

RESEARCH REPORT

THE IMPORTANCE OF APPEARANCES: HOW SUSPECTS AND ACCUSED PERSONS ARE PRESENTED IN PUBLIC AND IN THE MEDIA

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Executive summary

The principle of presumption of innocence is contained in the chapter on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, according to which everyone is presumed innocent and may not be held guilty of a criminal offence until such guilt is proven by a binding court judgment. This material constitutional right is reflected in all subsequent laws and subordinate acts and in the statutes of associations and other social institutions as part of the national constitutional order. Its importance is constantly to be pointed out, and the particularly sensitive area in relation to this concept is media coverage of criminal offenses where it is necessary to deal with caution so as not to violate the principle of the presumption of innocence.

Rules on reporting and media presentation of suspects and accused persons are fragmented in the provisions of several laws regulating court proceedings as well as in rules referring to the media. Therefore, there are no special provisions regarding suspects and accused persons, but rather general rules apply to those categories as well, with the exception of certain specific legal provisions relating to children.

In Croatia, guidelines for journalists on reporting about suspects or accused persons can be found in the Code of Honor of the Croatian Journalists' Association which provides general definitions of the rights and duties of Croatian journalists, as well as in the Ethical Code for Journalists and Creative Staff of Croatian Radiotelevision. However, most media platforms in Croatia have no (published) code of ethics and according to the desk research, only Croatian Radiotelevision and Večernji list newspaper published their ethical codes and have them available on their official websites.

The Croatian media landscape is characterized by "strong commercial television service providers, a declining print sector and a vibrant mix of traditional and alternative online websites". There are three media sectors: public, commercial and "third sector" (non profit, independent or community media). The Croatian media system is characterized by "a weak journalistic profession which has difficulty in attaining a satisfactory level of autonomy, a strong relationship between politics and the media (...) and a strong role for the state in the media system (...)".

For purposes of this study, random sampling of articles was conducted in: 5 national daily newspapers with the largest circulation (Večernji list, Jutarnji list, 24 sata, Novi list, Slobodna Dalmacija), 3 weekly newspapers (7 dnevno, Globus, Nacional), 3 news portals not affiliated with print (Index.hr, Net.hr, T-portal) and in TV stories broadcast during the main news bulletins in the prime time on public-broadcasting channel (HRT1 Dnevnik) and on 2 private channels (NovaTV and RTL) with a primary focus on the news and with biggest viewership to the news. In the sampling period, a total of 245 news items were collected. The presumption of innocence was not mentioned in any of the 20 most relevant articles in all the media.

According to overall results, the majority of TV news are examples of good reporting in line with standards. In a very few cases it can be argued that some ethical standards have been violated - when using the photos of the victim or violence, when using the sensationalist words in reporting about suspects or accused, or when using archive materials or played scenes without a clear indication thereof.

In newspaper articles and online portals, the title of the article is often written in a sensationalist manner, not using the correct term for accused, suspects or charged persons, while in the text of the article those terms are usually stated clearly and accurately. Headlines contain words such as "killer", "hijacker", "smuggler", while the text itself contains terms like "suspected of murder" or "suspected of stealing". Examples of this type of reporting have been recorded in more than half of the analyzed news. Daily press and internet portals often publish articles containing initials, age, origin, status, place of residence and even occupation of suspects despite the fact that they are still under investigation and that their origin and status are not relevant to the story. In relation to the allegations of journalists who on a regular basis proclaim defendants guilty in the headlines, according to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, no state responsibility of the Republic of Croatia for the violation of the presumption of innocence has been determined so far.

It is noted that media are more careful when it comes to high profile cases and publicly exposed persons, so they are likely to use expressions such as "suspect", "defendant", "accused" and "convicted" correctly and accurately, in accordance with criminal law provisions. Also, in such cases, statements of the state attorney's press release are used by quoting their segments or transmitting them entirely.

1) Overview of legal framework of presumption of innocence and media regulations in Croatia

Presumption of innocence principle is enshrined in the section on Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. Article 28 of the Constitution stipulates: “Everyone is presumed innocent and may not be held guilty of a criminal offence until such guilt is proven by a binding court judgment.” This substantive constitutional right is reflected in all subsequent laws and by-laws, and in the statutes of the associations and other societal institutions as a part of the constitutional order defined in the section on Basic Provisions of the Constitution. Article 5 of the Constitution stipulates: “In the Republic of Croatia, laws shall comply with the Constitution. Other regulations shall comply with the Constitution and law. All persons shall be obliged to abide by the Constitution and law and respect the legal order of the Republic of Croatia.”¹

Regulations regarding reporting on and representation by the media of suspects and accused persons are fragmented in provisions of the several acts concerning court proceedings and rules regarding the media. There are no specific provisions that concern suspects and accused persons, but rather general rules that are applicable to the respective category. However, certain provisions explicitly mention children as they are generally recognized as a group that requires additional protection no matter their status in the case in question.

According to Article 5(6) of the Court Rules of Procedure², the president of the court decides to grant permission for film, television and photographic recording of court hearings when it is in the public interest, unless otherwise provided for in a special law.

According to Article 395(3) of the Criminal Procedure Act³, photographic, film, television and other recordings with technical devices may not be made in the courtroom, unless they are made for court purposes. In exceptional cases, when it is of significance for public interest, the president of the higher court may permit a film or television recording and the president of the court may permit a photographic recording.

The Media Act⁴ prescribes media principles and obligations, which in Article 16 (1) regulate that the media shall be obliged to respect privacy, dignity, reputation and honour of citizens, especially of children, youth and family, irrespective of gender and sexual orientation. The publishing of information that discloses the identity of a child, if such information jeopardizes the wellbeing of a child, shall be prohibited. The Media Act does not entail specific provisions relating to the presentation of suspects and violation of the presumption of innocence. However, according to its Article 55 every person mentioned in the media with regard to a criminal

¹ The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (consolidated text), available at: <https://www.sabor.hr/en/constitution-republic-croatia-consolidated-text>

² Court Rules of Procedure (OG 37/14, 49/14, 08/15, 35/15, 123/15, 45/16, 29/17, 33/17 – Correction, 34/17, 57/17, 101/18, 119/18)

³ Criminal Procedure Act (OG 152/08, 76/09, 80/11, 121/11, 91/12, 143/12, 56/13, 145/13, 152/14, 70/17)

⁴ Media Act (OG 59/04, 84/11, 81/13)

complaint, investigation request or the launching of investigation or penal proceedings shall have the right within three months after a decision has been made to dismiss the criminal complaint or to reject the investigation request, that is, after a legally valid decision has been made to halt the proceedings or a legally valid acquitting sentence has been made, to request from the publisher to publish information thereof.⁵

The Electronic Media Act⁶ in Article 12 (1) prescribes that audio and/or audiovisual services jeopardizing the constitutional order and national security shall not be allowed. Article 12 (3) contains more detailed provision concerning children and prescribes that it shall not be allowed to publish information revealing the identity of a child up to 18 years of age involved in cases of any type of violence, regardless of the child's status as witness, victim or perpetrator, or in cases of attempted suicide or committed suicide, as well as to introduce details of a child's family affairs and private life.

