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The Press and Democracy Building: Journalism Education and Training in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe during Transition

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The Press and Democracy Building:

**Journalism Education and Training in Eastern and South-Eastern
Europe During Transition**

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**A thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirement of the award
of
M.Phil.
(Master of Philosophy)**

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ABSTRACT

Media assistance to the former communist countries of Eastern Europe from 1989 became an important part of the transformation of that part of Europe from a socialist command economy to a democratic, liberal market economy. The media was seen as an important ideological weapon of the previous regimes and so was to be transformed in order to change society.

The exact amount of media aid is unknown, so much of it was hidden under such headings as aid to civil society and democracy building, but it is known to account for hundreds of millions of euro. Most was spent on specific training of working journalists, some was used to establish codes of conduct, or help legislators frame media laws. Some funding was used as loans to help establish new media enterprises.

Mostly the model used was a training one, and the training was often given by working journalists, with a very specific view of their own profession and its importance to democracy. Usually the trainers had no knowledge of local languages, culture or its media. They believed they were tasked with bringing to Eastern Europe Western-style journalism, usually that associated with the English language presumption of impartiality and objectivity, usually personified as the *New York Times* and the BBC.

One of the first projects to include the old journalism faculties in the state-run universities was a project aimed at professionalising the media in

Bulgaria, which was established as part of Bulgaria's pre European Union entry programme. That project is at the centre of this thesis as an important case study, both as an example of how media development has worked and how it might develop. This thesis set out to establish whether working with the faculties that had been central to the old system of journalism education, and ignored by the new training, was a valuable and workable alternative to the training model which was being questioned by many involved in journalism and media training. The thesis offers an analysis of journalism and journalism education and training, places media development aid in its context, and analyses specifically the Bulgarian project, and its links with the university. It concludes that working with the existing faculties allows cultural mediation for Western aid and also works to help universities themselves to modernise.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis, which I now submit for examination for the award of MPhil (Master of Philosophy), is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other Institute or university.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research. The Institute has permission to keep, to lend or to copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis be duly acknowledged.

Signature _____

Date _____

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I have already thanked those who were involved in the project in the acknowledgements to the Curriculum Modernisation and Strategy Report which is in the appendices, but a special thanks is due to both Marek Beckerman and Michael Randall of the BBC and to Professor Teodora Petrova, of Sofia University, who believed in the project from the start.

I should also like to thank my students who had to put up with me trying out ideas on them and suggesting that they might look at the area of media in transitional democracies. One student, Daire Higgins, was with the BBC World Service Trust when this project started and has since moved to DIT as a PhD student and is now researching media development.

Mostly I have to thank my wife, Niamh O'Sullivan, who was willing to put up with me heading off to South-Eastern Europe at short notice, but also acted as a motivator, editor and even third supervisor. Clearly without her, this thesis would not have started let alone been finished,

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis arose out of a project funded by the EU to improve the professionalism of journalists working in Bulgaria. Much of the project concentrated on the traditional concerns of international media aid or development, that is, vocational training for working journalists, improvement of media management, formulating codes of conduct, as well as specific training for ethnic minority journalists, in this case journalists from the Roma community. These were the types of training that had developed in Eastern, South-Eastern Europe and the former USSR, since the collapse of communism in 1989. However, there was one major difference between this project and others that had gone before it: the project had a module aimed at improving the journalism curriculum at a major journalism faculty in a traditional state university, namely the SS Cyril and Methodius University of Sofia, as well as giving aid to some other smaller universities.

As the thesis will show, there had been aid to universities before, mainly based on partnerships with Western universities. Most had been concerned with student exchange, or curriculum development. However, this project involved the university for the first time in a project that was aimed specifically at professionalizing the profession of journalism.

As this thesis will show, it was a major break with the way journalism and media aid had developed over the years. Media development had tended towards the short term, training of existing working journalists often in specific areas, such as media ethics or working with particular software for editing or layout. Sometimes it was in order to cover specific stories, human trafficking was an obvious one, as was election coverage, often aimed at one specific election. The aim of such development aid was to help the development of democracy, or civil society. Sometimes funders were accused of being involved in ideological work, helping develop the free market, or even of supporting specific policies. US agencies more often found themselves accused of working for their government or the State Department, for instance. The other problem was that increasingly those involved in media development wondered as to its effectiveness.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the curriculum development element of the project; to trace its development over the three years it was in place; to put it into the context of media development and aid to develop democracy and civil society in the transitional democracies in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe; to see if it offers a more sustainable form of media development than traditional training; and to evaluate the project to see if it offers a model for future media development and if the journalism faculties, with all their faults, might offer a better model than has been used hitherto. The research and resulting thesis will also provide an academic study of the process that led to the completion of the project. There was no formal assessment and evaluation of the project when it finished its work. As noted

in Chapter Nine, Assessment and Evaluation, the BBC World Service Trust, the lead partner in the project, suggested that the final report, drawn up by the team leader, Hans Steiger, *was* the final evaluation. Given the absence of a formal assessment of the project when it was finish, this thesis also acted as an evaluation of the university aspect of the project.

The Project Inception

In 2003, the BBC World Service Trust approached the School of Media at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) in order to find a partner for a media development project in Bulgaria. DIT was to be involved in a curriculum development module of an ambitious multi-faceted project aimed at professionalising the media in readiness for Bulgaria's entry to the European Union in 2007.

As is outlined elsewhere in this thesis, media development had avoided the traditional journalism schools, viewing them as unreformed relics of the previous regimes. The communist era journalism schools continued to operate, often with many staff appointed and educated during that time. And if they had journalism experience, it was usually gained working for communist publications or broadcast organizations. However, they still produced the majority of young journalists. The new universities, usually private and based on the American model, were considered expensive. Many of them taught programmes through English and many of their graduates wanted to work abroad rather than within the Bulgarian media.

The state owned universities and their journalism and mass communications faculties had many systemic problems, and were facing increasing pressures to change, which they found difficult to effect.

Bologna Process

Among the pressures faced by the journalism faculties were changes being forced by the Bologna Process¹, the agreement reached between education ministers across Europe to create a common European education space for third-level education. The lower status now enjoyed by journalism professors, previously important ideological workers, meant they were now finding it difficult to educate journalists for an increasingly foreign owned and tabloid media industry, with little money for resources, such as computers, radio and television studios and newsrooms, and few relevant skills.

The project team

DIT joined the project as one of a number of partners. The other partners were: the BBC World Service Trust, which led the project; Human Dynamics, a Vienna based consultancy that specialised in managing projects in areas of public sector reform, economic development and good governance. It had worked with the EU, the World Bank, the Austrian

¹The Bologna Agreement seeks to create a high degree of openness and transparency in order for academics and students to access courses consistently across Europe. Theoretically, students will be able to move from country to country, accumulating credits from a common credit system that will finally add up to the required number necessary for a degree. Such moves will demand a clear curriculum document, which lays out the aims, objectives and outcomes of particular modules, and what credits are offered. This is described in terms of creating a common European education space. It was agreed by EU Education Ministers in 1999, and since then has been joined by most Eastern and South Eastern European countries.

Government and other funding agencies. It had an office in Sofia and mainly dealt with the reporting and EU accountability systems within project. It had nothing to do with the actual implementation of the projects aims. Other partners were the University of Leipzig, which supplied some expertise, especially in the early days; the Media Development Centre in Sofia, supplied local expertise as well as office space and other facilities and the International Federation of Journalists², which had little involvement in the project after the initial application stage. Some were silent partners, but DIT opted to be active. The author of this thesis was appointed the Key International Expert, to lead the Curriculum Modernisation element of the project. This entailed monthly visits to Sofia and other centres for two years, to complete the work according to the timetable decided at the inception of the project.

The project was difficult in that there was no blueprint or well worked out action plan. Often what was presented as prescriptive was based on other types of journalism training; in fact it was often difficult to get the rest of the team to refer to journalism education, rather than training, when referring to the curriculum modernisation element. Also the method of bringing down funding meant being in Sofia for a required number of days, even if research could be carried out elsewhere, or when faculty staff from Sofia travelled to Dublin as part of the Scholarship Initiative. It was a funding-system based

² The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) is the international body for journalist associations and trade unions and claims to represent 600,000 members in 100 countries. It also supports issues relating to free speech and journalists' rights. The author has worked as a consultant to the IFJ on a number of projects in eastern Europe and Palestine.

on a training model, not really suited to a more educationally based programme.

The International Key Expert had experience in media development, having worked in journalism training in a number of Eastern European countries, from Russia, to Belarus, Croatia and Macedonia.

The Research Project

The idea of basing a research project on the curriculum modernisation module was due to the project's unique nature – the first time a journalism faculty had been the recipient of media development funding; the increasing disillusionment with short term training schemes and the failure of so much development funding to make a difference to the nature of the media in many of the countries of Eastern Europe.

The project offered a unique research opportunity to measure the effectiveness of the training model that was common throughout the region, as opposed to a more education-based programme centred on universities. If it did work, then the question might be: will such a model replace much of the training that currently forms the primary method of strengthening journalism and consequently the move towards greater democratic accountability?

Media development had traditionally been offered to working journalists as an alternative to the university system. Trainers saw themselves as offering real life journalism as opposed to a theoretical and outdated journalism. It tended to be vocational while Eastern European journalism faculties were highly theoretical and academic. The idea of the ‘reflective practitioner’ or learning by doing strategy, so common in Western journalism schools, had never been part of journalism education in Eastern Europe. Media development projects offered working journalists a range of skills with short courses in what were often called ‘European standards’ or ‘international standards’. However, working with the universities means the Western trainer is working with university academics, working on curriculum and pedagogical methodologies, leaving local journalism academics to interpret their own journalistic culture.

The author of this thesis, as the International Key Expert, led a team that designed and implemented a programme of reform, which included a scholarship scheme, conferences, along with all the other elements of the modernisation project. This writer researched and wrote a number of detailed and lengthy reports, which are contained in the appendices. They form an integral part of this thesis and research project. As the literature review will show, the number of academic studies of projects designed to strengthen democracy and civil societies, especially those involving media are relatively few. Many of those that exist are often descriptive rather than analytical. The involvement in this project was an opportunity to reflect on

the nature of such projects, analyse their strengths and weaknesses and also their effectiveness.

Academic studies in Journalism

Journalism studies has become a serious area of academic research, with a number of specialised academic journals and other publications associated with it. This thesis reflects a general academic concern with the relationship between journalism and democracy, as well as a more specific study of how that relationship works in practice. It will also be a contribution to the debate about journalism education and its place within the academy. The place of journalism within the context of democracy has been a serious area of academic research for many years. It is now assumed that the arguments that were part of the debate that led to the first Amendment of the US Constitution were more or less correct and that the role of journalism, at its best, is to inform an active electorate in order for them to be able to make decisions that effect their society and government. However, there are difficulties with this, namely the business and media model that will support journalism. The project itself comes out of the major ideological battle of the 20th century, that between communism and capitalism, which, of course offered two models that might support journalism, a state controlled model of the soviet variety and a market led model. The Phare³ project, funded as it was by the European Union, obviously favoured the second, as does media development generally in Eastern and South Eastern Europe. In stating that,

3 Phare: Pologne, Hongrie, Assistance à la Reconstruction Economique, was established in 1989 to help Poland and Hungary's development towards democracy. Between 2000-2006, it was the main vehicle for assistance to Eastern Europe's pre-accession countries.

a number of ideological assumptions are raised, which are important to tease out and investigate and that was part of the research project as well.

While the literature review in Chapter One suggests there has not been much scholarly writing about media development, it is possible, through the literature, to trace the origins of media development back into the immediate post war and Cold War periods. There has been much written on the collapse of the communist world in the post 1989 period, which had a profound influence on intellectual thought as well as the repercussions of the war in former Yugoslavia, which impacted hugely on surrounding countries, including Bulgaria.

The methodology used, outlined in Chapter Three, was interesting in that it took from a number of types of research, including sociological and ethnographic. The methodology had to take into account the fact that the author of this thesis was also a major participant in what was being investigated. It was, as described by Bourdieu, an exercise in ‘observing oneself observing’. (Bourdieu, 2003: 281).

Central to the research is journalism education, as the research posits an education model as opposed to a training model. Chapter Four outlines a number of trends in Western European and American journalism education, while Chapter Five looks at the prevailing ideological model of the Soviet system for educating journalists and how that model became the dominant one throughout much of the Eastern bloc. It was necessary to give the

Leninist theory of the press in some detail, given that journalism education in Eastern Europe has remained largely un-researched and unknown.

Chapter Six in effect draws together much of the above and puts the project itself into a historical context. Media development outside Eastern Europe was not investigated, though that would be a very fruitful area of further research.

