association UNS National Assembly of Serbia Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media Newspaper Publishing Society "Sremske Novine"
Age *Youth*	**7** 16%	7	Psychological Center for Community Mental Health Belgrade Open School National Youth Council of Serbia
Ethnicity *Roma*	**2** 5%	2	Roma Media Service
Multiple	**3** 6%	2	MDI (2 times) Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation

Gender was the main topic of 10 activities (23%), all carried out by civil society organisations.

Three activities were related to women only, while the remaining seven referred to diverse gender identities.

Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans was the only actor that included gender identity in the titles of its activities (Guidelines for professional, credible, and ethical reporting on the LGBTIQ+ community, Workshop „Framing the story: How to report on the queer community")

Persons with disabilities were the subject of eight activities (18%), in all but one case being their central focus. Their carriers varied, including a disability-oriented CSO (Academic Inclusive Association), a journalist association (UNS), a media publisher (Sremske novine), and two state bodies (national parliament and electronic media regulator).

The only age group tackled was youth, addressed by seven activities (16%). Among initiators of these activities there was only one youth organisation (National Youth Council of Serbia), though, the one which gathers over a hundred others. A dominant topic (in five out of seven activities) was the mental health of youth, addressed by the same youth organisation and four times by the association of psychologists specialised for working with young people (Psychological Center for Community Health "Mental Hub").

Youth with mental health issues was at the same time the only kind of multiply disadvantaged social group. The Academic Inclusive Association, the organisation of students, which was the carrier of the project generally oriented to youth (within the programme as well oriented to youth), dealt with persons with disability but did not differentiate among them based on age.

Pro-diversity activities largely ignored ethnic groups. Only two activities (5%) were guided by ethnic discrimination issues, both concerning Roma people and both organised by a small organisation Roma Media Service.

Three activities, two by the Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans and one by Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation addressed several marginalised groups with one activity. The former dealt with ethnicity, religion and gender within its project Reporting Diversity Network – The New Agenda, and with gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity and political and ideological opponents in its monitoring report about hate speech. The latter pointed out women, Roma and youth in inclusive new content created in a variety of media formats.

Target groups of activities

The mapping took into account up to three target groups for each activity. Altogether, 99 mentions of target groups were recorded.

Most often the activities were directed towards two target groups: journalists (24) and media (24). They were treated as the main target group each in more than half of activities (55%). In one-quarter (12, i.e. 28%) that was the case with both targets groups.

Journalists and media were targeted by activities of various types and thematic areas.

The term "journalists" was rarely specified, even when it obviously included a variety of media workers. Only twice they were named more generically – "media professionals" (Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation) and "media representatives" (Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans).

Four activities targeted young journalists in particular (two activities by the Academic Inclusive Association and two by the MDI Western Balkans).

In six cases, besides journalists, the activity included students of journalism as well.

One activity, organised by the Roma Media Service, was targeting journalists of Roma origin.

Only in one case target group was described in terms of media journalists work for. The Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans designated media representatives from "youth media, local media and media in minority languages" as prime participants of its training on human rights, discrimination and hate speech.

Media, as a target group, were rarely detailed as well. Out of 24, two activities were oriented towards electronic media, one to local media and one to both local and youth media.

The next most frequent target was marginalised groups (18, i.e. 41%). Apart from the marginalised groups being taken together, four groups were explicitly named: youth (7 times) people with disabilities (4), women (2) and people of Roma origin (1).

The young as well were rarely designated more specifically, once referred to as young activists and another time as students.

Civil society organisations were among the primal target groups for 11 activities (25%). In two cases they were defined as organisations dealing with human rights, in another two as dealing with gender equality and once as youth organisations.

	Journalists	Media	Marginalised groups	CSOs	Audience	Policy makers	Other
Target groups of activities							
Number of activities	24	24	18	11	7	6	9
%	55	55	41	25	16	14	20

Media audience was targeted in seven activities (16%). Most often, activities included an online audience, once combined with print and once with TV audience. Other activities were oriented to a young audience and once to a general audience (conference on the occasion of the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, attended by high representative of the European Union, Council of Europe and home state body Commissioner for Protection of Equality).