When it comes to compensation of damages, the Media Act as a specific piece of legislation refers to general regulations of the law on obligations prescribed by the Civil Obligations Act⁷ regarding issues that are not regulated by the Media Act itself.

According to Article 27 of the Media Act⁸, a journalist shall have the right to express their standpoint with regard to all events, occurrences, persons, subjects and activities. A journalist's work contract may not be terminated, their salary decreased or their position on the editorial board altered, the contracted income or part thereof decreased or suspended because of an expressed standpoint.

When it comes to the liability for damages, the Media Act establishes the liability of the publisher for damage. Namely, according to its Article 21 (1), the publisher who by publishing information in the media causes damage to another person shall be obliged to pay compensation, except in cases stipulated by this Act. It further prescribes in its paragraph (3) that, unless otherwise stipulated by that Act, regulations on obligatory relations shall be applied to the establishment of liability for damage. According to Article 22 (1), a non-pecuniary damage shall be compensated, as a rule, by publishing a correction of the information with the publisher's apology as well as with the payment of compensation pursuant to the general regulations of the law on obligations.⁹

Even though the Media Act directs responsibility for compensation for damages at media publishers (exceptionally the editor-in-chief of the media), domestic legal practice has led to the fact that, apart from a lawsuit directed against a publisher, the injured party can press charges directly against the author of the information, meaning the journalist. The consequence of such practice is that the injured party can choose freely the law and the legal basis according to

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Electronic Media Act (OG 153/09, 84/11, 94/13,136/13)

⁷ Civil Obligations Act (OG 35/05, 41/08, 125/11, 78/15, 29/18)

⁸ Media Act (OG 59/04, 84/11, 81/13)

⁹ Ibid.

which the claim for compensation of damages caused by the publication of information in the media will be processed, thus choosing the person to be charged with alleged violation.¹⁰

Even though it does not establish the responsibility of the media outlets, the best known case before the European Court of Human Rights concerning violation of the presumption of innocence through media statements was *Peša* case in which the Court determined the violation of the presumption of innocence according to Article 6, p.2 of the European Convention. The applicant was the vice president of the Croatian Privatization Fund (HFP), a state agency responsible for privatization of all state-owned assets, who was together with two other employees arrested in June 2007 on suspicion of receiving the bribe. During the proceedings against the applicant, several highest state officials (Head of the police, the Chief state attorney, the Prime minister and the President of the Republic of Croatia) issued statements to the media in which they expressed their position on the applicant's guilt. The Court found that the presumption of innocence was violated given that at a time of the statements criminal proceedings had not yet been initiated in accordance with the national law.¹¹ Media statements made by high officials in this phase could have significantly affected the perception of public with regards to applicant's innocence.

However, Article 6 p. 2 of the Convention does not contain a positive obligation of the state in relation to statements made by private persons and the media regarding guilt, which means that statements made by private persons who are not public officials as well as media reporters do not impose a responsibility of the state for the violation of the presumption of innocence.¹² Harmonizing of the presumption innocence with the right of the public to be informed is a very sensitive matter. With regards to economic criminal offences which represent a special point of focus of the public of the Republic of Croatia, the European Court of Human Rights itself acknowledged the need to respect the right of public to be informed from the very beginning of the process. However, that can not justify allegations stating that a defendant has undoubtedly committed a criminal offense, especially when it comes to statements coming from the highest state officials like in *Peša* case. In relation to the allegations of journalists who on a regular basis proclaim defendants guilty in the headlines, according to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights no state responsibility for the violation of the presumption of innocence has been determined so far.¹³

¹⁰ Jakovljević, D.: Non-material damage caused by the information published in the media, *Pravnik : časopis za pravna i društvena pitanja*, Vol.51 No.101, May 2017, available at: https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=276637

¹¹ M. Pajčić, L. Valković: Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights Against the Republic of Croatia for Violation of the Right to a Fair Trial (Article 6 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms), *Hrvatski ljetopis za kazneno pravo i praksu* (Zagreb), vol. 19, No. 2/2012, p. 778-781, available at: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/110889>

¹² *Ibid.*, page 778

¹³ *Ibid.*, page 792

2) Overview of journalistic guidelines in Croatia

In Croatia, the guidelines for journalists regarding reporting on suspects or accused persons can be found in the Journalists Code of Honor of Croatian Journalist Association¹⁴ and in the Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff of Croatian Radiotelevision¹⁵.

The Journalists Code of Honor of Croatian Journalist Association¹⁶ is a document that brings general definitions of the rights and duties of Croatian journalists. In Article 17, it highlights that “the constitutional principle of presumption of innocence of the accused is to be respected when reporting on court proceedings, as well as the dignity, integrity and feelings of all parties to the dispute. In criminal proceedings, journalists are obliged to respect the right to protect the identity of protected witnesses, dependents, whistleblowers, and injured parties, who must not be disclosed without their consent, except in cases of extreme public interest.” Also, in Article 15 it is pointed out that “special attention, vigilance and responsibility are required when reporting on suicides, accidents, personal tragedies, illnesses, deaths and violent acts. A journalist should avoid interviewing and presenting persons directly or indirectly affected by these events, except in the case of an exceptional public interest. In this case, the journalist is obliged to take into account the honor, reputation and dignity of the person he or she is reporting on.”¹⁷ Special emphasis is given to the protection of the identity of a child or a minor involved in cases of criminal offense, regardless of whether a child or a minor is a witness, victim, suspect or defendant, in a way that “the identity of the child or minor is allowed to be revealed only exceptionally, when it is in the public interest and does not endanger the welfare of a child or minor, and with the consent of the parent or guardian of a child or a minor, or when it for the benefit of a child seeking public bodies”.¹⁸

The Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff of Croatian Radiotelevision also in its Article 21 contains a provision on the duty to respect the presumption of innocence as follows: “In reporting on crimes and court proceedings, journalists and editors must respect the constitutional and legal presumption that a person is innocent until a valid court verdict has declared him guilty. The expressions such as “suspect”, “defendant”, “accused” and “convicted” have to be used correctly and accurately, in accordance with criminal law.”¹⁹ When it comes to the data that could reveal the identity of persons involved in criminal investigation, they can be published, but they can not contain names or other information about the identity of persons involved in the process, if they are not previously published by the police or another state body or if they are already known from other trusted and allowed sources²⁰. It is also stated that it is allowed to publish data from a public trial, but “they should not be extracted and should not be

¹⁴ Croatian Journalist Association, Journalists Code of Honor, available at: <https://www.hnd.hr/dokumenti>

¹⁵ Croatian Radiotelevision, Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff, available at https://www.hrt.hr/fileadmin/video/Eticki_kodeks_za_novinare_i_kreativno_osoblje_HRT_a.pdf

¹⁶ See footnote 14

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See footnote 15

²⁰ Ibid.

tendentious to any person”²¹. It is not allowed to comment proper judgements or to publish data on juveniles trials or another court process closed to the public.

The Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) is an independent non-for-profit professional journalist association that was founded in 1910. It is a member of the International Journalist Federation (IFJ) and the European Journalist Federation (EFJ) and it has more than 2500 members. The CJA body called the Ethical Council is in charge for protection and implementation of the Journalists Code of Honor, that contains articles concerning issues on presentation of suspects and accused people - Articles 15, 17, and 20. The Ethical Council is a self-regulator and it can give an opinion about the breach of the Journalists Code of Honor and can give a reprimand or sanction. Among its decisions from 2015-2018, there are none concerning the presumption of innocence or presentation of accused or suspects²².

The Union of Journalists of Croatia (SNH), founded in 1990, aims to protect the fundamental working, social and professional rights of journalists in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, the Labor Code, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Conventions of the International Labor Organization. In its documents and announcements it does not mention the presentation of suspects and accused.²³

The CJA Ethical Council, as a self-regulator of media space in Croatia, has the power to reprimand or sanction a member of the CJA according to Article 9 of its Rules of procedure.²⁴ Following the hearing and voting, in milder cases the Ethical Council may reprimand a journalist, reminding him of his obligations and the duty to comply with ethical and professional standards. In more difficult cases a severe reprimand warning him of seriously violating ethical and professional standard is given, whereas in the most severe cases when violations of the Journalists Code of Honor seriously compromise the dignity of the profession the Council brings a decision on exclusion from CJA. On the latter, the Council is obliged to inform the Executive Board, the Central Committee of the CJA and the CJA administrative staff.²⁵

The Electronic Media Council manages the Electronic Media Agency and carries out the duties of a regulatory body in the area of electronic media. According to Article 24 of the Electronic Media Act²⁶ “the audiovisual or radio programmes shall in particular broadcast truthful information, respect human dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms and contribute to the respect of other people’s opinions and beliefs, as well as contribute to the free forming of opinions, versatile and objective informing of listeners and viewers, and to their education and entertainment(...)”.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Available at: <https://hnd.hr/zakljucci-novinarskog-vijeca-casti>

²³ Available at: <http://www.snh.hr/index.php?jezik=hr&idMenu=1>

²⁴ Croatian Journalist Association, Rules of Procedure, 9 May 2017, available at: <https://www.hnd.hr/dokumenti>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Electronic Media Act (OG 153/09, 84/11, 94/13,136/13)

According to its Article 25 the audiovisual or radio programmes shall meet the following conditions: events shall be presented realistically and different approaches and opinions shall be appropriately represented, news shall truthfully and correctly present facts and event and be impartial, professionally correct and encourage free forming of opinion. According to Article 82, a fine from the range of 100,000 - 1,000,000 HRK shall be imposed for an offence on a legal person who broadcasts audiovisual or radio programmes that do not fulfil those obligations.²⁷

The Electronic Media Council is authorized, under Article 76 of the Electronic Media Act, to decide on temporary or permanent termination of a concession if it establishes that a media service provider publishes audiovisual or radio programs contrary to Article 12 of the Electronic Media Act which stipulates that "in audio and/or audiovisual services it shall be prohibited to promote, favour the promotion of and spreading of hatred or discrimination based on race or ethnic affiliation or colour, gender, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, property, trade union membership, education, social status, marital or family status, age, health condition, disability, genetic heritage, native identity, expression or sexual orientation, as well as anti-Semitism and xenophobia, ideas of the fascist, nationalist, communist and other totalitarian regimes."²⁸

With regards to violations of the provisions of the Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff of HRT, the Ethics Committee of the HRT has the right and duty to make an opinion on violations of the provisions of Ethics Code. According to Article 50, a violation of Ethics Code may be filed by Croatian Radiotelevision employees and external associates within the project they are working on against the journalists and creative staff covered by the Code.²⁹

Pursuant to Article 59, the Ethics Committee issues opinions with the majority of votes of all its members according to which reported persons might be assessed as: "not having violated the Code", "violated the Code" and "severely violated the Code". The opinion on the latter may also be brought in case a violation of the provisions of the Code is repeated by the same person within a period of less than two years.³⁰ The Code does not foresee sanctions that arise after the committee brings its opinion. A person who has been found to have breached the Code may be subject to measures relating to breach of employment duties.

The majority of media platforms in Croatia do not have (published) ethical codes. According to desk research, only Croatian Radiotelevision and Večernji list - daily newspaper published their Ethical Codes which are available on their official web sites.

Daily newspaper of Večernji list published their Ethical Codex that does not contain provisions regarding presumption of innocence, but it does contain provision regarding reporting on crime as follows: "Večernji list will avoid disclosing the identity of relatives or friends of accused or

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Croatian Radiotelevision, Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff, available at https://www.hrt.hr/fileadmin/video/Eticki_kodeks_za_novinare_i_kreativno_osoblje_HRT_a.pdf

³⁰ Ibid.

convicted persons without their consent. Particular attention should be paid to the sensitive position of children who are witnesses or victims of crime. This should not be interpreted as restricting the right to report on judicial proceedings.”³¹

Compliance with the provisions of the Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff of Croatian Radiotelevision is supervised by the Ethics Committee of the Croatian Radiotelevision and has the right and duty to make an opinion on violations of the provisions of Ethics Code. According to Article 50, a violation of Ethics Code may be filed by Croatian Radiotelevision employees and external associates within the project they are working on against the journalists and creative staff covered by the Code.³²

Compliance with the provisions of the Ethical Codex of the Večernji list daily newspaper is supervised by the Council of Honor which gives its ethical judgment based on this Ethical Codex, The Journalists Code of Honor of Croatian Journalist Association, the Media Act and other relevant legislation. It can be addressed by readers, sources of information, any person mentioned in the media, members of the editorial staff, editor-in-chief and publisher.³³

There are no specific provisions on guidance and the intervention of editors when it comes to reporting of journalists on suspects and accused. However, certain general rules regarding hierarchy and rules of editors’ intervention may be applicable accordingly.