The project itself, what it hoped to achieve and how, is investigated in Chapter Seven, while Chapter Eight analyses the final report, Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan, as the major outcome of the project. This is followed by an assessment and evaluation before arriving at conclusions. The research suggests that the immediate benefits for Bulgarian Faculties of Journalism and Mass Communications might have been slight, but it is suggested that the project was worth funding and undertaking, because it was the first of its kind and indicates a new way of viewing journalism and media development and its relationship to the transitional societies where it takes place. It is suggested that if the training model has failed in Eastern Europe it needs to be replaced by something else, something that will address societal needs, ethics and good governance and above all democracy and civic society building.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is remarkable that 20 years of media assistance to the former communist countries of Eastern, South Eastern Europe and Central Asia, has received so little scholarly attention. As Graig LaMay notes in *Exporting Press Freedom*, (2007: xvi) only about a dozen books and reports exist on the subject of international media assistance, written by journalists, some scholars and development aid workers.

It is not as if media assistance was a new idea. A link between development issues, democracy and press freedom was famously made by the Nobel prize winning economist, Amartya Sen, when he said: ‘I would argue that a free press and an active political opposition constitutes the best early warning system a country threatened by famine could have’ (Sen, 1999: 181). Indeed, he argues throughout the work the importance of transparency and the role of an ‘enterprising news media’ especially when there are incentives – provided by a democratic system – for bringing out facts that may be embarrassing to the government. But the connection between a functioning free press and democracy goes back even further, to arguments espoused by John Milton in the 17th century, in *Areopagitica*, his treatise on censorship, and to Thomas Jefferson and his famous comment on press freedom:

The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. (Jefferson to Carrington [1787], quoted in Keane. 1991: 2)

Jefferson was highly influenced by the British philosopher, John Locke, who argued in a *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) that the liberty of the press came out of the rights of the individual. Later proponents of a free press were James Mill, in his *Liberty of the Press* (1811), Jeremy Bentham in the *Liberty of the Press and Public Discussion* (1820) and J. S. Mill in his *On Liberty* (1859).

The Public Sphere

Jurgen Habermas in his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962 [trans 1989] *passim*) argued that a close relationship existed in the early years of democratic development, from the 18th century onwards, between newspapers, magazines and journals and the sphere where debates and analysis took place, which transformed Europe from a representational culture to an *Offentlichkeit*, or public sphere, or from a passive culture to one where citizens took an active role in society. He was critical, of course, of modern mass media because it again encouraged a passive culture.

Journalists have tended to draw on Habermas and often talk of creating a public sphere through media development. However, Habermas is not without his critics. John Keane, one of the foremost thinkers on democracy

in his classic, *Media and Democracy* (1991) dismisses Habermas as harbouring ‘a certain nostalgia for the heroic ideals of the early modern public sphere’ (Keane, 1991: 35). Another critic, Nancy Fraser, has argued that Public Sphere theory is only relevant to the nation state, or a ‘Westphalian⁴ model’ and its concept of citizenship where ‘the sovereign territorial state was the proper addressee of public opinion (Fraser, 2007: 23). She highlighted changes that had taken place since the 18th century, globalisation, colonisation, migration and the growth of transnational power and influence:

What was not much debated, in contrast, was the state’s capacity to regulate the private powers that shaped its citizen’s lives. That issue went without saying, as public sphere theorists assumed, for example, that economies were effectively national and could be steered by national states in the interest of national citizens. (Fraser, 2007, 23

The Liberty of the Press

The intellectual tradition of defending the liberty of the press is important to modern journalism, which sees itself as the heir to that tradition. The argument that journalism is central to democracy comes directly from Milton and Locke, through Jefferson to the First Amendment of the American Constitution, and has been accepted by judicial courts on both sides of the Atlantic. The major libel case of *Sullivan V the New York Times*

⁴ Westphalian model is a concept used by international relations scholars to refer to the sort of states that emerged in Europe following the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Westphalian sovereignty refers to a nation state that has a defined territory and an absence of external agencies having any influence. Fraser maintains that public sphere theory does not take account of a post Westphalian world.

accepted the special position the media holds in society, as recounted by Anthony Lewis in, *Make No Law, The Sullivan Case and the First Amendment* (1991).

Marie McGonagle's work *A Textbook on Media Law* (1996) details a number of decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, which has ruled on the role of the journalist, i.e. to be a watchdog on behalf of the public, and whose role is central to the workings of democracy.

It is, of course, the link between journalism and democracy that is the main reason for media development. Reverting to Sen, who argues that for people to develop their full potential, they need freedom, and freedom of speech is one of the freedoms needed for human development: 'To express publicly what we value and to demand that attention be paid to it, we need free speech and democratic choice' (Sen, 1999: 152). However, there is no one theory of democracy. The cultural historian, Jacques Barzun, who presciently asked, three years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, 'is democratic theory for export?' (Barzun, 1986) suggested that there was no theory, only a proposition that can be generally accepted. That proposition, he said, was simply: 'For a free mankind, it is best that the people should be sovereign, and this popular sovereignty implies political and social equality' (Barzun, 1986). Barzun suggested that there was no one agreed democratic theory that could be exported, no perfect model.

Jasper Strombeck adds some certainty. He says there are four theoretical models of democracy (Strombeck, 2005): Procedural Democracy (free and fair elections); Competitive Elections; Participatory Democracy (citizen participation); and Deliberative Democracy (discussions among the public and their representatives). The first two are based on the election of representatives and the second two depend on more direct forms of citizen participation. All four depend on journalism though. In the first two, the journalist plays the classic role of watchdog, or the Fourth Estate. In the second two theories, the citizens have more room to speak for themselves, but the journalist still plays a key role, because ‘democracy can never become more deliberative without the active participation of media and journalism’ (Strombeck, 2005: 340).

Despite the certitude that surrounds the idea of a free press and its central role in democracy, a number of thinkers have questioned this in the modern context. John Keane’s work *Media and Democracy* (1991) suggests new forms of public service media in order to combat the media conglomerates, which, he maintains, were never envisaged by the earlier press freedom thinkers. Brian Winston (2005) suggests that public support for free expression is now in decline, while the philosopher, Onora O’Neill (2002), likewise questions some accepted truths concerning the media and journalistic practices and, like Keane, questions whether a free press was ever envisaged as something that could be held by a giant corporation. O’Neill in her 2002 BBC Reith Lecture series on public trust, on which her book was based, said:

Like Mill we may be passionate about individual freedom of expression, and so about the freedom of the press to represent individuals' opinions and views. But freedom of expression is for individuals, not for institutions. We have good reasons for allowing individuals to express opinions even if they are invented, false, silly, irrelevant or plain crazy, but hardly for allowing powerful institutions to do so. Yet we are now perilously close to a world in which media conglomerates act as if they too had unrestricted rights of free expression, and therefore a licence to subject positions for which they don't care to caricature and derision, misrepresentation or silence. If they had those unconditional rights they would have rights to undermine individuals' abilities to judge for themselves and to place their trust well, indeed rights to undermine democracy. (O'Neill, Reith Lecture, BBC, 2002)

However, as far as modern journalism studies goes, the most important work, in terms of its impact, is probably *Four Theories of the Press* by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1962). In it, the three writers outline their understanding of the links between the mass media and society. Written at the height of the Cold War, the four theories outlined were the authoritarian, libertarian, Soviet and social responsibility models. Nearly every article and book dealing with the philosophical basis of journalism, especially in the US, alludes to the *Four Theories*. Even though it is a book of its time, of the Cold War, and now rather dated, it is still often cited as one of the most influential books by scores of journalism scholars and graduates of journalism schools. Journalism education generally, and its literature, will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 4.

Four Theories of the Press

Four Theories put forward a classic interpretation of the press and its role, that people are rational and able to discern between truth and falsehood and, therefore, can choose between a better and worse alternative. Man is capable of determining his own destiny, and given all the facts will make the right choice.

Rooted in this theory, which is the basis of the thinking behind the formulation of the First Amendment to the US Constitution,⁵ that if man exercised reason, the majority, as a group, would make sound decisions, even if individual citizens might not.

They did not advocate a purely libertarian view often articulated by some defenders of the First Amendment⁶ but came down in favour of a social responsibility viewpoint. The authors warned

..the power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible, to see that all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide; and that if the media do not take on themselves such responsibility it may be necessary for some other agency of the public to enforce it.

(Siebert et al 1962: 5)

⁵ The First Amendment to the US Constitution states: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

However, *The Four Theories*, while much loved, still has its critics. Dennis McQuail, for instance, pointed out in *Mass Communications Theory: An Introduction* (1987) that Siebert *et al* did not include any theory that would encapsulate the developing world. He added two more theories, the development theory and the democratic-participation theory. Nevertheless, even a critic such as McQuail adopted the Siebert model of the four theories, but added more.

The Cold War

Four Theories is very much a post World War Two and Cold War book. It followed the publication of the report of the Commission on the Freedom and Accountability of the Press in 1947. The Commission, also called the Hutchins' Commission (after its chair, Robert Hutchins, University of Chicago) made a number of recommendations, which included making the press note its obligations to society – be committed to accuracy, truth, objectivity and balance. The authors of *The Four Theories of the Press* were, like so many media academics at the time, influenced by the events of the Second World War and the role the media had played in it, in that the press had been used for propaganda purposes. Resistance to Nazi occupation was often organised around clandestine newspapers, and at the end of the war, both the Americans and the Russians funded newspapers in their zones of occupation. The role of propaganda during the war and the need to aid the development of the media after it, led to fresh thinking about the role of the press. The German historian, Heinz-Dietrich Fischer in *Parteien und Presse in Deutschland Seit 1945* (Bremen, 1971) described how reorganization of

the press was an important component to reorganizing German society in terms of de-nazification and the development of democracy.

It was not necessarily a given that the Hutchin's Commission would be an influential success. Even the authors of *Four Theories of the Press*, who were favourable towards the Commission's reports, agreed that some of its findings were 'unrealistic' (Siebert et al 1962: 103). Following the publication of its report, it was criticised for the way it went about its business – it excluded the media from many of its hearings – and could well have been forgotten but for *Four Theories*. According to Stephen L. Vaughn, in his *Encyclopedia of American Journalism*:

It was nearly two decades later when *Four Theories of the Press* became a landmark in journalism scholarship that the report came to be considered a directive for 'moral order' - a call for American journalists to help impose democratic ideals on the world. (Vaughn, 2007: 219)

Four Theories of the Press, through the Hutchin's Commission, was a link to the first media assistance and development, following World War Two, and was influential among a generation who attended journalism schools from the 1960s, or who had taught in journalism schools – the very generation who flocked into Eastern Europe after 1989. They had been brought up on *Four Theories*, with its breakdown into Soviet and authoritarian, on the one hand, and libertarian and social responsibility on the other. This was not necessarily how Siebert *et al* expected their work to

be received, but for journalists brought up during the Cold War, that was clearly how it was. Two sides: one side won.

The notion of one side having won after the fall of communism was very strong and had a major influence on media development, similar to that at the end of the Second World War. In the post 1989 period, it was a case of the end of the socialist project and its replacement by something else, market driven liberal democracy. For journalists and journalist academics, it was as if this was the reason they had read *Four Theories of the Press*. But not all agreed. James Carey, one of the most respected journalism academics, said in 1991:

For the past year or more American journalists and intellectuals have been travelling east in order to teach these newly liberated peoples the practical arts of writing a first amendment, managing a modern newspaper or television station, or, more elementary yet, writing and editing Western style journalism. We regularly assume these days that we have something to export to the peoples of Eastern Europe. We are less open to the thought that we might have something to learn from them, that they might teach us something about democracy and civic culture. (Carey in Stryker, Munson and Warren, 1997: 210)

The End of History

The most outspoken claim was made by Francis Fukuyama, for whom 1989 marked the end of history itself. He did not mean there would be no more events or struggles, but that the course of human development was set to approximate US market driven, capitalist democracy.

Fukuyama said that in past decades many could foresee a socialist future, but today most would have difficulty imagining a world radically different from 'our own', by which he meant American Capitalist democracy:

We cannot envisage to ourselves a world that is essentially different from the present one, and at the same time better. Other, less reflective ages also thought of themselves as the best, but we arrive at this conclusion, exhausted, as it were, from the pursuit of alternatives which we felt had to be better than liberal democracy. (Fukuyama, 1992: 46)

If Fukuyama's phrase, 'the end of history' seemed to sum up the events of the collapse of Communism, for the sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, the events of 1989 and beyond was the foremost event in marking the end of modernity itself. Bauman declared that 'it was under communism, not capitalist auspices that the audacious dream of modernity, freed from obstacles by the merciless and seemingly omnipotent state, was pushed to its radical limits, grand design, unlimited social engineering, huge and bulky technology, total transformation of nature' (Bauman, 1992: 179).

If Sparks sees in Bauman's work a call to produce a new, post-modern, account of the human condition, one that starts 'from the fact that there is no longer any possible alternative to the capitalist system, but recognizes that this is not the simple and unproblematic system of unalloyed benefits its unthinking adherents proclaim it to be' (Sparks, 1998: 7), it is clear from Bauman's later work and his public comments that if he was ever a total

optimist, which was never quite the case, his own colleagues clearly see in the work of this former Marxist a far more complex analysis of the fall of communism than the quasi official work of Fukuyama would suggest.