Activities rarely tackled state institutions, i.e. policymakers. They were addressed six times (14%): three times by the MDI Western Balkans, once in a joint activity of the European Union and Council of Europe, once in a long-term programme of Share Foundation and once by the Storyteller local actor which targeted local authorities in its municipality.

Other target groups (in 9, i.e. 20% of activities) included journalism educators, youth educators, psychologists, legal experts, journalist professional organisations and self-regulatory bodies (twice). Citizens were singled out as the prime target group twice, by the Share Foundation and MDI Western Balkans.

Financial sources for activities

Out of 44 activities, four were financed by domestic sources. In two cases, finances came from the national budget, which provided public means for the legislative work of the national parliament (adoption of the new Law on Electronic Media) and a donation by the Ministry of Tourism to the National Youth Council of Serbia (creation and publishing of the Handbook for ethical media reporting on youth mental health).

Foreign funders supported the overwhelming majority of activities (38, i.e. 86%). The funding came from 11 institutions and organisations.

Two of them were international (UN Secretary General's Peace Building Fund and OSCE Mission to Serbia), two were American (US Embassy in Serbia, Balkan Trust for Democracy), while the remaining seven were European, including the European Union, Council of Europe and entities in Sweden, Norway and Germany.

Three donors from abroad supported the implementation of multiple activities, from eight to 15. One funder helped two, and an additional five helped one activity each. In two cases, the funder was not known.

The majority of activities (15) were funded by the European Union (EU). EU either acted as a sole donor (5 activities) or in collaboration with some other institutions (10), including the Council of Europe, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, OSCE Mission to Serbia and Balkan Trust for Democracy.

Most of these activities were done within the frameworks of three complex projects, all having a regional component: SEENPM's project Our media, a joint project of the EU and Council of Europe Combating Discrimination and Promoting Diversity in Serbia, part of the larger programme Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey, and the regional project Reporting Diversity Network – The New Agenda, carried out by the Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans.

Financial source	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
European Union **(5)**	"Our Media": Civil Society Movement for Multiplying Media Literacy and Activism, Preventing Polarization, and Promoting Dialogue	SEENPM	Gender
	High professionalism with limited reach Self-regulation of the media in Serbia	Novi Sad Journalism School	All
	Grant distribution scheme for CSOs focused on promoting media activism and countering disinformation	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender
	Community journalism for young reporters in local and youth media	MDI Western Balkans	All
	Media Literacy Empowered	Club for Youth Empowerment 018	All
European Union + **Council of Europe** **(5)**	Combating discrimination and promoting diversity in Serbia	European Union + Council of Europe	All
	Conference – Marking the International Day for Countering Hate Speech	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	All
	Training for journalists on discrimination and hate speech	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	All
	Training for Media Representatives on Human Rights, Discrimination, and Hate Speech	MDI Western Balkans	All
	Rulebook on the accessibility of program content to people with impaired hearing or vision	Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media	Disability
European Union, Balkan **Trust for Democracy,** **Norwegian Ministry of** **Foreign Affairs** **(4)**	Reporting Diversity Network – The New Agenda	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	Multiple
	Monitoring report on hate speech in Serbia	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	All
	Get involved: Take part in our campaign	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	All
	Guidelines for professional, credible, and ethical reporting on the LGBTIQ+ community	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	Gender
EU Delegation in Serbia **OSCE Mission to Serbia** **(1)**	Amendments to the Code of Journalists of Serbia	UNS and NUNS	All

The next most frequently mentioned international donor was Sweden, in 10 cases designated as "Sweden" (or "Kingdom of Sweden") and in one as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

"Sweden" funded 10 activities, including the long-term program Youth and Media for democratic development, three projects within the program and all the parts of these projects.