According to the Journalist Code of Honor of the Croatian Journalist Association, an editor shall not ask a journalist to work against his professional ethical principles. Media content that has been significantly edited by shortening or large interventions by the editor which leads to significant change of content may be published only with the author’s consent.³⁴

The journalists and editors roles and relations are defined in detail in the Ethical Code of HRT. According to Article 44, the responsible editor has the right to intervene in the preparation or completion of the content only if he/she considers the Code, professional standards or laws are violated, and is obliged to report his intention to the journalist, editors and supervisors.³⁵

When it comes to laws, according to Media Act³⁶, a publisher who causes damage to others with information published is obliged to provide compensation. Editor-in-Chief is responsible for all published information. This also applies to the editorial processing of published information (selection of headings, subheadings, text below the photo etc.) The Statute of the Media is a

³¹ Etički kodeks Večernjeg lista, available at: http://media.vecernji-list.hr/pdf/Eticki_kodeks_Vecernjeg_lista.pdf

³² Croatian Radiotelevision, Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff, available at https://www.hrt.hr/fileadmin/video/Eticki_kodeks_za_novinare_i_kreativno_osoblje_HRT_a.pdf

³³ Etički kodeks Večernjeg lista, available at: http://media.vecernji-list.hr/pdf/Eticki_kodeks_Vecernjeg_lista.pdf

³⁴ Croatian Journalist Association, Journalists Code of Honor, available at: <https://www.hnd.hr/dokumenti>

³⁵ Croatian Radiotelevision, Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff, available at https://www.hrt.hr/fileadmin/video/Eticki_kodeks_za_novinare_i_kreativno_osoblje_HRT_a.pdf

³⁶ Media Act (OG 59/04, 84/11, 81/13)

self-regulatory act that specifically determines the role of journalists in the process of appointing and dismissing the editor-in-chief, freedom of work and the responsibility of journalists.³⁷

The Agency for Electronic Media (AEM) is an autonomous and independent legal entity with public authority entered into the register. The Agency adopts the Statute that Croatian Parliament confirms. The bodies of the Agency are the Director of the Agency and the Electronic Media Council, which is the administrative body of the Agency. The Director of the Agency represents and manages the Agency and is responsible for the work of the Agency's professional services. The President of the Electronic Media Council is also the Director of the Agency, and is appointed by the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia.³⁸

The Ethical Council of HRT has 9 members, that are elected on a mandate of 2 years. They are elected from chief editors of HRT, production director, HRT editors and journalists.³⁹

The HRT Program Council represents and protects the public interest by conducting program oversight and improving radio and audiovisual programs, as well as other audio and audiovisual and multimedia services. The Council has eleven members and the Croatian Parliament is electing and dismissing nine members of the HRT Council. Election of members is done by the Croatian Parliament on the basis of a public invitation published and implemented by the Information and Media Committee of the Croatian Parliament. Two members of the HRT Council are elected and dismissed by journalists and other HRT employees who are actively involved in the creation of HRT programs as provided by the HRT Act and the HRT Statute.⁴⁰

3) Croatian media landscape

The Croatian media landscape is characterized by “strong commercial television providers, a declining print sector, and a vibrant mix of traditional and alternative online websites”.⁴¹ There are three media sectors: public (that includes HINA and HRT), commercial (radio, TV, newspapers, portals) and a “third sector” (non profit, independent or community media).⁴² The Croatian media system is also characterized by “a weak journalistic profession which has difficulty in attaining a satisfactory level of autonomy, a strong relationship between politics and the media (increasingly more on a personal than institutional level), and a strong role for the

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Agencija za elektroničke medije, available at: <https://www.e-mediji.hr/hr/aem/vijece-agencija/agencija/>

³⁹ Croatian Radiotelevision, Ethics Code for Journalists and Creative Staff, available at https://www.hrt.hr/fileadmin/video/Eticki_kodeks_za_novinare_i_kreativno_osoblje_HRT_a.pdf

⁴⁰ Programsko vijeće HRT-a, available at: <https://www.hrt.hr/organizacija/programsko-vijece/>

⁴¹ Digital News Report 2018, Croatia, available at: <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2018/croatia-2018/>

⁴² Radni materijali za raspravu o medijskoj politici Republike Hrvatske 2015–2020, Prvi dio, Nacionalni izvještaj o medijima, available at: <https://www.min-kulture.hr/userdocs/images/NAJNOVIJE%20NOVOSTI/Radni%20materijali%20-%20Izvjestaj%20-%20Uvod%20i%20mapa%20dokumenta.pdf>

state in the media system, which through its regulatory, protective, distributive and redistributive roles compensates for the weakness of the journalistic profession and media self regulation.”⁴³

According to the Reuters Institute Digital News report in 2017, “a key media issue over the past year has been the threat to the editorial independence of the public service broadcaster (HRT) after a large number of journalists and editors were demoted or reassigned and the head of HRT was replaced following parliamentary elections.”⁴⁴ At the same time, the latest research on ratings of TV channels in Croatia show that HRT has been losing its long-held primacy to commercial rivals, as the Nova TV is continuously number one in terms of news, but also it holds a lead position in most watched shows in 2018⁴⁵. Nova TV shows as the top source of news among all the media (61%), followed by the television branch of the Croatian RTL in second place (59%)⁴⁶. Also, the Nova TV and RTL are the TV stations which are graded the best, while HRT stations have the worst overall impression. When it comes to local TV stations, they are far less watched than national TV stations. Among the local TV stations, the most watched are Jabuka TV, Mreža ZG and Z1 television.⁴⁷ According to the list of television service providers of AEM⁴⁸, there are 28 different TV providers, commercial and public and 5 of them have a national frequency license. HRT, as a public service broadcaster, has 4 channels and it is mainly financed by viewer/listener licence fees and advertising. The activity, function, content of public services, financing, management, scope and mode of operation of HRT is defined by The Law on the Croatian Radio Television⁴⁹ and it defines HRT as public institution that is independent of any political influence and commercial interest. HRT is managed by the Director General of HRT, that is appointed by Croatian Parliament for a term of five years, in accordance with the Law on Croatian Radio and Television and the Statute of Croatian Radio and Television. The “publicness” of HRT is guaranteed through Council for HRT Programming, a body that has 11 members, elected by the Croatian Parliament after a public contest open to all citizens and institutions. The independence of HRT is realised particularly by stable and independent financing and through the program and editorial independence of HRT. However, the 2018 Report on Joint International Mission (JIM) on Press Freedom in Croatia states that “The government must reform the legislation governing HRT so as to guarantee the station’s independence. Notably, this process should include changing the method of appointing the HRT