His concern is how to save the ethical principles of socialism when communism is finished. He thought about all of this years before everyone else, and saw the collapse of communism as a great opportunity, but as the 90s wore on he became increasingly depressed that these ethical issues were not being addressed and, instead, consumer values were more deeply entrenched than ever.’ (Ian Varcoe quoted in Bunting, *The Guardian*, Saturday 5 April 2003)

For journalists, and especially American journalism academics, the collapse of the communist states of Europe and Central Asia was an important contribution to their own world-view. Many Marxist theorists had questioned the role of journalism and the certainty that surrounded journalism’s view of itself.

The Liberal Theory of the Press

According to the liberal theory of the press, the press operates under a ‘free press’ model whereby anyone is free to publish a newspaper or magazine without having to be licensed by anyone in authority. Indeed, for Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, in *The Elements of Journalism*, journalism owes its first loyalty to citizens and not any other authority and has as its primary purpose providing those citizens ‘with the information they need to be free and self-governing’ (2003:12).

According to Curran and Seaton, in their classic *Power without Responsibility* (2003), the liberal, or free market view of the press holds that it stands or falls on the democracy of the free market and ‘press freedom is a property right exercised by publishers on behalf of society’ (2003: 287), a point of view that has been questioned, not alone by Curran and Seaton, but, as has been pointed out, by Keane (1991) and O’Neill (2002).

The Marxist Theory of the Press

As Cole and Harcup argue in *Newspaper Journalism*, scholars and observers, influenced by Marxism, hold that the media in general and journalists in particular play ‘an ideological role, irrespective of the intentions of the individual involved’ (2010: 171). Sparks argues that a truly free press is impossible in a free market. A Marxist critique suggests that, in Western capitalist societies, the media in effect helps to spread and reinforce a ruling class ideology. Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* suggest that:

The class, which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. (1965: 61)

Or, as Marx and Engels say more succinctly in the *Communist Manifesto*:
‘The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class’
(1848: 51).

Stuart Hall describes ideological power as the ‘power to signify events in a particular way, although ideology can also be a ‘site of struggle’ between competing definitions (Hall, 1982: 69-70). Seeing the media and the press in this ideological light then, for all its diversity, and with various exceptions, the routines and practices of journalists tend to privilege the powerful and foreclose discussion before it strays too far beyond the dominant ideology.

There are, of course, divisions and subtleties within Marxist theory. There are convincing arguments that suggest the emphasis on the ideological content of journalism downplays the agency of journalists and might fail to take into account the complex ways an audience might read media texts. A close reading of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, would convince most to be cautious of applying a Marxist dialectic too mechanistically in analysing the role of the media.⁷ Gramsci’s theory of ‘hegemony’ suggests that the ruling class needs consent and to make alliances in the area of civil society to maintain its dominant position. Gramsci wrote about journalism as able to ‘create and develop its readers’ needs’ and ‘progressively enlarge’ its readership (quoted in Forgacs, 1988: 383). Gramsci also argued for a broad press to reflect both public opinion and different levels of social and cultural

⁷ See general discussion of Gramsci in Showstack Sassoon (1982) and in Mouffe (ed) (1979), especially Chantel Mouffe’s own essay, Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci. See Gramsci on journalism in A Gramsci Reader, Forgacs (ed) (1988)

development, rather than a single press reflecting the views of a centre (Forgacs, 1988: 380). Nick Stevenson sounds a cautionary note about the tendency of media theorists to overstate the incorporating power of ideology (Stevenson, 2002: 46), while Tony Harcup suggests that to say journalists have agency is ‘not to deny that journalists operate in a world of constraints but to argue that structural forces do not totally determine individuals actions’ (Harcup, 2004: 6).

For many ‘media missionaries’, though, 1989 was the triumph of the liberal theory of the press and the failure of those theories that questioned the role of the press and its relationship with democracy. It meant there was no theoretical questioning of why media development was taking place and what shape it should take. Any alternative critique could be dismissed as part of a failed system.

The Post-Communist World

If there is a dearth of material concerning media development this has not been the case with political development in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since the collapse of communism. Not surprisingly, there has been a vast literature surrounding the collapse of communism and especially the war in former Yugoslavia, much of it written by journalists who covered those events. In many instances, historians and journalists have used the opportunity to reassess the Balkans and the relationships between the countries of the region. In a number of countries, especially Russia, Poland

and the former GDR, the opening of archives has led to a critical reassessment of the Soviet period.

Poland received most academic and journalistic attention. This was hardly surprising since it was one of the first countries in the region to change its regime. The war in former Yugoslavia led to a plethora of works that assessed the developments and how the war started and why. *The Death of Yugoslavia* (1996) by Laura Silber and Allan Little, which came out of a BBC documentary, was an early work. It was followed by a number of works by Misha Glenny, formerly the BBC's Eastern Europe Correspondent. Presumably with one eye on Frances Fukuyama, he published *The Rebirth of History*, optimistically subtitled *Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy* (1991). That was followed by his *Fall of Yugoslavia* in 1992 and then his magisterial, *The Balkans, 1804-1999, Nationalism War and the Great Powers* (1999), which put the Balkans during the Cold War into a historical context. Historiography of Eastern Europe had tended to cease with the end of the Second World War, something Glenny addressed. Later he wrote *McMafia: The Globalisation of Crime* (2008), which, while dealing with the growth of organized crime world wide, was, without doubt, influenced by the huge growth of crime in Eastern Europe, in the guise of the Russian, Serbian and Bulgarian Mafia. It dealt with a major problem that was felt capable of undermining the fragile democracies of some of the countries and was also a major concern of journalists in Bulgaria. Glenny, and a number of writers on Eastern Europe, have become increasingly pessimistic, and one of the institutions they are most pessimistic about is the

media. Many journalists, including Glenny use the term ‘mafocracy’ to describe where many Balkan countries were heading, and which the media seemed unable or unwilling to analyse or expose.

Robert Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghost: A Journey Through History* (1993), was a political commentary, history and travelogue. Kaplan’s work might at one level be considered a contribution to the long line of travel writing going back to Rebecca West’s 1941 classic, *Black Lamb and Gray Falcon*, and beyond, or even John Reed, who wrote *Ten Days that Shook the World* (1922), but also published reportage from the Balkans (Reed, 1916). Kaplan did repeat many stereotypes concerning the Balkans, of a place populated by a people addicted to irrational violence, terrorism and genocide. It was the sort of work that spoke of ‘ancient passions’, the very views that most of writers on the Balkans and Eastern Europe were revising. However, it has to be considered of some importance, as it was reputed to have been a major influence on President Clinton and his policy towards the Balkans, which, of course, led to the NATO intervention and the bombing of Kosovo and Serbia.

Mark Mazower’s *The Balkans, A Short History* (2000), dealt with the same issues, but as a historian. However, he suggested, rather than a people acting on ancient passions, it was the importation of a Western ideology, nationalism, that had led to the wars and the violence that seemed to define much of Balkan history throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Other works started a discourse on the Balkans itself. Maria Toderova in *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) explored the idea of the Balkans and how the Balkans was constructed as the Other. The Bulgaria philosopher, Tzvetan Toderov, in his work, the *Fragility of Goodness* (trans. 2001), explored questions concerning the Balkans and Bulgaria through a study in morality concerning the question as to why Bulgarian Jews survived the holocaust.

The journalist, Tim Judah, wrote a number of well-received histories of individual Balkan countries, mainly Serbia and Kosovo, while Mark Thompson in his important work, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina* (1999) examined media manipulation in former Yugoslavia. He showed how the media was used to make war possible and suggested such actions were a clear sign war was coming. What Thompson showed was how dangerous it is when the press and journalists are used for propaganda. He goes so far as to suggest that it was the media that made the break up of Yugoslavia and war possible.

The other side of Thompson's sober account of a compliant media being used by the Milosevic regime are those works that concentrate on individual media outlets. Tom Gjelten's *Sarajevo Daily: A City and its Newspaper under Siege* (1995) uses the story of the newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*, as a metaphor for the resistance during the siege of Sarajevo. The newspaper and its reputation has been in decline since. Matthew Collin's work, *This is Serbia Calling* (2001) tells the story of the rock music station, B92, and how resistance to the Milosevic regime was centred on its news and music output.

Both works present the journalist/ media worker as hero and highlight the ultimate power of independent media. *This is Serbia Calling* presents media as potentially rebellious, romantic and powerful. According to its blurb, B92 ‘waged a 10-year campaign for freedom armed only with a radio transmitter, some rock n roll records, and a dream of truth, justice and another kind of life’ (2001). B92 was still there when Milosevic was overthrown and still campaigning.

The paucity of scholarly work analysing media development is in contrast to the general interest in Eastern Europe and its transition from communism to democracy. As noted by Craig LeMay, only about a dozen scholarly works and reporters have been written offering either a description or a critique of media development. However, both historians and journalists have produced a considerable corpus of work, which indicates the significance of the changes that occurred from 1989 onwards.

Why the lack of analysis of media development might be due to the journalists who were involved in it were unused to self-reflection and preferred to write about political and other developments rather than their own work. The fact that so much of the work was training undertaken by media professionals ensured it was not subject to the same scrutiny as other activity in the region. Had there been greater involvement by academics it might have been different.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Given the nature of the thesis, finding an appropriate methodology offered particular challenges and required that a number of methodologies would be combined and new ways of researching developed. Participant observation was an obvious possibility. With its roots in anthropology, participant observation has been used extensively in sociology and communications studies. Participant observation involves intensive, primarily qualitative, analysis of an aspect or aspects of human behaviour of a group of people, usually of an interpersonal nature, within their own environment, over an extended period of time. Becker and Greer say it can be carried out 'either openly in the role of researcher, or covertly in some disguised role' (quoted in Roberts, 1981: 57). The advantages of this ethnographic method include both the applied and the academic. Joorgensen identifies this method as especially appropriate for scholarly problems when

- little is known about the phenomenon

- there are important differences between the view of the insiders as opposed to outsiders
 - the phenomenon is somehow obscured from the view of outsiders
 - the phenomena are hidden from public view
- (Joorgensen, 1989: 12)

Whilst there has been an increase in the number of academic publications and texts dealing with ‘insider’ or ‘action’ research (Cancian, 1996; Mc Niff, 2002; O’Leary 2005), the overwhelming majority of academic texts and journal articles describe the researcher as an outsider – typically a ‘sociologist’, ‘ethnographer’ or ‘anthropologist’, who is also a full time academic. This ‘outsider’ researcher normally enters the field by way of an institutional, organisational or cultural gatekeeper, in order to gain access to research settings, subjects and data. Upon completion of data collection, the ‘outsider’ researcher normally returns to the university and writes up his or her findings, and generates conclusions and recommendations.⁸

In this case, the researcher was employed to research, in order to make recommendations to aid Bulgarian universities reform their curriculum. The research was to some extent repurposed, gathered for consultancy purposes and then also used also for academic purposes. It, moreover, informed DIT of its own involvement in the project and how effective that intervention was.

⁸ See for example: Burgess (1990); Hakim (2000); Denzin (2005); Nachmias (2005); Jupp (2006); and Rook (2007).

Participant observation does not necessarily mean that the researcher is actually participating in the activity under discussion. Participant observation was developed primarily by the Polish anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski, when he was stranded among the natives of the Trobriand Island during the First World War. He was already a pioneer of ethnographical fieldwork, but living in such intimate terms led to the development of his theories of participant observation. It is fitting, given the nature of the project under discussion, that Ryszard Kapuscinski, the great Polish journalist and writer argues that: 'Fieldwork is not only recommended for anthropologists, but is also a fundamental condition for the job of reporter. In this sense we can regard Malinowski as the creator of anthropological reportage' (Kapuscinski, 2006: 31).

Subjectivity is a factor in participant observation and action research; of their nature, there is, undoubtedly, an inherent threat to the objectivity of the researcher. Relatedly, the concept of validity is relevant in the case of insider research, which is equally prone to bias and contamination.

In this particular case, this author, as the International Key Expert on the EU funded project, Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards in Journalism: Curriculum Modernisation (sub project), initially conducted research on the ground, towards a non research outcome *per se*, becoming, to some extent, a researcher in the academic sense, after the event. The academic research exercise, in the form of this thesis, in effect, therefore, is

a reflection on work already carried out, the first stages of which involved in-depth research, but for a different purpose, a contractual obligation to produce a number of reports and advise the Bulgarian universities as per the terms of reference for the project. The same material was used for academic purposes, but the issues then became whether different questions and methods were required. The thesis, by using research material gathered for a different purpose, and then turned into an academic research project by the same person, became an exercise in practice-based research.

The Phare project was used for research purposes as a case study and fulfilled the criteria of Denzin and Lincoln who defined case study as:

...a result of the researcher wanting better understanding of a particular case not only because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but also, in all its particularity and ordinariness, the case itself is of interest. (2000: 437)

Blaxter *et al* (2001: 73) outline six advantages of using case studies in the research.

- i. Case study data are drawn from people's experiences and practices and so are seen to be strong in reality.
- ii. Case studies allow for generalisations from specific instance to a more general issue.

- iii. Case studies allow the researcher to show the complexity of social life. Good case studies build on this to explore alternative meanings and interpretations.
- iv. Case studies can provide a data source from which further analysis can be made. They can, therefore, be archived for further research work.
- v. Because case studies build on actual practices and experiences, they can be linked to action and their insights contribute to changing practice. Indeed, case study may be a subset of a broader action research project.
- vi. Because the data contained in the case studies are close to peoples experiences, they can be more persuasive and more accessible.