		Activities financed by Sweden donor(s)	
Financial source	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
Sweden **(10)**	Youth and media for democratic development	Belgrade Open School	Youth
	Young people and journalists for a better media approach to the inclusion of people with disabilities	Academic Inclusive Association + Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS)	Disability
	Handbook for reporting on people with disabilities	Academic Inclusive Association	Disability
	Workshop on media representation of persons with disabilities	Academic Inclusive Association	Disability
	Training for persons with disabilities to appear in the media	Academic Inclusive Association	Disability
	Media coverage of persons with disabilities	UNS	Disability
	Mental health on air	Psychological Center for Community Mental Health „MentalHub" + Liceulice	Youth
	Dashes and shadows: Monitoring mental health reporting	„MentalHub"	Youth
	Destigmatiser: media for youth mental health	„MentalHub" + Factory of Creativity	Youth
	How to report on Mental Health Handbook for journalists	„MentalHub"	Youth
SIDA, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	Training on gender-responsive budgeting for journalists	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender

The US Embassy in Serbia financed eight activities, all implemented within the program Small Media Grants and four projects launched under its framework. The program is carried out yearly and executed by the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia (NUNS) and Media & Reform Center Nis.

	Activities financed by the US Embassy in Serbia		
Financial source	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
US Embassy in Serbia (8)	Small Media Grants Program	NUNS	All
	Small Media Grants Program	Media & Reform Center Nis	All
	Equally and truthfully: deconstructing gender disinformation in the media	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender
	Gender disinformation: concept and recommendations	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender
	Training on analysis and fact-checking of gender disinformation	Novi Sad Journalism School	Gender
	A day in minority shoes	Storyteller	All
	Towards equality - Srem without prejudices	Newspaper Publishing Society "Sremske Novine"	Disability
	Women in focus - support to media visibility	Center for Development Support and Initiative	Gender

Among other donors, the OSCE Mission in Serbia supported two separate activities.

The remaining five financed a single one. Apart from the OSCE, there was another global organisation, the UN Secretary General's Peace Building Fund while others were European organisations from Norway and Germany.

	Donors for one or two activities		
Financial source	Name of the activity	Actor	Marginalised group
OSCE Mission in Serbia	Handbook for journalists – Discrimination and equality	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	All
UN Secretary General's Peace Building Fund	Media literacy of young people	Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation	Multiple
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Women and media literacy	Prijepolje Women Forum	Gender
Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation of Federal Republic of Germany, DW Academy	Youth in the Media Mirror 2022	National Youth Council of Serbia and Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans	Youth

CONCLUSION

The level of freedom in Serbia has been declining for almost a decade. According to the Freedom House assessment, Serbia has been a partly free country since 2018. Media freedoms have been the greatest victim of the growing authoritarianism of the political system. In Reporters Without Borders' 2018 list, Serbia had the biggest decline in media freedom in one year, ranking 76th. The decline has continued since then, so in 2020 Serbia ranked 93rd, and in 2023 98th. Serbia suffers from both state-capture and media-capture phenomena. The media environment has become a highly divided field, occupied by the mainstream media acting as the propaganda backbone of the regime and a small group of media critical of the government. They polarise their audiences on every event or occurrence they cover and prevent an integrative public debate on problems important to the general public.

Under these conditions, there is a narrow space for making the position of minorities, be it ethnicity, gender, physical or mental disability or other personal trait, a highly significant media and social issue.

Yet, a pro-media diversity field in Serbia is active and vibrant, involving 25 actors who performed 44 activities from January 2023 until October 2024.

Most of its actors are civil society organisations, focusing their general work on the rights of marginalised groups, or media development.

Associations of journalists and other professional organisations rarely tackle the issue of media representation of marginalised communities, as they are occupied with the issue of their own sustainability and media freedom. There are only a few international and regional organisations among actors. The majority are Serbian by origin, dominantly situated in Belgrade.

Most activities in the pro-diversity field are project-driven. Long-term programs are rare. There is none specifically designed for stimulating more inclusive media coverage. The overwhelming majority of activities are funded by international donors, predominantly European. The leading financial source is the European Union.

The activities focus on a few disadvantaged social groups. They are women, the LGBTIQ+ community, persons with disability and youth. Ethnic minorities are rarely in focus. Religious minorities were mentioned once in 44 cases, but socially impoverished never. Activities tackle multiple marginalised groups very seldom. This was the case only with young persons with mental health issues.

Activities cover a variety of thematic issues, such as media content analysis, training and education for media professionals, media literacy, inclusive content creation, legislation, etc. Raising the professional awareness of journalists is still a dominant one. Consequently, two dominant target groups of activities are journalists and media.