⁴³ Peruško, Zrinjka. [Rediscovering the Mediterranean Characteristics of the Croatian Media System](#) // Eastern European politics and societies, 27 (2013)

⁴⁴ Digital News Report 2017, Croatia, available at: <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2017/croatia-2017/>

⁴⁵ Analiza gledanosti televizijskog programa u Hrvatskoj, available at: <https://www.e-mediji.hr/hr/analiza-gledanosti-televizijskog-programa-u-hrvatskoj/>

⁴⁶ Digital News Report 2018, Croatia, available at: <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2018/croatia-2018/>

⁴⁷ Analiza gledanosti televizijskog programa u Hrvatskoj, available at: <https://www.e-mediji.hr/hr/analiza-gledanosti-televizijskog-programa-u-hrvatskoj/>

⁴⁸ Knjiga pružatelja medijskih usluga televizije, available at: <https://www.e-mediji.hr/hr/pruzatelji-medijskih-usluga/televizijski-nakladnici/>

⁴⁹ Law on Croatian Radiotelevision (OG [137/10](#), [76/12](#), [78/16](#), [46/17](#), [73/17](#), [94/18](#))

director general and other HRT governing structures in line with European standards on public broadcasting⁵⁰.

Even though television is still a primary news source in Croatia, 88% of viewers use online sources to access the news.⁵¹ The most read internet portal is Index.hr, that is digitally born, not related to press - it is in the top 5 sites in Croatia, and number one in news portals⁵². Other most read portals are the ones connected to press - daily tabloid extension *24sata.hr* (owned by Styria Digital), the most popular non-tabloid daily *Jutarnji list* (owned by Hanza Media) and *Večernji list* (owned by Styria Digital) and then other born digital portals like *Net.hr* (owned by Telegram Media Group and *T-portal* (owned by T-HT).⁵³ While these media in Croatia continue to hold the top reader and most popular ones year by year, a number of right-wing portals are also proving popular.⁵⁴ Also, recent research shows that the most read news content on online portals is local news⁵⁵ while more recently specialised portals which are tailored to the certain profile of the readers are having higher audience share and more influence⁵⁶. The data also shows trends in using social media as a portal for entry into a variety of content, including online portals, but also the phenomenon of disinformation and hate speech. Therefore, the recommendation from JIM states that "The Electronic Media Council should be more active in cases where electronic media are not respecting professional standards, especially in cases of use of hate language in local media (local TV channels)" as well as it indicated the need for "reparation of a media strategy for Croatia with active work and feedback from all media players".⁵⁷

While the online sources on news are rising and changing the media landscape, all daily printed papers in Croatia are facing an overall decline, which involves a 10% fall in the daily print and 15% in weekly printed newspaper circulation. The most read daily newspaper in the past 4 years is „24sata“, and is followed by „Jutarnji list“ and „Večernji list“. Observed by ownership groups, the largest market share in 2017 has Styria AG, between 50 and 60 percent, the owner of „24 sata“ i „Večernji list“, while Hanza Media („Jutarnji list“ i „Slobodna Dalmacija“) has

⁵⁰ Press freedom in Croatia: Hate speech and Hope for change Report on the January 2018 Joint International Mission (JIM), available at: <http://seemo.org/assets/pdf/Croatia-Report-final%203152018.pdf>

⁵¹ Digital News Report 2018, Croatia, available at: <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2018/croatia-2018/>

⁵² Alexa top sites Croatia, available at: <https://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/HR>

⁵³ Analiza tržišta elektroničkih publikacija, Institut za razvoj i međunarodne odnose, Zagreb 2017, available at: <https://www.e-mediji.hr/hr/pruzatelji-medijskih-usluga/istrazivanja-i-analize/objavljena-analiza-trzista-elektronickih-publikacija/>

⁵⁴ Digital News Report 2018, Croatia, available at: <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2018/croatia-2018/>

⁵⁵ Analiza tržišta elektroničkih publikacija, Institut za razvoj i međunarodne odnose, Zagreb 2017, available at: <https://www.e-mediji.hr/hr/pruzatelji-medijskih-usluga/istrazivanja-i-analize/objavljena-analiza-trzista-elektronickih-publikacija/>

⁵⁶ Specijalizirani portali postaju dominantni, available at: <https://www.hnd.hr/specijalizirani-portali-postaju-dominantni>

⁵⁷ Press freedom in Croatia: Hate speech and Hope for change Report on the January 2018 Joint International Mission (JIM), dostupno na: <http://seemo.org/assets/pdf/Croatia-Report-final%203152018.pdf>

between 30-40 %. The third biggest owner is JOJ Media House, a.s. from Slovakia, that holds Slobodna Dalmacija and Novi list.⁵⁸ The best selling printed weekly in Croatia is "7Dnevno" (owned by Eurocinik d.o.o) while two political weeklies with the largest audience share are *Globus*, owned by EPH, and *Nacional* owned by NCL Media Grupa d.o.o.⁵⁹

Considering media ownership patterns, there is a lack of transparency in data collection and regulation. The obligation to report ownership information to the CCE (Media Act) or the Electronic Media Council (EMC) (Electronic Media Act) lies with media outlets themselves and it is not clear from the Law which body is competent to oversee the implementation of the provisions. Information about ownership is not easily accessible and the recommendation from JIM is: "Legal measures providing for transparency of media ownership must be updated to ensure a sufficient framework for monitoring and compliance".⁶⁰

Regarding media freedoms in Croatia, according to the World Press Freedom Index 2018, Croatia is in 69th place⁶¹ due to both the ever-growing involvement of public authorities in the work of public media and attacks on and intimidation of journalists, especially those who investigate controversial subjects such as war crimes, organised crime and corruption⁶². In 2016, following an official visit to Croatia, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concerns related to the media freedoms in Croatia - about the inadequate response by the authorities to the reported cases of physical attacks, death threats and intimidation against journalists. The Commissioner urged the authorities to ensure that pluralism of the public media service and the independence of the broadcast regulator, key elements for media pluralism and freedom of the media, are preserved and protected.⁶³

4) Research methodology and sampling

For this research, random sampling of articles was conducted in: 5 national daily newspapers with the largest circulation (Večernji list, Jutarnji list, 24 sata, Novi list, Slobodna Dalmacija), 3 weekly newspapers (7dnevno, Globus, Nacional), 3 news portals not affiliated with print (Index.hr, Net.hr, T-portal) and in TV stories broadcast during the main news bulletins in the prime time on public-broadcasting channel (HRT1 Dnevnik) and on 2 private channels (NovaTV and RTL) with primary focus on the news and with biggest viewership to the news.