The research, therefore, was not carried out by a disinterested academic researcher, but by one of the leaders of an EU project, whose main purpose was to successfully conclude the project within the terms and references and the rules of EU projects – part of a larger plan to address a democratic culture for Bulgaria and prepare Bulgaria for European Union membership. The reports produced during the initial stages of the project are, thus, the result of participatory observation, in that the author observed, and then directed the project based on the findings. To that extent, retrospectively, there may be grounds to suggest that the research was covert in nature, in so far as an academic thesis, based on the project, was not part of the project or envisaged at that time. Nor did those being ‘observed’ as it were, see themselves as being part of a study, but involved in a project which they

perceived to be, to varying extents, in their own interests. And, of course, all the findings amassed over the two years were submitted to the University or made public online, in the form of a series of documents written by and/or directed by this author, from the Inception Report to the Strategy and Action Plan. When the author began the academic research project academic staff at Sofia University were informed and a number answered questions and took part in a survey, devised by the author. (see appendix 6)

The research within the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications, in Sofia University, included research into the Faculty itself; its origins; its curricula; the history of journalism education in Bulgaria; the history of journalism education in the former communist countries; the environment in which the Faculty operated in terms of the media in Bulgaria; modern journalism in the West; and the requirements of the Bologna Process, the Europe wide educational policy to which Bulgaria had signed up.

Both the research outlined above, and the research for this thesis, then, drew on a range of social science research strategies – participant observation, and insider and overt methodologies – to conduct the research necessary for, and preliminary to fulfilling the objectives of the project under discussion. Thus, observation, surveys, discussions, interviews⁹ were all part of the research stage of the project itself, and are now harnessed to this academic thesis.

⁹ Interviews were carried out as part of the inception phase of the project, with limited success and later, after the project was completed the author carried out interviews with those academic staff who had taken part in the various scholarship initiatives, which are explained in detail in subsequent chapters.

As Maykut and Morehouse put it:

To reflect is to pause and think, to process what has gone before. The qualitative researcher or naturalistic enquirer is part of the investigation as a participant observer, but also removes him/herself from the situation to rethink the means of the experience. (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 25)

To a large extent, then, this thesis is an exercise in reflective journalism and education practice – an academic exercise in what Bourdieu describes as ‘observing oneself observing’, (Bourdieu, 2003: 281) because, of course, the author of this thesis was also a participant in the project and had to reflect on his own work within the Phare project. Bourdieu goes further to suggest the researcher bring to his or her research their own past, which is itself examined.

I profoundly believe that the researcher can and must mobilise his own experience, in other words this past, in all his acts of research. But he is entitled to do so only on condition that he subjects all these returns of the past to a rigorous critical examination. (Bourdieu 2003: 291)

This research exercise differs from most journalism academic research, which tends to be similar to traditional social science and media studies research methodologies. There is also a strong tradition within Western and especially English speaking journalism towards a heavy ideological reliance on ‘objectivity’ and un-biased reporting. Given the number of former working journalists who have become journalism academics means this has

entered the academic study of journalism. However, there is also a long tradition of journalistic memoir and autobiographical writing, which has led to a reflection on one's own work¹⁰. A number of universities, including the University of Lincoln, and City University, London, as well as a number of journalism faculties in the US, offer or have offered doctoral programmes based on a reflection of one's own work.

Thus methodologies employed stretch across academic disciplines, taking in methodologies employed in the social sciences, communications studies, history, anthropology, literature and ethnography. In itself this might be pointing to how journalism research will develop itself, as an academic amalgam, the sum of whose parts creates a new way of researching much the same as geography as an academic discipline incorporates both science and the humanities, the physical and social science.

¹⁰ In the Irish context, one of the most important memoirs is Andrew Dunlop (1911) *Fifty Years in Irish Journalism*. Two Irish journalists, Conor O'Clery and Seamus Martin have written memoirs that include accounts of their time covering the former USSR and Eastern Europe. Classic autobiographies include James Cameron's *Point of Departure* and *My Paper Chase: True Stories of Vanished Times* by Harold Evans. However, the number of biographies and memoirs written by journalists is huge. Some offer interesting insights, while others often simply recount the stories covered and the people they met.

CHAPTER FOUR

JOURNALISM EDUCATION

The Bulgarian project took place against a renewed debate about the future of journalism education, instigated to some extent by the President of Columbia University, in New York, the home of the world's most famous journalism school, Prof. Lee Bollinger. In 2002 he put together a high profile committee to look at what the School was doing and to define what professional journalism education was about. The committee was chaired by Nick Lemann, the then Washington correspondent for the *New Yorker* magazine. In 2004, Mr Lemann was appointed Dean of the School of Journalism and charged with implementing a new curriculum. This was followed by five of the United State's top journalism schools coming together in a three-year, \$6 million project to 'try and elevate the standing of journalism in academic practice and find ways to prepare journalists better' (*New York Times*, May 26, 2005). Part of that debate was the relationship between journalism education and training, and the academy and the relationship between theory and practice.

There is a long tradition in the US in trying to define what journalism education should be, going back to Joseph Pulitzer's decision to fund the

School of Journalism, that became Columbia Graduate School of Journalism in 1912.

James Carey summarised the ongoing debate:

In short, the struggle, which the American university led on behalf of the profession was a struggle between professional studies versus practical ones, academic studies versus the apprenticeship system, social science knowledge, versus common sense, ethical practitioners versus amoral hacks. (Carey,1978: 850)

Prof. Rod Allen, City University, London, summed up the type of journalism education on offer in the United Kingdom:

In universities the pressure on journalism education is to develop more critical reflective practitioners. At the same time educators need to tackle the growing problems of practical teaching posed by the increasing rapidity of technological change. Many university journalism educators pride themselves on the fact that they teach journalism in a thoroughly practical fashion. Students write stories, produce newspapers, television and radio programmes and work in an environment, which is intended to seem more like a workplace than a university. The practical dimension of many journalism programmes at both undergraduate and post graduate levels, is what sets them apart from the media-studies courses which derive from critical theory developed in social science and literary studies and which do not claim to prepare students for professional work in journalism.

At the same time, journalism teachers aim to promote reflective practice and most courses incorporate theory units on, say, history,

human rights, globalisation or postmodernism. (Allan in Keeble, 2005: 323)

The idea of ‘reflective practice,’ or the reflective practitioner, was developed by Donald Schon in his work, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Towards a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions*. He suggested placing what he called, the ‘reflective practicum’ at the centre of the work of the professional school, creating a link between the university and its traditional concerns and the world of practice and so resolve some of the conflicts between the academic and vocational dimensions of the professional school (Schon, 1987: 309). It is a term that appears in course and curriculum documents throughout the Western world and appeared in much of the documentation associated with the project in Bulgaria.

Theory versus Practice

Both Rod Allen and Nora French outlined the essential vocationalism of the origins of journalism education in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Dr French mapped the moves towards the expansion of higher education generally, and technical and vocational education in particular in Ireland, but pointed out that initiatives to establish journalism education in the 1960s did not come from any educational body, but was instigated by industry bodies, namely the National Union of Journalists and the Dublin Newspaper Management Committee. This initiative, she suggested, ‘can be closely

related once again to what was happening in journalism education in Britain’ (French, 2007:42).

In the United Kingdom some aspiring journalists are still expected to take the certificate tests of the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), an industry funded body, established in 1951. It was set up on an apprentice model, initially with day release and then block release from the workplace. It examines candidates in a number of practical areas, including shorthand, news writing and sub-editing, feature writing, local government, the court system, media law and basic politics. It also offers courses for photographers and sports journalists. There are similar bodies for broadcast and magazine journalism. The NCTJ’s model was more or less workplace learning. Student journalists were expected to learn while employed on regional newspapers before going near Fleet Street and the national newspapers. Although a number of British university journalism programmes have affiliated to it, with students taking the NCTJ examinations as well as the university assessment, a number have not¹¹. There has also been a history of tension between the NCTJ and university journalism departments, which was summed up in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES) as, ‘the impossibility of marriage between academic excellence and vocational training’ (*Times Higher Education Supplement*, May 15, 1998). According to Angela Phillips, of the Journalism Department at Goldsmith’s College, University of London, quoted in the same THES article:

¹¹ Eighteen British university journalism departments have affiliated to the NCTJ.

The NCTJ provides a narrow training, aimed at local newspapers. We're providing training that's intellectually stimulating - our students learn about broader issues than on a narrow, skills-based course. Bright postgrads are not stretched by NCTJ exams. (THES May 15th, 1998)

Debates surrounding journalism education have often centred on the balance between the theoretical and the vocational, with Western educators placing more emphasis on the vocational than has been traditional in Eastern and South Eastern Europe. Glasser points to one problem – a belief that skills, or professional-based courses are perceived as value free or neutral (Glasser, 1992 *passim*). However, even here there is not one fixed idea. James Carey famously made a plea for journalism as ‘a particular kind of democratic art’ adding that the natural academic home of journalism was among the humanities and the humanistic social sciences:

Journalism naturally belongs with political theory, which nurtures an understanding of democratic life and institutions: with literature, from which it derives a heightened awareness of language and expression and an understanding of narrative form; with philosophy, from which it can clarify its own moral foundations, with art which enriches its capacity to imagine the unity of the visual world; with history, which forms the underlying stratum of its consciousness. (Carey, 2000: 22)

Journalism education and training is a controversial subject. Since it has entered the academy it has had to defend its position against those who view

it as little more than skills training or trade school. Peter Parisi summed up the position journalism can often find itself in when he wrote:

In the lexicon of liberal arts scholarship “journalism” is a dirty word—a synonym for simplistic ideas and over-dramatic language. Journalism education suffers from the stigma of being a narrow practical training that oversimplifies the very intellectual complexities that disciplines such as literary study, philosophy, sociology, psychology and anthropology seek to explore. (Parisi, 1992: 4)

In the US, journalism has been increasingly housed in university communications departments. More often than not, this was a marriage of convenience rather than one of intellectual compatibility. Superficially, communications would appear to be a natural home for journalism and it conferred some academic respectability on a subject university academics might have preferred outside the academy. However, communication departments, or faculties of mass communications have often failed to see journalism as qualitatively different, or distinct, from other areas of communications, such as the entertainment industry and especially public relations. Only its most imaginative practitioners, or those who specialise in the study of journalism, understand that journalism is, or should be, part of a dialogue, that it has a public service function, that it has a defined role in a democracy and that it involves, or should involve, a public trust. As one of the most comprehensive studies of journalism education in the US ever undertaken commented:

The strongest winds of change promote removing journalism education as a separate academic discipline and merging it into communication courses designed not to prepare journalists – people with a mission to stimulate public discourse and serve the public interest- but to prepare generic communicators who could be hired to serve any interest. (Medsger, 1996: 5)

Or as Prof. James Carey said of the new science of communications:

By reading journalism functionally rather than intrinsically, it levelled journalism down to that of a signalling system while not immeasurably increasing our understanding of journalism as a social act, a political phenomenon, an imaginative construction of the social. (Carey, 2000: 21)

Ideology and Journalism Education

No such view was held in Eastern Europe. As Gross points out following the communist ascendancy in the late 1940s, ‘journalism education was defined as political education and coupled with propagandistic techniques to be applied both in print and broadcast media’ (Gross, 1999: 148). Gross, like other writers (Mills, 1994; and Hiebert 1994), all describe the highly theoretical nature of Eastern European and Soviet journalism education, and also the highly propagandist nature of the curriculum.

Elsewhere, the specific nature of Eastern European journalism education and especially that of the Soviet Union is described in some detail, suffice to say that writers on journalism education in Eastern Europe describe it as mainly theoretical, as Ekaterina Ognianova says:

Journalism education in Communist Bulgaria was theoretical since its purpose was to serve the ideological goals of the Communist Party. In this regard, journalism educators were seen by professional journalists as ideological gatekeepers and agents of the Communist Party and government. (Ognianova, 1994)

Gross says that the theoretical nature of Bulgarian journalism and the reason for it could also describe journalism programmes in East/Central European communist states and the Soviet Union (Gross, Aumente *et al*, 1999: 150).

Marin and Lengel describe a centralized system of education before 1989 which emphasized 'pure' theory areas of study while ignoring

applied media studies and skills development. Further, university life generally and university curricula specifically, remained isolated from the world outside communist rule. (Marin and Lengel in Blankson and Murphy 2007: 62)

The literature shows that while debates are taking place in Western journalism education, little changed in Eastern Europe, and that university journalism education programmes have not responded well to the changes that took place in the period after 1989. Many years after the collapse of communism most traditional journalism schools still retained curricula

whose model was clearly that which pertained during Soviet times, with a strong, almost exclusive, reliance on theory to the detriment of practice and with no attempts to merge the two. The problem was the social reality that had supported the theoretical positions that had been the model for the curricula had ceased to exist.

