

Interview with John Shearer

(1) Why can you not work with representatives of the RTV BiH Union

Progress in the transformation process at RTV BiH has so far been achieved with full consultation with the Unions. BH Radio 1 and Federation Radio were developed with the agreement of the unions and the employees have signed new contracts.

This said, the May changes in the Union structure are considered by the PBS Founding Board and the Federation TV Governing Board, the bodies managing the changes at RTV BiH as not being in line with the Unions own statute. They feel that because of this they are unable to hold talks with them and I respect this view.

I certainly hope that the Union will resolve these issues soon and that the constructive relationship we had before can be revived.

(2) Will you work on the transformation of RTRS in the same way that you are working on the transformation of RTV BiH.

The Public Broadcasting System is envisaged to incorporate the two entity broadcasters and the state level broadcaster as three separate public companies that work together for their mutual benefit and the benefit of the viewers.

RT RS is an important element in the restructuring. It shares many of the same problems as the other parts of the system. Critics like to emphasise the political problems, but the whole system suffers from a lack of money, inefficient and outdated finance systems and poor equipment. The international community will help provide some new equipment, and help to change the old systems to match the modern age. We are working together with the transition management board and the RT RS management right now to identify the priority areas for new

equipment.

The Governing Bodies of all 3 broadcasters are developing European standard legislation for the system – as you know, the Fed TV law was imposed by the High Representative, but needs to be amended in consultation with the Fed RTV Council. A first draft of the PBS law has been created by the PBS Executive Committee, and the RT RS law has been completed in close consultation between RT RS, OHR and the RS Government, and has had significant input from the Council of Europe and the European Broadcast Union.

(3) Which criteria will be enforced when choosing the employees for PBS and RTV FBiH

The second decision of the High Representative on the restructuring of the Public Broadcaster in BiH is clear on this question. The PBS Founding Board will appoint the General Director and a team of supporting Directors in accordance with the best international recruiting principles, and respecting the principles of the Constitution of BiH.

With regard RTV FBiH the decision states that each of the two channels shall reflect national and cultural diversities, and shall be staffed by people chosen on the basis of the highest professional criteria in accordance with the principles of the Constitution of BiH

Clearly many of those currently employed at RTV BiH will go on to work either at RTV FBiH or PBS.

(4) You say that the national key is not important, will employee's never the less be employed according to an 'ethnic key'?

As I've said the key is professional capability but I did say earlier that the Federation and State Broadcaster should be representative of the people that it serves.

The language of the decision is clear and the requirements therein will be adhered to.

(5) When do you expect the end of the whole transformation process?

The decisions requirements for Radio have been met with Federation Radio and BH Radio 1 and significant progress has been made in setting up the archive, music production, the technical resource division as well as other divisions. The Transition Management Board aims to launch the new Federation Television service in the autumn.

However there are also many difficulties, RTV BiH is still in a very difficult financial situation, the transmission infrastructure, damaged during the conflict, must be improved so that that Federation television and PBS can really be seen in the whole of their designated regions. Also there are still a lot of co-ordination and management changes that must be made. Equally, the High Reps decision requires domestic production to increase to 40% (it is currently at around 6%) which will take new equipment and the redevelopment of a production culture.

I am not going to put a specific time limit on the completion of the whole process, but with the support of the Governing Bodies and the staff, it is hoped that the principle elements of the new system can be in place by Spring next year.

Other systems and structures changes will follow this.