⁵⁸ Istraživanje tiska u 2017 godini, available at: <http://www.aztn.hr/ea/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Istra%C5%BEivanje-tr%C5%BEi%C5%A1ta-tiska-u-2017.pdf>

⁵⁹ Does media policy promote media freedom and independence? The case of Croatia, available at: <https://bib.irb.hr/prikazi-rad?rad=570124>

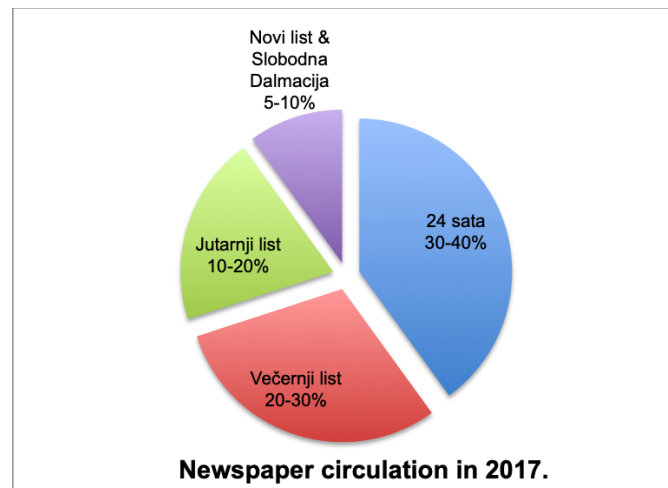
⁶⁰ Press freedom in Croatia: Hate speech and Hope for change Report on the January 2018 Joint International Mission (JIM), dostupno na: <http://seemo.org/assets/pdf/Croatia-Report-final%203152018.pdf>

⁶¹ Reporters Without Borders, available at: <https://rsf.org/en/croatia>

⁶² Human Rights In Croatia: Overview Of 2017, available at: http://www.kucaljudskihprava.hr/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/KLJP_PregledStanja_ENGWeb.pdf

⁶³ Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/croatia-high-time-to-create-a-tolerant-and-inclusive-society>

The information on the reach and ratings of daily newspapers are shown in Figure 1:



Source: <http://www.aztn.hr/ea/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Istra%C5%BEivanje-tr%C5%BEi%C5%A1ta-tiska-u-2017.pdf>

The total circulation of informative daily newspapers in Croatia in 2017 was 66.1 millions of copies⁶⁴, so the data shows that 24 sata sell between 26.44 millions and 19.83 millions and of copies, Večernji list between 19.83 millions and 13.22 millions, Jutarnji list between 13.22 millions and 6.61 million of copies, while Novi List, Slobodna Dalmacija that are regional daily newspapers between 6.61 million and 3.306 million of copies in 2017. All the newspapers have its portals related to its printed version, and the most read one is 24 sata, with 1.7 million of real users, or 65.16% of Internet reach.⁶⁵

The most read Internet news portal according to Alexa rating is Index.hr, with 3.98 daily pageviews per visitor⁶⁶ and it is the leading news website and sources of news online according to Reuters Digital News Report for Croatia, with 57% of users. It is followed by Net.hr (42%) and T-portal (40%).⁶⁷ According to Gemius Audience Report for Croatia for October 2018, Net.hr has 1 448 103 real users and T-portal 1 440 347 users⁶⁸.

The latest TV viewing analysis for September 2018 shows that the NovaTV generally has the most viewers, but also in the prime time (from 19 to 23 hours).⁶⁹ Graphical comparative analysis of the 15 most watched channels for in the time period of 19 to 23h is shown in Figure 2:

⁶⁴ Istraživanje tiska u 2017 godini, available at: <http://www.aztn.hr/ea/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Istra%C5%BEivanje-tr%C5%BEi%C5%A1ta-tiska-u-2017.pdf>

⁶⁵ Available at: <https://rating.gemius.com/hr/tree/8>

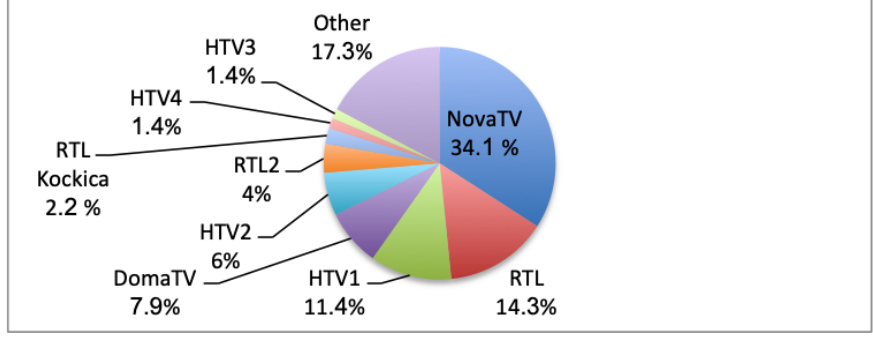
⁶⁶ Alexa top sites Croatia, available at: <https://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/HR>

⁶⁷ Digital News Report 2018, Croatia, available at: <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2018/croatia-2018/>

⁶⁸ Available at: <https://rating.gemius.com/hr/tree/8>

⁶⁹ Analiza gledanosti televizijskog programa u Hrvatskoj, available at: <https://www.e-mediji.hr/hr/analiza-gledanosti-televizijskog-programa-u-hrvatskoj/>

TV 19-23 h viewers in %, September 2018



Source: <https://www.e-mediji.hr/hr/analiza-gledanosti-televizijskog-programa-u-hrvatskoj/gledanost-tv-programa-rujan-2018/>

In the sampling period, 245 items of news were collected in total. The newspaper samples were collected from printed copies and stored in physically database, as well as photos of the articles that were stored digitally. The internet portal news items were viewed in the evening and all the news items published on that day were stored digitally. The TV broadcast reports were filmed from the official online platforms of the broadcasters and stored digitally.