In contrast, the new private universities offered a version of the sort of curriculum taught in the United States. They were private and expensive universities offering journalism education based on market capitalism for those who could afford it. Two examples are the New Bulgarian University and the American University of Bulgaria.

The next chapter will look at where the theory-based, traditional Eastern European curriculum came from and what its inspiration was.

CHAPTER FIVE

JOURNALISM EDUCATION AND THE LENINIST THEORY OF THE PRESS

It is necessary to outline the history of journalism education in the USSR and its satellites in order to understand where journalism education in Bulgaria and other Eastern and South Eastern European countries came from. The structures and even the syllabus that exists today owe much to the type of curriculum developed in the Soviet Union since the Second World War. Even the place of Sofia University mirrors that of Moscow State, in that all other state controlled university journalism schools look to it for their curriculum and teaching methods. It is a system that is still very centralised, with Ministerial approval necessary for any changes in the curriculum. The degree of dependence on the powerful central schools, such as Moscow State and Sofia Universities, can be seen in a comment from the Dean of Journalism at the Leningrad State University, Dr Vladimir G. Komarov, who declared that the MGU (Moscow State) 'is a model for all of the rest of us. We look to it and to its dean for guidance and innovation' (Schillinger, 1988: 53).

Moscow State University

As the first formal school of journalism was established at Moscow State University in 1947, only five years ahead of Sofia University, it became the

model for departments and schools, which were then established throughout the USSR and Bulgaria over the next 30 years. By 1994, according to the Freedom Forum, there were 32 schools in Russia and the CIS.

Journalists were trained and educated in order to serve the state. According to Joy Morrison in her study of journalism education in Russia: 'Under the Soviet theory of the press the media was an arm of the state, never to question always to promote' (Morrison, 1997:26). The system of education, she maintained, was based on a system where criminal sanctions could be brought against anyone, including a journalist, who denigrated the state. Colin Sparks summed up the role of the communist journalist and how it differed from that of the Western journalist thus:

Journalism did not make the same claims to objectivity and fairness which, it is said, characterise the Western media, and in particular those of the USA. On the contrary, the function of journalists was to explain and to educate and to help by their writing to win support for the construction of the new socialist world. (Sparks, 1998: 43)

Or, as a number of American journalism academics noted the difference in the two systems:

Since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, democratic journalism has been exported to its former republics in the form of seminars and workshops that generally emphasize traditional U.S. news values such as impact, conflict, novelty, prominence, proximity, and timeliness. These news values are often touted as alternatives to those based on Soviet-era conventions, policies, and ideology, when

journalism training was directed at training professionals for propaganda-oriented careers and membership in the Communist Party. (Shafer, Freedman and Rice, 2005: 4)

Prior to the establishment of the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State, the education and formation of journalists were considered too important and sensitive to be left to the semi-autonomous university system. Journalism was taught either at Communist Party schools, the Union of Journalists, or within the communist media itself. World War Two, or the Great Patriotic War, as it was called in the USSR, emphasised the importance of journalism in mobilising the people in defence of the Motherland. After the war, universities were revamped, giving journalism education and training a higher visibility. Moscow State, and other schools, would not only educate Soviet journalists but were open to foreign students, either from other Eastern Block countries, or those developing countries within the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. The party apparatus and the communist newspapers and other media continued to have a role, providing political and technical training.

Journalism education in the Soviet Union and Bulgaria consisted typically of a five-year university degree, with a focus on language and literature, an assigned foreign language, the history of the Communist Party, the history of the native press, the history of the Communist Party press abroad (also known as the history of the proletarian press), criticism of the bourgeois press, political economy and Marxist-Leninism. Journalism was highly ideological and very popular, as it offered access to the higher echelons of

the Communist Party. It was also possible to do two-year postgraduate programmes, leading to a master's degree for those who had studied a related subject, such as philosophy or philology.

Journalism Education and the Communist Party

How close journalism education was to the commanding role of the Communist Party is illustrated in the number of students who were members of the Communist Party or its youth wing, Komsomol. In the academic year 1986-87, during the period of Perestroika and Glasnost, of the 1,256 students enrolled in Moscow State's undergraduate journalism programme, only five had no affiliation with the Communist Party. (Schillinger, 1988: 54)

The media had a role, defined under what was called the Leninist theory of the press, which was taught at the highly centralised system of journalism education. The bulk of the syllabus was theoretical, taught through a top-down model, with formal lectures as the main teaching method. Skills were usually taught outside the university during placements with newspapers, radio or television stations, and were clearly considered of secondary importance. In a media system that was, in the words of Colin Sparks, about 'didactic enlightenment rather than diversion', ideological purity was more essential than an ability to grab the reader's attention, as is usually the case in the highly competitive Western media (Sparks, 1998: 44). The role of the media was self-evident and, therefore, so was that of the journalism schools. One American academic study declared that throughout the Soviet Union,

the press was assigned the role of propagandist, collective agitator and educator, to build the Communist Party and to further Marxist-Leninist ideology. The guiding principle was subordination of the media to the party, the single voice and agent of the working class. (Schafer and Freedman, 2004: 95)

Leninist Theory of the Press

By the time of the Communist take-over in Bulgaria, following World War Two, there was already a well worked out role for the media in workers' states, which had developed since 1917 in Russia, and before within the Russian Social Democratic Party and the Bolsheviks. Bulgaria took on board, almost immediately, the new Soviet system of university-based journalism education. As Joy Morrison put it, Soviet journalists were 'taught not to question, but to inform' (Morrison, 1997: 27). At the centre of their curriculum was Marxist-Leninism, and in particular the Leninist theory of the press.

Given that Karl Marx worked as a journalist and editor for many years, including being the European correspondent and a columnist for the *New York Daily Tribune*, it is strange, and a pity, he never developed a detailed theory of the press and its role. The press was included in his general analysis of bourgeois society, but one has to search carefully through his writings to find any direct reference to issues relating to the press. However, one such reference, taken from the *Rheinische Zeitung*, where he was editor in May 1842, indicates a high degree of support for the idea of press freedom. Commenting on a debate on press freedom in the Rhine Provincial Assembly, he said:

The defenders of the press in this assembly have on the whole no real relation to what they are defending. They have never come to know freedom of the press as a vital need. For them, it is a matter of the head to which the heart plays no part. (Marx in Wheen, 2000: 42)

Writing elsewhere, the young Marx wrote, without any equivocation, that press freedom was ‘the pre-requisite for a democratic life (Marx in Hardt, 2001: 26). But if the Soviet Union needed a theoretical position in how it should conduct its journalism, it turned to Lenin and his writings on the press and journalism, rather than to Marx.

The press in the Soviet Union, and later its satellites, was integrated into the political field. It had no ‘watchdog’ role, as the media in the West often sees itself; it was not there to hold the powerful in check. On the contrary, once the Soviet system emerged from Civil War and the Wars of Intervention, journalists were expected to follow the Party line, as laid down by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), and have an organising function totally different from the media in the West. The media was politically supervised and its task was to deliver support for the construction of Socialism.

Media commentators in the West have tended to view the Soviet media through Cold War eyes, thereby viewing the media as simple organs of propaganda. The now classic Western theory that explains the Soviet system of the media is that of Wilbur Schramm in his chapter on the ‘The Soviet

Communist Theory' in the *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert *et al.*, 1963), whose influence on journalism studies, especially in the US, was discussed earlier. It was originally written in 1956. *Four Theories of the Press* set up the Western ideal against the Soviet model. Schramm maintains that:

the two systems line up almost diametrically opposed in their basic tenets, although both use words like freedom and responsibility to describe what they are doing. Our press tries to contribute to the search for truth; the Soviet press tries to convey pre-established Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist truth. We think of the audiences of our press as 'rational men', able to choose between truth and falsehood; the Soviets think of theirs as needing careful guidance from caretakers, and to this end the Soviet state sets up the most complete possible safeguards against competing information. We bend over backwards to make sure that information and ideas will compete. They bend over backwards to make sure that only the line decided upon will flow through the Soviet channels, We say that their press is not free; they say that our press is not responsible. (Siebert *et al.*, 1993: 5-6)

Other than the tone of this piece, there would have been few on the faculties of either Sofia University or Moscow State University who would disagree with Wilbur Schramm.

To understand how Sofia University developed, one has to understand where it came from and, to do that, one must turn to Lenin and what has been described as his theory of the press. This 'theory' was written by Lenin in response to the different conditions he found himself in while politically active in the early years of the 20th century, when he was part of a small

illegal political grouping, living in exile and subject to faction forming and splits. Whether these disparate commentaries constitute a theory is a moot point. Colin Sparks certainly does not think so. Sparks suggests that it is doubtful that such dispersed writings constitute a theory at all. There are different ways these thoughts can be assessed: they might be viewed as insights as to how a working-class press might work in opposition, or they may lay down distinctions between the bourgeois press and the press of the working-class movement. The writings also related to particular problems the social democrats were facing. Sparks says: ‘Taken together, it is hardly possible to speak of anything more than a series of scattered insights and *ad hoc* pronouncements’ (Sparks, 1998: 49).

What Lenin’s writings clearly emphasised was that the media and journalists had no role outside that assigned by the Party. Later Marxist writers on the media, such as Gramsci, were more subtle and complex, but the reading of Lenin taken from about three texts served Stalinism and the establishment of journalism schools long and faithfully.

The first text is the relatively minor work, *Where to Begin?* In it Lenin states:

The role of the newspapers... is not limited solely to the dissemination of ideas, to political education and the enlistment of political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitation, it is also a collective organisation. In this last respect it may be likened to the scaffolding round a building under construction, which marks the contours of the structure and

facilitates communication between the builders, enabling them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour. With the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organisation will take place. (Lenin, 1961: v:22)

Party Organisation and the Newspaper

In the more well-known and seminal text, *What Is To Be Done?*, Lenin emphasises the social role of the paper within a group of revolutionaries scattered throughout the Russian empire. The newspaper's content is important, but so is the organisation necessary to distribute and produce the journal.

The mere function of distributing a newspaper would help to establish actual contact (if it is a newspaper worthy of the name, i.e. it is issued regularly, not once a month like a magazine but at least four times a month). At the present time, communications between towns on revolutionary business is the exception rather than the rule. If we had a newspaper, however, such communication would become the rule and would secure, not only the distribution of the newspaper, of course, but (what is more important) an exchange of experience, of material, of forces and of resources. (Lenin 1961: v:507)

The sort of integrated model Lenin propounded was similar to other revolutionary parties and, in particular, the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). It might be said that given the role of the newspaper and its editors and journalists, the newspaper was at the heart of a communications strategy that would include Party agitation, planning and preparing large demonstrations, as well as arguing the Party line.

Lenin could have adopted other models that existed for left-wing newspapers, including more commercial models that existed in the US, for instance, where leftist entrepreneurs established newspapers that were more commercial. Instead, he looked towards a European model and especially the model of the German Social Democrats, and sought to adapt it to conditions in Russia.

In another major text, *Party Organisation and Party Literature*, Lenin argued that ‘Literature must become part of the common cause of the proletariat... Literature must become a component of organised, planned and integrated Social Democratic work’ (Lenin, 1961: x: 45). This was written in November 1905, when Russia was in the midst of a revolution and the Social Democrats were a mass party and effectively legal, as was its press. What Lenin was saying, Colin Spark’s suggests, is that in these conditions, writers who are members of the Party had to take responsibility for political actions once they had taken part in the decision-making (Sparks, 1998:47-48). These political actions included writing for the Party press. If they disagreed, he said, they were free to write elsewhere.

First of all we are discussing party literature, and its subordination to Party control. Everyone is free to write and say whatever he likes without any restrictions. (Lenin, 1961: x: 47)

Following the success of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Party found itself to be a mass party wielding state power in conditions of invasion and civil war.

It was never possible in Lenin's lifetime for him to attempt to develop a theory appropriate to a stable and democratic Soviet State. Such theoretical contributions as he attempted towards defining the press during this period were limited and fragmentary. (Sparks, 1998: 48)

Lenin's writings during this period embraced three aspects: the rationale for banning hostile publications in circumstances in which the state was in danger from within or without, something familiar to many non-communist states, which have retained the right to ban publications or broadcasting if the state feels threatened;¹² the ability to express an opinion that was not dependent on the wealthy owners of the press, but open to every worker and peasant; and the duty of the press to expose shortcomings and limitations of the new Soviet State. In the latter two, the emphasis seems to have been on the rights of non-journalists to have their views expressed.

While Communist Party members during the period of the Soviet Union might point to these writings as constituting a theory, it might also be argued that they were the response to particular issues at particular times. Whether they constituted a theory is a matter for debate, but undoubtedly they form the intellectual and theoretical framework for both the communist press and journalism, and consequently the training of those same journalists.

¹² For example, the Irish broadcasting ban, formally section 31 of the Broadcasting Act (1960), severely curtailed broadcast journalism for over 20 years. It was upheld as a reasonable response to threats against the state, when challenged, at the European Court of Human Rights in 1991. The UK had Broadcasting ban in place for some time, though it was far less restrictive than the Irish ban.