Attempts to tackle other elements of media structures are rare. Several initiatives are worth mentioning - individual examples of limited initiatives for strengthening alternative media (two community portals and one specialised print magazine), pressuring relevant state institutions to punish hate speech, providing alternative narratives as a form of counteraction against hate speech as well as the idea of creating a civil society movement for developing media activism and increasing media literacy.

The mapping of currently active organisations in the media diversity field shows that there are considerable opportunities for widening their activities by directing attention to neglected marginalised groups (related to social status, marital status, age, health condition, etc. and multiply underrepresented, such as women, children and old households in rural areas, various minorities in underdeveloped districts and municipalities, etc) and by establishing better cooperation with alternative media, especially digital community media. They should also try to transfer their experiences to actors outside of the three largest cities and establish partnerships with local civil society organisations and local media.

Considering the state of pro-diversity activism, there is a need for interested actors (old and new) to launch a new wave of pro-diversity actions, which will go beyond journalists and the existing polarisation of media and their audiences. Pro-diversity activities could be an integrative factor for the general public, if carried out above existing political conflicts and connected to financiers with wide popularity, such as UN agencies, Divac Foundation or Novak Djokovic Foundation (actively engaged in pre-school education of children).
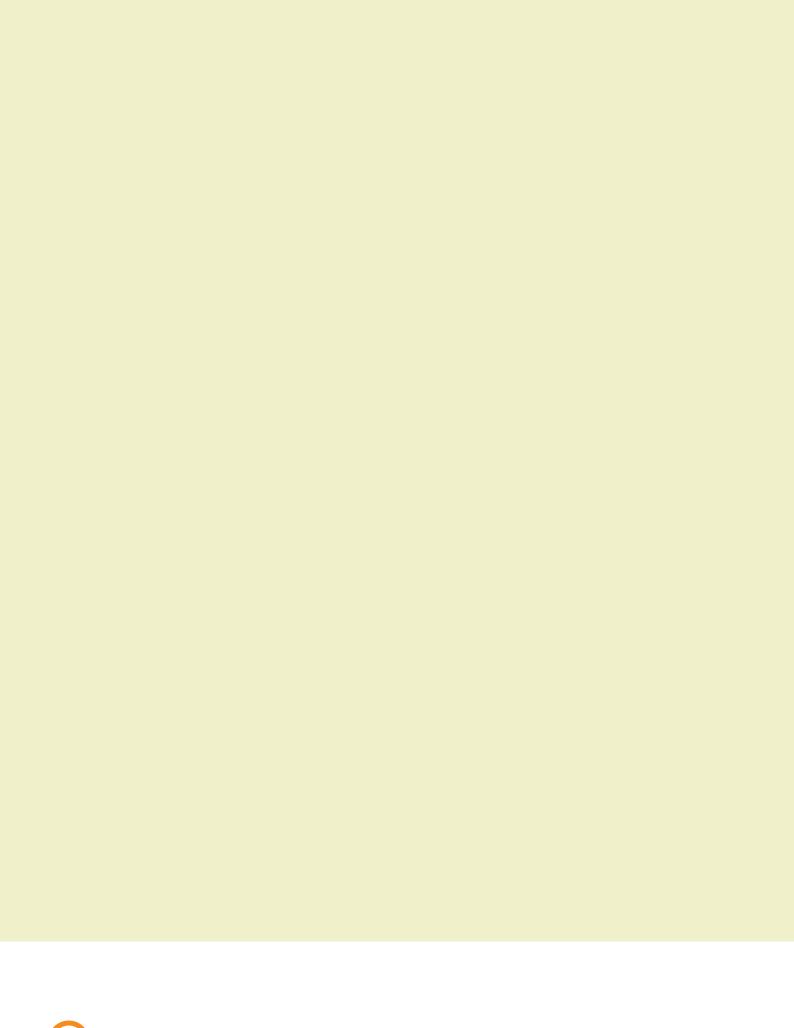
A new, upgraded level of diversity activism should pay attention to the functioning of public service broadcasters who are obliged to take special care of marginalised groups, as well as the implementation of other legislative or regulative norms concerning vulnerable groups, such as the new legislation about the persons with impaired hearing or sight. They should promote the benefits of diversity in media employment policies, which is a highly neglected aspect of the media scene. They should be concerned with the state funding of activities intended to improve the position of vulnerable groups and help investigative journalism organisations scrutinise the spending of public funds. Another opportunity for improvement of activities is the cooperation with the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, which was not mentioned in the recorded activities.