The key words used to identify the news for sampling were:

police	policija
court	sud
prosecution	procesuiranje, kazneni progon
criminal offense	kazneno djelo
investigation	istraga
authorities	tijela vlasti državna tijela institucije
lawyer	odvjetnik/ca
suspicion	sumnja

crime	zločin
suspect	osumnjičen(a), osumnjičenik/ca
defendant	okrivljen(a), okrivljenik/ca
accused	optuženi(a)/ osumnjičen(a)
criminal case	kazneni slučaj
delict	delikt
charged	optuženi(a), optuženik/ica
arrested	uhićen(a), uhićenik/ica

The selection of the news was based on: keywords match, precise reference to real suspects or accused people, reference to a criminal proceeding, news that contain more than 50 words in English linguistic equivalent. Special attention was given to the visual presentation of suspects and accused in the news (photos or videos of arrestment, especially when measures of physical restraints were applied).

For the examination during the research, the following news items were selected for examination:

Printed daily newspapers:

24sata - Zadar: Dvojica Poljaka pretukla taksista (58) / Zadar: Two Poles beat up the taxi driver (13/06/2018)

24 sata - Monstrum - U subotu je ocu prerezao grkljan. U istom je stanu prije 21 godinu ubio majku. Izbo ju je 28 puta. Njezino je truplo danima skrivao u smočnici... / Monster - He cut his father's throat on Saturday. He killed his mother in the same apartment 21 years ago. He stabbed her 28 times. He was hiding her body in the pantry for days (02/09/2018)

Jutarnji list - Okorjeli recidivist Otmičar Zagorčeva sina u autu krijumčario devet paketa amfetamina / A rigid recidivist and kidnapper of Zagorac's son was smuggling 9 packages of amphetamine in his car (02/07/2018)

Jutarnji list - Migranti krali torbe po centru Zagreba, uhvatila ih okradena / Migrants were stealing bags in the center of Zagreb, they were caught by the woman they had stolen from (13/09/2018)

Slobodna dalmacija - Ubojica uhićen pri kontroli putovnice / The killer was arrested at passport control (29/06/2018)

Internet portals not related to press:

Index.hr - Muškarac iz BiH u kombiju švercao 15 migranata, uhvaćen kod Rijeke / Man from Bosnia and Herzegovina smuggled 15 migrants in a van, captured near Rijeka (05/06/2018)

Index.hr - Zašto se smeću iz Zadra neće suditi za pokušaj ubojstva? / Why the scum from Zadar won't be tried for attempted murder? (21/06/2018)

T-portal - Ubojica sa Zrća ostaje u zatvoru, branio se šutnjom / Killer from Zrće remains in prison, uses his right to remain silent (29/06/2018)

Net.hr - HRVATSKI ESCOBAR PRED SUDOM U ZAGREBU: 'Ne smatram se krivim za pranje novca, a na pitanja ne želim odgovarati' / Croatian Escobar at Zagreb court: "I don't find myself guilty for money laundering and I don't want to respond to any questions" (02/07/2018)

Net.hr - UBOJICA SPLITSKOG DILERA ZARADIO NOVU OPTUŽNICU: Besramnom krađom identiteta podigao kredit i zgrnuo novac / Killer of a dealer from Split earned new indictment: he took a bank loan through identity theft and hoarded money (05/09/2018)

Internet portals related to press:

7dnevno - Soroševa blagajnica, Sanja Sarnavka, pod povećalom DORH-a! / Soros' cashier, Sanja Sarnavka, under the magnifier of DORH! (29/06/2018)

24 sata - Alžirski brijač Aleksiću je na ulazu u tramvaj ukrao mobitel / Algerian barber stole Aleksić a cell phone at the entrance to the tram (05/09/2018)

24 sata - Ubojstvo na Zrću: Ubo ga je u prsa i prerezao mu aortu i venu / Murder on Zrće: Stab him in his chest and cut his aorta and vein (05/09/2018)

Večernji.hr - Krijumčar koji godinama bježi policiji izbo sitnog dilera zbog kćeri / The smuggler who escapes the police for years stabbed a dealer because of his daughter (21/09/2018)

Novi list.hr - ZLOČIN NA ZRĆU Hoće li ubojicu izručiti britanskom pravosuđu znat će se nakon podizanja optužnice / CRIME ON THE ZRĆE Will the killer be extradited to the British judiciary will be known after the indictment has been filed (29/06/2018)

TV:

NovaTV - "Hrvatski Escobar" danas je iz zatvora u Rijeci doveden na zagrebački Županijski sud / "Croatian Escobar" was brought today from the prison in Rijeka to the Zagreb County Court (02/07/2018)

NovaTV - Policija uhitila dilera / Police arrested drug diller (13/06/2018.)

NovaTV - Priveden trener zlostavljač: bludničio nad maloljetnicama / A 66-year-old arrested in Zagreb on suspicion of sexually abusing girls (21/09/2018)

RTL - Stjepan Prnjat je doveden pred sud / Stjepan Prnjat was brought to the court (02/07/2018)

RTL - Agresivni dečko izazvao je ozbiljne ozljede 18-godišnjoj djevojci, uhićenih tek nakon 12 sati / Aggressive boyfriend caused severe injuries to an 18-year old girl, arrested only after 12 hours (21/06/2018)

5) Findings and conclusions

The overall findings of observing the TV news are: most of the TV news items are examples of good reporting, in line with standards. In very few cases it can be argued that some ethical standards were violated - when using the photos of the victim or violence, or when using the sensationalist words in reporting about suspects or accused, or using archive materials or played scenes without a clear indication thereof.

Due to the fact that TV relies on video materials, it is more common to show arrest scenes. In the news from the 2nd of July, the report from Nova TV contains materials published on an official Youtube channel of the Ministry of Interior (MUP TV), that shows "conduction of a complex criminal investigation of a code name "NANA" regarding the smuggling of a larger quantity of cocaine from South America to the Republic of Croatia."⁷⁰ The broadcaster did not indicate that this is archive material, or what is the source. In this video material, more persons are arrested and the scenes of arrest are shown, even though this particular news is about bringing one certain accused from prison in Rijeka to Zagreb County Court, under the accusation of money laundering, so the published video material is not clearly contextualised. It is stated that the accused was brought to a court under high security measures, although these measures were not shown in the Nova TV report. Moreover the lawyer of the accused interviewed in the same story stated: "I think it's a little too exaggerated to do that because I do not see the reason for bringing someone in this way to the court, but it's obviously someone's estimation that he probably has some of his reasons for" doing so. In the story from RTL on the same case, the high police security measures on the streets were shown and the video from the courtroom, where the accused is present without measures of restraint. It is stated that the accused is not willing to come to the next trial because of high measures and cited: "Fully equipped for war, that is why I do not feel like coming", while the answer was: "Look, somebody thinks that there are reasons for that." It is not clearly shown who is answering to the accused. The media is naming the accused "Croatian Escobar", and this is repeated in several different media, as well as printed and online, when referring to this case.