Journalism training in Eastern Europe also had another tradition, which goes back to the 1920s when a journalism programme was established in the Free School of Political Science in the former Czechoslovakia. According to Gross, this, and programmes that followed in Poland, Hungary and Romania, emphasised the liberal arts and social sciences, rather than reporting, journalism writing and professional ethics (Gross, 2001: 5). Journalism programmes run by journalism associations, which offered practical skills, were not accepted or acknowledged in the universities. Ekaterina Ognianova agrees, saying that the theoretical nature of journalism education was partly due to the Eastern European tradition, which viewed general intellectual abilities and competence, and a talent to present it, as more important ‘than the news itself’.

It was also due to the Bulgarian pre-communist tradition of a partisan press and newspapers siding with a party’s position since the last century. But, most of all, journalism education in communist Bulgaria was theoretical since its purpose was to serve the ideological goals of the Communist Party. In this regard, journalism educators were seen as professional gatekeepers and agents of the Communist Party and government. (Ognianova in Gross, 2001:6)

Much of the media aid and development that took place in the former communist countries was based on a vocational model that was already considered inadequate in much of the West, where the education of journalists was increasingly taking place within the university sector. Moreover, much of the media aid was simply the opposite side of the same coin, insisting that journalists reject one ideological position – the so-called

Leninist theory of the press – for another equally ideological one – the so-called Anglo Saxon model – that supported democracy and the free market. By viewing and portraying the traditional universities as simply servants of the previous regimes, Western funding failed to understand and build upon earlier journalism traditions and education, based on strong humanities, intellectual and literary traditions of Central and Eastern Europe in the early and interwar years of the last century.

The decision to include university journalism education, alongside traditional journalism training, to some extent may have come about by accident, but nevertheless made the EU project in Bulgaria and its university module almost revolutionary, not least because it forced both sides, Western trainers and university academics to confront, each other's preconceptions.

CHAPTER SIX

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

It is over 20 years since the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, and over 20 years since the first initiatives were put in place to train journalists and reform the media. In that time, a vast amount of money has been spent on media training and development, with thousands of journalists receiving some sort of training from Western journalists, trainers and, more recently, educators. Nevertheless, today, with some exceptions, and despite the money and effort, journalism throughout the transitional states is still characterised by a lack of professionalism, little understanding of the need for accuracy, a willingness to accept bribes and a lack of understanding of the journalist's ethical role. Although every country in Eastern and South Eastern Europe experienced communism and the transition period differently, there is no doubt but that what is true of the region as a whole is also true of Bulgaria. Bulgaria is uniquely placed, and exemplifies the history, opportunities, changes and problems typical of the region and, for these reasons, will be the case study on which this thesis will focus.

Media assistance or development had tended to mean funding for specific training in reporting, editing for both print and broadcasting, ethics training

and the development of codes of conduct for either employer groups or journalism trade unions. Often training was in specific software, such as QuarkXPress or In-Design. Often overseas agencies spotted gaps and offered training to fill them. This might be training in election coverage, covering diversity, possibly trafficking or investigative journalism. It has also meant some media management training, and in some instances funders, have made low interest loans available to help new companies start up, or support those in financial difficulties. One such funder has been the New York based Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF), which has been supplying loans for media since 1996. It has included media in Russia, Georgia, Slovakia, Serbia, as well as transitional countries in other parts of the world.

Exactly how much money has been invested or donated is hard to estimate because funding going to media assistance is not always obvious: it can be donated under headings such as democracy development, developing good governance, aiding civil society, or aiding elections. There are, however, enough figures to give an indication as to the scale of the media development industry in Central, Eastern, South Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and the Caucasus.

Prior to the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, media assistance was relatively small, and tended to be concerned with funding propaganda bodies, such as Radio Free Europe. Following the fall of the Communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe and then the Soviet Union, however,

it grew exponentially. Between 1985 and 2001, the US government and non-government agencies spent \$600 million in media assistance, the bulk going to former communist countries. In 2004, the US government donated \$40 million, with about \$25 million going to the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and, through it, to two independent agencies, Internews and the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX/Promedia). The balance went to media development through the State Department (LaMay, 2007: xiii).

The philanthropist and investor, George Soros, donates about \$20 million annually, mainly through his Open Society Institutes. A number of individual governments also aid media development, as does the UN and its agencies. According to *Media Missionaries*, a report by Ellen Hume for the US Knight Foundation in 2002, the non-US assistance is also considerable. ‘The European Union has probably donated as much as the US government in money, training, equipment and legal advice,’ (Hume, 2002: 19). She cites many other agencies and governments who have also funded media assistance. In total, LaMay suggests that there are hundreds of US and European non-governmental organisations funding media assistance (LaMay, 2002: xiii).

Media Development, Has it Worked?

But after all this money, and the activity arising from it, the question remains: has it worked? According to the IREX (International Research and Exchange) *Media Sustainability Index, Country Report for Bulgaria 2001*,

for instance: ‘Journalists avoid controversy. They don’t contradict their publisher’s policy, and are wary of upsetting government officials for fear of being fired, sued or both. Journalists respond to events of relevance to officials, rather than the general public.’ The report further states: ‘Accepting money or gifts for covering certain events and not covering others is often considered a normal practice in journalistic circles. As a result, the dividing line between editorial and advertising is blurred and the public trust in media output is weakened’ (IREX, 2001: 81).

One of the leading academic media commentators on the region, Peter Gross, comments:

... while some progress has been made in professionalizing the field, to date the region’s journalism is not of a calibre consonant with that of its Western neighbours. Their partisanship and inclinations to propagandize and their lack of professional standards and ethics are leftover traits from the pre-communist era, refined and hardened by the communist experience, its exigencies and teachings. (Gross, 1996: 43)

In 2008 Gross was even more critical of elements of the media in south-Eastern Europe. Speaking about Romania, which, by then had become a member of the EU, he said the media had not established themselves as being a necessity in democracy:

It is hardly a surprise that despite showing promise more than once since 1998 that they might evolve as bona fide platforms for news, information, and varied opinions, most news media outlets persist

being organs of disinformation, intimidation, trivialisation, rumour, advocacy and propaganda on all political and economic issues or those tinged by them. (Gross 2008: 146)

LaMay, in his work, *Exporting Press Freedom* (2007), one of the few serious and critical studies of the area of media assistance, suggests that in recent years, the amount of funding has diminished. He cites a number of reasons for this, including some success in Central Europe, though even this success, some of which is predicated on foreign investment, which has created near monopolies in some countries, is problematic in itself, and will be examined later. Another reason is that the US government has diverted media assistance to Islamic and Arab countries following the events of 9/11. However, alternatively, he suggests that there 'is a belief among donors and recipients alike that too many media assistance programmes have not produced lasting or worthy results' (LaMay, 2007: xiv-xv).

Why has so much activity and money failed to put in place a responsible media that can contribute to the development and strengthening of democracy? A number of observers have commented on the deficiencies in the provisions devised to address the problems. According to Ekaterina Ognianova:

Most training sessions have been too short; they have been too theoretical and general; and they have insulted the participants by revealing the visitors' total ignorance about their countries and by preaching the ABCs of journalism to experienced professionals. (Ognianova, 1995: 36)

Ellen Hume's work, *Media Missionaries* (and the title of her report is without irony), writes of hundreds of Americans rushing to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics to spread the gospel of democracy: 'Among them were some of America's most altruistic journalists who hoped to midwife a newly independent press.' But even Hume's upbeat report is forced to concede: 'In much of the former USSR, for example, millions of dollars in aid have not produced a viable independent media' (Hume, 2002: 9).

While many studies emphasise the number of individual academics, especially American, who have taken part in training programmes, that probably reflects the propensity for academics to write up their experiences. Most training, however, has been offered by development agencies, including those funded by USAID, the EU and others. Much of it has been vocational and skills-based and many of the trainers have been working journalists, consultants and trainers, rather than educators. It is important to distinguish between education and training. While there is considerable overlap between the two, there are important differences to be noted. Training tends to be short term and related to acquiring very specific skills. Education tends to be longer term and aims to instil the critical, evaluative and transferable skills associated with the reflective practitioner.

The number of organisations which have been involved in media training and development gives some indication of the scale of media involvement in

the former communist countries.¹³ But the context in which journalism training has taken place has been one that has witnessed the triumph of global capitalism; the end of the Cold War; the discrediting of the *New World Information and Communications Order*;¹⁴ and the dominance of the Western approach to journalism and journalism training.

In its place is the Western journalistic paradigm, which is expressed in the phrase ‘objective and a value-free presentation of facts’. This is usually explained as presenting a story as ‘balanced’ so that competing versions/interpretations of facts are presented; information is verified as fact; information and comment is ascribed to specific named sources; views and feelings are kept out of the story; and there is no underlying agenda. This is also known as the Anglo-Saxon model. Sparks maintains that the Anglo-Saxon model is

characterised by fearlessly independent media employing brave investigative journalists who, whatever their personal feelings, are dedicated to the separation of fact and opinion in their reporting, who

¹³ Gannett Foundation; US Information Agency; American Society of Newspaper Editors; Voice of America; Charter 77; German Marshall Fund; International Federation of Newspaper Publishers; Soros Foundation; Reuters; Media Development Loan Fund; Internews; Myers Foundation of Australia; UNESCO; Trans-Atlantic Dialogue on European Broadcasting; Center for War, Peace and the News Media; US Agency for International Development; the BBC World Service Trust; European Journalism Centre; the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; International Research and Exchange (IREX); the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), to name but a number of those organisation involved in media development.

¹⁴ The World Communications Order was a term coined to explain a debate, initiated by UNESCO in the 1970s and 1980s over media representation of the developing world. It led to the MacBride Commission, chaired by the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sean MacBride who formulated a number of recommendations designed to address the media imbalance between the developed and developing world. There was strong opposition to the Commission’s report from the US, which withdrew from UNESCO and from many media organisations.

are even-handed and impartial between contending viewpoints and whose main task is to inform their readers and viewers without fear or favour about all this is most important in the world today. (Sparks, 1998: 175)

This is what journalists in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe have been exposed to in training schemes. Some analysts have acknowledged the difficulties and the limitations of such media training. According to Lucida Fleeson:

As trainers we coach from the sidelines: it is the reporters and their editors who must decide whether or not to put their organisation behind a controversial story. After all, it is they who could be fired or... be visited in their offices by heavy-set bodyguards of criminal kingpins. (Fleeson, 2005)

The Free Market

The purpose of offering training is officially to strengthen democracy. But, while this may be so, there is also an ideological rationale associated with promoting the free market. As Mihai Coman, of Bucharest University, says:

The mass media in post-communist countries experienced not only a forceful entry of foreign capital, but more importantly, an invasion of Western programming. By 1995 in a number of countries, including Bulgaria, Romania and Russia, programmes bought from the West accounted for over 40 per cent of broadcast fare. (Coman, 2000: 41)

That ‘forceful entry of foreign capital’ meant many new media organisations were established with Western money. Western interests also bought some of the former communist media. In Bulgaria, for instance, Western interests included Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp, which owns bTV, as well as the German media group, Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitungsgruppe (WAZ), which owns the newspapers *24 Chasa* and *Trud*. These two newspapers account for about 80 per cent of the Bulgarian print market. Swiss and Russian commercial interests own other media outlets. And there are similar stories from all the former communist countries. According to LaMay, WAZ also dominates the newspaper markets in Serbia and Macedonia, for example (LaMay, 2007: xiv).

In ‘Foreign Ownership in the SEE Region’, in the journal *deScripto: A Media Journal for East and South Eastern Europe*, Daniela Sussenbacher argues that most of the former communist countries of the region have a high concentration of media ownership: ‘The big European media concerns are mainly targeting the print media sector, while American media organisations focus on the electronic media sector (Sussenbacher, 2005:1).

Journalistic Voice

The trainers employed by these agencies have never tried to find or develop a journalistic voice from within the countries they are working in, because they are charged with promoting Western journalistic practices. Even if they wanted to, however, they could not, because they are unqualified to do so.

They rarely speak the local language, and have little understanding of local journalism or its history. They often have poor knowledge of the political situation within which the people they are training work. Problematically, some trainers have offered advice, which, if taken, could put journalists in danger, such as dealing with police, security forces or criminals, as if it was Western Europe or the US.