ATTACHMENT

Programme	Project	Part of the project	Marginalised group	Actor
Youth and Media for Democratic Development			Youth	Belgrade Open School
	Young people and journalists for a better media approach to the inclusion of people with disabilities		Youth	Academic Inclusive Association (AIA)+ Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS)
		Handbook for reporting on people with disabilities	Disability	AIA
		Workshop on media representation of persons with disabilities	Disability	AIA
		Training for persons with disabilities to appear in the media	Disability	AIA
		Media coverage of persons with disabilities	Disability	UNS
	Mental health on air		Mental health	Psychological Center for Community Mental Health „MentalHub" + Liceulice
		Dashes and shadows: Monitoring mental health reporting	Mental health	„MentalHub"
	Destigmatizer: media for youth mental health		Mental health	Psychological Center for Community Mental Health „MentalHub" + Factory of Creativity
		How to report on mental health Handbook for journalists	Mental health	„MentalHub"
Small Media Grants Programme			All	NUNS
	One day in minority shoes		All	Agency for Consulting and Media Management Storyteller
	Equally and truthfully: deconstructing gender disinformation in the media		Gender	Novi Sad Journalism School
		Gender disinformation: concept and recommendations	Gender	Novi Sad Journalism School
		Training on analysis and fact-checking of gender disinformation	Gender	Novi Sad Journalism School
	Towards equality - Srem without prejudices		Disability	Newspaper Publishing Society "Sremske Novine"
Small Media Grants Programme			All	Media & Reform Center Nis
	Women in focus - support to media visibility		Gender	Center for Development Support and Initiative „NOVITAS"
Violation of digital rights and freedoms			All	Share Foundation

	Combating discrimination and promoting diversity in Serbia		All	European Union Council of Europe
		Conference - Marking the International Day for Countering Hate Speech	All	Commissioner for Protection of Equality
		Training for journalists on discrimination and hate speech	All	Commissioner for Protection of Equality
		Training for Media Representatives on Human Rights, Discrimination, and Hate Speech	Gender, sexual orientation	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans
	"Our Media": Civil Society Movement for Multiplying Media Literacy and Activism, Preventing Polarization, and Promoting Dialogue		Gender	SEENPM
		High professionalism with limited reach: Self-regulation of the media in Serbia	All	Novi Sad Journalism School
		Grant distribution scheme for CSOs focused on promoting media activism and countering disinformation	Gender	Novi Sad Journalism School
	Reporting Diversity Network – The New Agenda		All	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans
		Monitoring report on hate speech in Serbia	All	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans
		Get involved: Take part in our campaign	All	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans
		Guidelines for professional, credible, and ethical reporting on the LGBTIQ+ community	Sexual orientation	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans
	Media literacy of young people		Gender, sexual orientation, Roma	Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation
	Amendments to the Code of Journalists of Serbia		All	UNS and NUNS
	The way out of the media darkness		Ethnicity	Roma Media Service
		Training for young reporters who will report on the local community in local and youth media	All	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans
		Handbook for ethical media reporting on youth mental health	Youth	National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS)
		Youth in the media mirror 2022	Youth	National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS)
		Media Literacy Empowered	Youth	Club for Youth Empowerment 018
		Training on gender-responsive budgeting for journalists	Gender	Novi Sad Journalism School
		Women and media literacy	Gender	Prijepolje Women Forum
		Workshop "Young Roma males ad females in the media mirror"	Ethnicity	Roma Media Service
		Rulebook on the accessibility of programme content to people with impaired hearing or vision	Disability	Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media
Single action		Handbook for journalists – Discrimination and equality	All	Commissioner for Protection of Equality
		New Law on Electronic Media	Disability	National Assembly of Serbia
		Workshop „Framing the story: How to report on the queer community"	Sexual orientation	Media Diversity Institute Western Balkans