In the RTL news from 21st of June, the video material contains the real photos of victims injuries (without face portrait) as well as video of played scenes of domestic violence, while it is not indicated that this video footage contains played scenes. Also, there is an archive video material showing arrest, but it is not clear that this material is connected to this story.

In a Nova TV news item from 21st September, the story contains played scenes and it is clearly indicated that they are played. The terms suspected and accused are used in accordance with the criminal law, but in the written part of news there is a statement: "Trainer abuser brought to court for juvenile fornication, that does not contain the information that the person is suspected, not already charged for this act.

⁷⁰ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImGCwzbc6DQ>

Similar situations are often recorded in printed news and internet portals. The title of the article is often written in a sensationalistic way, not applying the correct wording for accused, suspected or charged persons, while in the body of the article this is usually correct and clearly stated. The news titles contain words like “killer”, “kidnapper”, “smuggler”, while the text contains wording like “suspected of murder”, or “suspected of stealing”. Examples of this kind of reporting were recorded in 3 of 5 examined articles from internet portals not related to press, in 3 of 5 cases from portals related to press, and in 4 of 5 articles from printed press.

The daily press and internet portals are ordinarily publishing the initials of a suspected or accused and their age. There are also cases of publishing the full name and the first name and initial of the last name. In the case of news from portal 24 sata from 5th of September, full name, age, origin, status and the place of residence (“migrant from Algeria with residence in hotel Porin”), and even the profession of accused were published, even though it is not relevant. In the article of printed daily news 24 sata from 13th of June, the age and origin of suspects were published with the title “Two Poles beat up the taxi driver”, where the information of the origin and age of the person is not relevant. Also, the title of the article from Jutarnji list from 13th of September says: “Migrants were stealing bags in the center of Zagreb, they were caught by the woman they had stolen from”, where also the initials, age, origin, status, place of residence and even profession of accused persons were reported. It is also stated that: “Two of them pretending to be drunk and the third is stealing handbags and anything that comes to him. They are the trio – migrants from Algeria living temporary in hotel Porin in Zagrebs neighborhood Slobošćina, but now in the prison cells of Remetinec, due to heavy thefts committed during last Thursday”, even though the persons are under investigation and have not been charged yet. Also, their origin, status and place of residence is not relevant from the story.

When it comes to the visual materials of the arrested, the news about the arrest of a suspect of murder from 29 of June that is present in most of the observed media on that day, the portals and printed daily published portrait of arrested with presence of the police and handcuffs on back. Novi list, 24 sata, T-portal both use the word “killer” in the title of this news, while in the text they are indicating that the person is arrested and suspected of murder. In the printed edition from 5th September, 24 sata has even more sensationalistic title: “The killer from Zrce hit with his knife wherever he could”. T-portal published visual materials for this article, containing 10 photos of the portrait of arrested with presence of the police and handcuffs on back, as well as 13 photos of the investigation and the crime scene.

The portrait of the suspect is published in Net.hr portal on news from 5th September, with the title: “Killer of a dealer from Split earned new indictment: he took a bank loan through identity theft and hoarded money”, with referring to a previous record of a suspect as being guilty for another crime even though in the text it is highlighted that the procedure is still ongoing. The source of the photo is Facebook, and the author of the article is Danas.hr, which is an internet portal that is not existing online and it is not registered in the electronic publications and media service providers.

The portrait of a suspect is also published in 24 sata, the online and printed version, on the 2nd of September. In printed version, the photo is on the cover page, followed with a title: "Psycho from Travno", while the subtitle contains words "monstrum" and details about the criminal act, as well as detailed description referring to a previous criminal record of the suspect. The photos of the building where the crime is committed are published, and in online edition there is a video news containing both of the photos. The online edition is followed with a hashtag "slaughtered". In the article, it is stated that the investigation is still in progress, led by state attorney.

When it comes to the visual materials of victims, Večernji list in its internet portal on news "The smuggler who escapes the police for years stabbed a dealer because of his daughter" published a face portrait photo of a victim, followed with the text: "Forbidden Love - A. Č (49) who was involved in the smuggling of cocaine from South America did not want his daughter to be with the dealers, which was why he stabbed Denis O. with a knife (33) (pictured below) who was a small dealer", that is an example of not treating a person with dignity and presenting opinions as facts before the criminal investigation was initiated.

Visual materials on the victim were also published on the portal Index.hr from 21st of June, where the victims injuries were shown in a photo with a blurred face. In this article, the photo of the suspect is also published, showing the person as dangerous (shirtless, bold, strong). Also, the title of the article is containing the word "scum/trash" and in the body of the text the word "maniac" is used.

In the weekly printed and online edition of 7 dnevno, from 29th of June, the article contains fake news and sensational titles like "for five years concealed the tax crime" or "Soros' cashier, Sanja Sarnavka, under the magnifier of DORH!" that lack serious sources and facts, while it is stated that the article is written "according to unofficial sources". It involves persons from public and political sphere, presenting their full names and positions, showing them as responsible for tax evasion and money laundering, even though there are no official statements, or any reliable sources of evidence listed.

Examples of good practice when it comes to the representation of suspects and accused in the media and reporting about the crimes, can be found in TV news both from public and private broadcasters. For example, the high profile case that include publicly exposed person and international arrest warrant, is reported in RTL on 13th of June, where the Minister of Justice is interviewed. His statement is focused on the procedure, legal framework and role of public authority in this case, not on the suspect and his guilt or innocence. Also, the internet portals and newspapers are more careful when it comes to high profile cases and publicly exposed persons, so they are likely to use expressions such as "suspect", "defendant", "accused" and "convicted" correctly and accurately, in accordance with criminal law. Also, they are using a the state attorney press release and cite its parts or transmitting entirely.

The presumption of innocence was not mentioned in any of 20 examined articles from all the media.