This author, while working on a training programme for a US agency some years ago in Minsk, Belarus, was told by those in charge of the project that the journalists were to be trained in the ways of the *New York Times*. This was despite the fact that the newspaper journalists involved in the training programme worked for very small opposition newspapers and subject to constant harassment; the newspapers they worked for were forced often to be printed outside Belarus, in Lithuania, due to the government controlled printing monopoly. There is anecdotal evidence of diplomatic interference in training schemes, to ensure particular outcomes and some trainers were moved, or did not have contract renewed when they became too close to local journalists or journalists' organisations. This is something that USAID recognises as a problem. Perspicaciously, the report, *The Role of Media in Democracy, a Strategic Approach*, commissioned by USAID notes that:

Democratic transitions may not be strengthened through the creation of a media, which, while free from its own government control, espouses views of foreign governments and reflects their interests.
(USAID, 1999: 9)

Two US university journalism professors, Richard Shafer and Eric Freedman, wrote of their experience as Fulbright scholars in the post-Soviet Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan. They were in Uzbekistan to teach ‘democratic journalism’, and observed that the posting was ‘probably related in a minor way to complex factors of foreign relations, historical circumstances and positioning in the world economy’ (Shafer and Freedman, 2003: 43). They were aware of the ambiguity of their position, but nevertheless found a good reason to continue to teach ‘democratic journalism’:

Of course, as Americans we adhered to the basic assumption that all people yearn for individual liberties that are fundamental to our belief system. This belief system includes open access to information through a relatively unfettered press system. (Shafer and Freedman, 2003: 43)

The conventions of international journalism, they maintain, are essentially the same, and are primarily based on the British and American models. Paradoxically, in stating this position, they consciously reject any alternative view, including that of John C. Merrill, whom they cite. Merrill argues that the insistence that the media everywhere conform to Western ‘capitalistic and pluralistic’ media structures was

not only an arrogant and ethnocentric one but also betrays a stultified, intellectual view of reality. Cultures are different; the values that shore up such cultures are different. Stages of national development are different, citizens’ expectations are different. (Merrill in Shafer and Freedman, 2003: 93)

Within a few years a change of attitude appeared to be emerging and the two authors were writing, with a colleague:

The authors have observed ideologues among foreign consultants who assume that all aspects of the Western model are inherently better than those practiced in the nation that is hosting them. This view is probably more common among veteran professional journalists than among journalism academics that are also former journalists, and possess both teaching and research skills, and a high level of theoretical and historical knowledge related to mass media. (Shafer, Freedman and Rice, 2005: 8)

Overseas journalism education

There are other problems associated with the training and vocational model that has been the major one in Eastern and South Eastern Europe since the collapse of communism. This model has encouraged some of the brightest and best to go abroad, since they believe they have been trained up to something called ‘Western standards’. Sadly, however, many want to work elsewhere not so much to bring Western media skills to Uzbekistan, for example, but to work abroad.

Other journalists, some having availed of scholarship schemes to do journalism Masters degrees in the US, believe they are too highly trained to work as journalists for low pay and seek donor money to offer yet more training, or work in Western-financed media centres, or media development

centres, whose sole function is to access Western donor funding and offer Anglo-Saxon or Western journalism training.

Some American journalism academics have questioned this development. Theodore M. Glasser, of Stanford University, when looking at professional issues in journalism across cultures said:

One of the least debated issues among journalism educators in the United States is the wisdom of educating international students whose professional goals include returning home to practice journalism the “American way”. It is curious that questions of cultural dependence are legitimate topics for research when applied to the consumption of media programmes and the like but largely a non sequitur when applied to the consumption of media education. (Glasser, 1992: 132)

Glasser further noted that while some have argued that courses, such as history or law ‘might be a little culturally confined’, the everyday ‘skills’ courses like reporting or editing ‘have nothing to do with anyone’s culture.

The unquestioned assumption seems to be that the techniques of the professional, like the methods of the scientist, exist independently of the world they are designed to describe; and thus journalists, to the extent that they conduct themselves professionally, can somehow situate themselves above or beyond any of the values, customs, or traditions that distinguish one culture from the next. The unfortunate implication, of course, is that the truly ‘professional’ parts of our curriculum are value free and therefore culturally neutral. (Glasser Spring 1992. 136)

Vocational training can also give a spurious authority to media output. Eastern and South Eastern Europe have many radio stations, television stations, magazines and newspapers with very high production values that disguise and even give authority to bad journalism.

Yet another problem is the sheer number of journalists who can be trained. In reality, despite 20 years of media development activity in the former communist countries, ‘most of the new journalists receive knowledge necessary to do the job in the newsroom on the job training’ (Coman, 2000: 44).

The Anglo Saxon model

When journalism trainers talk of democratic journalism, Western standards or the Anglo Saxon model, it is increasingly the case that no one knows what they mean anymore. If journalists in Eastern Europe are being taught to separate fact from opinion, or to listen to C.P. Scott’s dictum, that facts are sacred but comment is free, then who will teach that, as increasingly that is not the model adopted in Western countries, where tabloid newspapers scream opinion and Fox News has abandoned any pretence at impartiality.¹⁵ Then there is the tension between the US and much of Europe, where the US journalism school model is as foreign in France as it is in Ukraine or

¹⁵. C.P Scott was a legendary editor of *The Guardian*. His dictum concerning facts and comment was written in an article celebrating 100 years of *the Guardian* in 1921.

Bulgaria. The ideal, pushed mainly, but not exclusively by US agencies, is in trouble itself, because it hardly exists. Sparks suggest that

The Anglo Saxon model of the media is a largely imaginary construction. Like some mythological beast, it is an impossible amalgam of selected features of two incompatible systems, joined together without regard to its possibility of existence, In this case, the two parts might be characterised as the *New York Times* and the BBC – although with both presented in an idealised form. (Sparks, 1998: 176)

Training agencies have also suggested, by positing something called Western standards or the Anglo Saxon model, that there is one media system worth striving for. However, it appears that such a model is illusionary. The US media model is increasingly a monopolistic one¹⁶. Most cities of any size in the US are now one newspaper towns, which is itself a negation of the free market which is sold by American experts as part of the media reforms, so necessary to support strong democratic institutions. That very monopoly means journalists must be ‘serious’ in their journalism in order to maximise the elite audience so necessary for advertisers.

However, in the UK, the other Anglo Saxon media market, there is fierce competition, with ten national newspapers slugging it out daily. In order to attract readers, the newspapers adopt very partisan views, appealing to a

¹⁶See Bagdikian (1992) and also essay by Begg,D, on the dangers posed to democracy by new media monopolies in Kiberd, D, (ed) (1997) for an interesting Irish take on the general debate concerning media monopolies.

stratified class-based audience. The largest sales are not of serious newspapers, but of newspapers that offer entertainment, and even naked women on page three. As James Curran noted:

Competitive market pressure to maximise sales resulted therefore in human interest content displacing public affairs coverage. Indeed by the late 1970s, public affairs accounted for less than 20 per cent of the editorial content of the national popular press. A comparable process has occurred in popular television. (Curran, 2000: 128)

Broadcasting legislation in Britain and Ireland ensured, until relatively recently, that there was little capitalist competition. All television and most radio was public service and even where there was commercial television, such as ITV in Britain, it was strongly regulated and ensured it operated to what might be considered public service norms, such as a legislative requirement to impartiality and objectivity. In the US, however, broadcasters fought for audience in a highly competitive and lightly regulated market by being increasingly partisan.

Sparks suggests some post-communist systems have more in common with the Italian or southern European media than any Anglo Saxon model, however difficult that might be to define. 'Certainly, the Italian, or more generally the southern European, media type does have some features in common with that of post-communism' (Sparks, 1998: 178). He goes on to argue that

Such a perspective allows us better to understand both the common features of the different national instances and different historical dynamics. There is no evidence that there is operating a secret teleology that will result in ‘Anglo Saxon’ media and against which the current progress or lack of progress of the existing media may be measured. (Sparks, 1998: 179)

In the early years, following the fall of communism, there were many offers of university partnerships, but most American universities preferred not to deal with existing universities in the region, establishing their own institutions. The University of Missouri, for example, launched the American University in Bulgaria. Rutgers University launched its Media Centre in Warsaw (until it became plagued with problems and lost its US funding). New York University founded the Russian-American Press and Information Centre (RAPIC), now the Press Development Institute, which focused on print journalism training, growing in time to 19 field offices, of uneven quality (Hume, 2002: 33).

Education rather than Training

Notwithstanding all these initiatives, this thesis posits an educational rather than a training model: that of working with and through the journalism faculties of the major universities in the transitional states in question. There is a long tradition of journalism education in these universities, going back to the formation of the School of Journalism at Moscow State University in

1947. Such universities have been dismissed by Western media development agencies as being unreconstructed Stalinism at worst, or at best offering an out-of-date model that is incapable of reform.

Marin and Lengel point out that the state centralized all university matters: including curriculum decisions, and maintained a separation of teaching and research:

This separation resulted in a curricula that did not benefit from new knowledge emerging from research. Also the state, in its control of university curricula, forbade topics such as media, which it regarded as a direct link to the west. (Marin and Lengel in Blankson and Murphy (ed) 2007: 62)

There had been some contacts made with Eastern and South Eastern European universities, through the aforementioned Fulbright programme and EU-funded university exchange and links programmes, especially the EU's Tempus programme. Most of these were channelled through already existing university programmes, rather than media programmes. A number of these links were with Western-style private universities, such as the American University in Bulgaria, where teaching is done through English, with little regards to Bulgaria's own media or education traditions, and with prohibitively high fees by local standards. Here, the Professor of Journalism, for example, was a former correspondent for News Corp's London-based Sky News – he did not speak Bulgarian and taught through English.

According to a student taking journalism at the American University, the curriculum was based on ‘the American press and the American system of journalism mainly. Many of the professors are American... Internships are obligatory; some do them in America’ (Huter, Luef and Maireder, 2005: 7).

The BBC led PHARE project

One of the first indications that there could be a change of attitude was the project launched in 2004, of the project that is part of this thesis, under the EU’s Phare programme. It was officially called Technical Assistance for Improving the Professional Standards of Journalism, Bulgaria. The project’s general aim was to strengthen the independence of the media through improving professional standards in Bulgarian journalism, and by extension Bulgaria’s democracy as part of the lead up process to EU membership. The participants, as already mentioned, included the BBC World Service Trust; the Media Development Centre, Sofia; the International Federation of Journalists, the University of Leipzig and the Dublin Institute of Technology. And it is this project on which this thesis focuses.

It was an ambitious project that aspired by its end to have established a system of self-regulation, including a code of practice and a complaints commission; to have offered and delivered training to 300 mid-career journalists; to have put in place human resource strategies for media organisation; and also to have modernised the teaching and curriculum at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications (FJMC) at Sofia University. Initially, the latter was very much an add-on, as media projects

did not usually include universities, but in time, as we shall see, it came to be seen as highly significant, and led to further important projects for the BBC World Service Trust and DIT, entirely based on journalism education.

Journalism Education at Sofia University

The first degree programme in journalism at Sofia University was established in the academic year 1952/3, only five years after the establishment of the first degree programme in the USSR, at Moscow State University in 1947. Journalism was made a separate department within the Faculty of Slavic Studies in 1968 and remained so until 1974, when a separate Faculty of Journalism was established. It was re-named the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications (FJMC) in 1991.

Journalism education in Bulgaria emerged from a particular set of circumstances relating to the Communist victory in 1947. It also mirrored developments in the Soviet Union, probably more so than any other so-called 'People's Democracies' in the post-war years. Unlike its communist neighbours, Yugoslavia and Romania, Bulgaria remained loyal to the USSR, a reflection of its view of Russia as a friend and liberator, a national view that went back to the 1870s. So loyal was the Peoples' Republic of Bulgaria that it was the only Warsaw Pact country never to have Soviet troops stationed on its soil.

While there have been major changes at the FJMC since the collapse of communism, the structures and even the syllabus that existed in 2004 still owes much to the type of curriculum developed in the Soviet Union since the Second World War, whose role was to produce journalists who conformed to state ideology. Hence, Sofia University offered a five-year programme leading to an MA degree. The programme was highly theoretical, with a minimum of journalism practice. The facilities necessary to deliver a modern programme were also a problem. When the project team evaluated the Faculty at the start of the project, there were few computers or television cameras, little sound equipment and no portable recording equipment at all. It did have a highly educated academic staff, only some of who had practical skills, and none had a modern syllabus to teach.

Over a two-year period, as described more fully in the next chapter, the project organised seminars in curriculum modernisation, familiarised lecturers with modern equipment, organised seminars in London at which journalism educators and trainers gave practical advice. Conferences were organised and staff travelled to journalism schools all over Western Europe to research curriculum development.¹⁷

There were, however, problems. Some academic staff was resistant to change; local media organisations questioned the point of the exercise; some of those working with the project itself were unused to dealing with academic institutions and preferred to concentrate on the training elements.

¹⁷ See Appendices for details.

The fact that there was no budget for equipment meant that some important areas, such as online journalism, could not even be considered.

There is little doubt that the outcome of the Bulgarian project was always going to be somewhat aspirational. It needed major funding to allow the academic staff to fully implement the recommendations. It did mean some individual syllabi were modernised; an association for Bulgarian journalism educators was established; and many staff have been exposed to different curriculum models, and to new learning and teaching methodologies. The Faculty was also given help towards implementing the changes necessary to conform to the Bologna Process. But much remains to be done, as is discussed in the conclusions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DEMOCRACY, JOURNALISM AND BULGARIA'S ROAD INTO THE EU

The 4-part project, Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards in Journalism, was included in the 2001 EU Phare programme for Bulgaria, and was put in place as part of the anticipated accession of Bulgaria to EU membership, which was expected to take place some time between 2005 and 2007/8. Ultimately, Bulgaria became a full member of the EU on January 1st 2007.

Bulgaria's membership of the EU, along with Romania – the two countries joined the Union on the same day – was always problematic. It seemed less developed than the geographically more Western European former communist countries, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, and the three Baltic States, which had joined already. Its institutions appeared less stable and its police and judiciary seemed unable to deal with its problem of organised crime, Mafia and corruption (Glenny, 2008: *passim*, Foley, 2004 & 2009). It was important for Brussels to show the rest of Europe that Bulgaria was well on its way to achieving what might be called European standards of democratic development. In order to do this, it was necessary to show that a vibrant civil society was in formation, and

one of the aspects of this was to encourage a strong and professional media. While the EU has never had a media policy *per se*, it has had policies concerning television and radio. However, since December 1999, the EU had acknowledged that media should be governed by co-regulation through a partnership between the state and the media industries, which was included as part of its audio-visual policy for 2001-2005, which amended the *Television Without Frontiers*, the mainstay of EU audiovisual policy for audiovisual media services. That was one way of being involved in media, to work on regulating standards, which became an important part of the Phare project, and a central plank of its policy towards accession countries.

Co-regulation is already widely used with regard to the protection of minors and the proposal should encourage co-regulatory regimes in the fields coordinated by the Directive. Such regimes must be broadly accepted by the main stakeholders and provide for effective enforcement. (COM (2005) 646 final, European Commission, Brussels, 2005, paragraph 342)

Issues pertaining to the development of Bulgaria's democratic institutions became increasingly urgent, as it was looking less likely that Bulgaria would be able to accede to membership by 2007. Two regular EU reports, that for 2000 and 2001, noted weaknesses in Bulgaria's media including the lack of minority ethnic participation, and specialised programmes for ethnic minorities on Bulgarian national television. Those two reports¹⁸ detailed deficiencies in the media and became the basis of the thinking behind the

¹⁸ As was normal practice, the EU published annual assessments of how Bulgaria and other applicant countries, progressed towards final membership of the EU. The reports were entitled *Regular Report on Bulgaria's Progress towards Accession*, various years.

eventual Phare project. If Bulgaria was to become a member, it was necessary to strengthen certain institutions, such as the judicial and the political, and if openness, transparency and accountability of the institutions of the state were to be achieved, there would have to be a media with the professional skills to ensure that took place. Following discussions with media organisations and relevant individuals in Bulgaria, the EU identified four factors accounting for a decline in professional standards in journalism. These factors later became the foundation for the Phare project:

- The lack of voluntary self-regulation and dispute resolution in the media sector, based on consensus among media and journalists
- Weak or non-existent human resource development policies in media
- Outdated and inefficient standards of journalist teaching at university level
- Limited opportunities for professional training for practicing journalists.

These considerations subsequently became the basis for the terms of reference for the project itself, and defined the four elements of the project.

Sequence of Key Activities and Events

In order to avoid confusion and given the length of time the project took it is necessary to highlight particular events and key steps in the curriculum

modernisation sub-project as it developed over nearly two years. It must be remembered that what is outlined in the following timeline is, of course, only a quarter of whole project, which included training of mid-career journalists, developing of a code of ethics and the policing system to go with it as well as all the other elements of the project. There was also considerable work prior to the formal start of the project, including the application process, the preparation of the technical offer, which was the basis of the application from the consortium and other preparatory work.

February 2004:

Following the Assessment Report in January 2004, an International Curriculum Experts meeting convened.

March 2004:

Working Group on Curriculum Modernisation set up and operative.

April 2004:

Participatory Assessment conducted.

May 2004:

Findings of the Assessment presented to the Working Group.

June 2004:

An analysis prepared by the Key Curriculum Expert entitled: Curriculum Modernisation: Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations.

July 2004:

Guidelines drawn up for the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative by local and international experts.

August 2004:

Details and conditions for the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative announced, published and circulated with the deadline for applications set at 30th September 2004.

September 2004:

A meeting of the Key Expert and Team Leader with the University authorities, Faculty members and the Project Implementation Unit convened on 29th September to discuss concerns raised by the findings and recommendations of the Key Expert's **Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations.**

October 2004:

An Evaluation Panel established to assess scholarship applications consisting of the Key Expert, an international expert, a Sofia University representative, a media industry representative and a local expert in scholarship and exchange programmes.

November 2004:

- Approval of nine applicants for the scholarships first round by the Evaluation Panel after selection interviews on 3rd and 4th November.
- Formal approval of the extension of the Overall Project to run till November 2005.

December 2004 – January 2005 – February 2005:

Scholarship placements at European universities designed and developed.

March – July 2005:

First round of CSI scholarships takes place.

May 2005:

Second round of CSI scholarships conceived and the new seminar formula designed.

June 2005:

- Applications officially invited on 3rd June for the second round of CSI. Selection interviews conducted on 28th June.
- Advanced preparatory work carried out to establish a Faculty Network for exchange of information.

July 2005:

Two-week Curriculum Modernisation programme takes place as the second round of CSI in London, attended by seven Faculty members.

September 2005:

- A one-day review and evaluation meeting of all recipients of both rounds of CSI takes place on 13th September with the view to carrying its benefits over into the curriculum modernization process.
- A two-day conference held on 15-16th September in Sofia attended by representatives from nine journalism-teaching universities in Bulgaria to establish and found a faculty information exchange network.
- Agreement by consent to establish a countrywide ‘Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications in Bulgaria.’ Organising Committee set-up, timeframe agreed. Press release published and circulated on the 20th September.

October 2005:

- Appointment of one international expert and two local experts to assist the Key Expert in finalising the Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan and starting advance implementation action.

- Work on adoption of a unified template with guidelines for individual module construction by all Faculty members.
- Work on designing a student course-book with simplified module templates.
- Analysis of findings, conclusions and recommendations in post-CSI reports and surveys of all recipients.
- Advanced work on compilation and adaptation of post-CSI reports to produce a Faculty internal publication to inform further curriculum modernisation programme.
- Consultations with faculty members on identifying leadership structure and roles for the future Curriculum Review Committee (Curriculum Action Group).
- Identification of the proposed new modules for selection to run as experimental/pilot courses.

November 2005:

- Unified module template adopted for the Faculty subject to formal approval
- Student workbook drafted along the Bologna lines
- First draft of internal publication on the findings and benefits of the CSI
- Further consultations on setting up the **Curriculum Review Committee**
- Further work on the launching of the Association of Journalism Educators in Bulgaria
- Association of Journalism Educators in Bulgaria established. First executive established and association registered in court.
- Curriculum Strategy and Action Plan to be presented to Working Group

Setting the Terms of Reference

The project as a whole was designed to strengthen the independence of the media, through the improving of professional standards. It comprised four sub projects:

- 1 To develop a system of voluntary self-regulation of the media sector, to develop a Code of Practice and establish a Complaints Commission. This was to be achieved by training in ethics and how to operate such a commission.
- 2 To initiate reforms of human resource management policies for media organisations
- 3 To deliver professional training to at least 300 mid-career journalists, of whom 70 had to be of minority ethnic origin
- 4 To modernise journalism teaching in Sofia University

The terms of reference, as articulated by the EU, became, in effect, the rule book which specified in detail all factors governing the project as a whole, and the four component parts, listed above, including the qualifications each participant would be required to have; the number of reports to be submitted; how the reports should be formatted; the reporting procedures; the number of people to be employed on the project; how people would be paid; how funding would be accessed; the frequency of meetings etc. (see Appendix 1)

Although the four sub projects could be related to each other, for instance the teaching of media ethics being linked to voluntary self-regulation, in practice that never took place. In no documentation was there any suggestion

that the sub projects could be integrated.¹⁹ In reality, the Phare project operated like four separate projects, with three following the traditional pattern of media development, as it had developed since the fall of communism in the early 1990s, that of training in journalism skills, management and media regulation, and a fourth, the Curriculum Modernisation sub project, offering a radical departure by working on long term change at a journalism faculty. This had never happened in a media-strengthening exercise before in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and was definitely a first for the BBC World Service Trust (BBC WST).

The problems as identified by the terms of reference included:

- The fragmentation of the Bulgarian media sector at the time, with over 130 radio stations, 129 TV operators, and over 180 newspapers and magazines, (according to a survey by Market Test Ltd).
- The lack of self-regulation over the previous decade that led to a decline in standards of professional journalism.
- The continuing incidence of media reports that promote prejudice, especially towards various ethnic groups.

(ToR, 2001: 1)

The Terms of Reference had been drawn up within the European Commission after shortcomings had been noted within the Bulgarian media. They were, in effect, the contract for the consortium. Various bodies were consulted, including publishers organisation, the Council for Electronic Media, the Union of Bulgarian Journalists and the European Institute in

¹⁹ As it transpired, there was only one person who linked all four sub projects, that was the team leader, but in his reports the four sub projects were also under separate headings and chapters.

Sofia and the unit responsible for Bulgarian accession within the Ministry of Finance. The actual author/s were anonymous.

The Consortium

In the normal way, the EU invited tenders from consortia. It is known that at least two applied, one led by the Danish School of Journalism, and the other by the BBC WST. The BBC WST is the BBC media development wing, and was founded following the collapse of communism in 1989. The then head of the BBC World Service, John Tusa, described it at the time as being ‘the Marshall Plan of the mind’ – a reference to the post-war US Marshall Plan (Tusa, 1989).

Initially, the BBC WST used BBC funding, but soon became a major player in the increasingly valuable media development industry, successfully applying for funding from a range of sponsoring bodies all over the world. BBC WST projects would range from using radio in Africa as part of AIDS awareness education, to working with radio provision for prisoners in Russian jails, it has run women’s education projects using broadcasting, and a popular online training programme, called iLearn. It has also developed professional training strategies all over Eastern Europe and Asia, and has run a number of media training schools throughout Russia and Eastern Europe.

Being successful in applying for EU projects is a complex process, which has led to a number of project management companies specialising in

helping organisations make applications. There are a number of tactics developed over time, which help towards a successful outcome.

Organisations that make up successful consortia tend to come from a number of countries within the EU, and in the case of media projects in Eastern Europe, it is considered strategic to include a partner from one of the newer EU member states, and possibly one from the beneficiary country as well.

The partners in the successful consortium in this instance, along with the BBC WST, included the Dublin Institute of Technology in Ireland, the Brussels based International Federation of Journalists (IFJ),²⁰ University of Leipzig, in what was formerly the German Democratic Republic, and the Media Development Centre in Sofia, Bulgaria. Human Dynamics was a Vienna based project management company, with an office in Ireland. The consortium had to have within it the skills necessary to deliver and also to manage the project. Not all the partners had equal participation and some took little part other than taking on an advisory role. Others, such as the BBC WST, became project leaders. The BBC WST's income would be based on full participation and therefore maximising its income with management fees as well as providing expertise. In this particular project, the IFJ remained very much in the background.

One of the more difficult tasks for any consortia is how to identify and engage those who will become the Key International Experts. Key International Experts must have specific experience and able to commit themselves for the length of the project. The leader of the project proposed

²⁰ The IFJ represents journalists' organisations and trade unions. It claims to represent 600,000 journalists in 100 countries

by the BBC in the Phare project was Hans Steiger, a former BBC World Service broadcast journalist, who had for a number of years run a BBC WST training school in Sarajevo. In other areas, the BBC was able to look to its own areas of expertise, especially in journalism training and human resource management.

Curriculum Modernisation, sub project

It was to DIT that the BBC WST looked for expertise on journalism education.²¹ This author became the International Key Expert for the Curriculum Modernisation sub project, having the required number of years teaching journalism at university level, experience as a working journalist, as well as having worked previously in a number of EU and US-funded journalism training projects in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. For the curriculum modernisation aspects of the project, these two remained constant throughout, and were joined by a wide range of individuals, both local and international, for specific tasks as required, for the duration of the project.

The ToR were clear, the modernisation of the teaching of journalism would concentrate on Sofia University ‘as a model for other faculties in Bulgaria’ (ToR, 2001: 8). To suggest otherwise would be certain to run up against the still highly centralised Bulgarian higher education sector. A general under-funding of higher education in Bulgaria, it was noted, impacted on the

²¹ Dublin Institute of Technology’s School of Media provides a number of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes and has been providing journalism training and education since the 1960s.

training of journalists. The ToR justified the concentration on Sofia University, on the basis of its size, it having the largest journalism faculty in the country training over 70 per cent of practicing journalists. Its programmes, however, remained outdated, still reflecting Soviet era curricula, and lacked resources and support (ToR, 2001: 8). The programmes carried very high teaching loads, and the curricula were heavy on theory and lacking in meaningful journalism practice.

The ToR, which had been drawn up by EU officials, observed that steps towards the reform of teaching methods and modernisation of the curriculum had been taken, of which, it must be stated, the international experts found no evidence. The Terms of Reference spoke of international links between the Faculty of Mass Communications and journalism education bodies. There was an implication that such membership implied some element of quality assurance, that the Faculty had qualified for membership, or passed some sort of test, but in fact the organisations in question usually accepted membership upon receipt of the payment of a fee. Membership of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA), for instance, was seen as evidence of reform, which is not the case. Most international academic and professional bodies accept into membership universities and faculties without any pre-conditions. The fact that they are involved in journalism education is the only qualification for membership.

The Term of Reference were somewhat prescriptive and over the two years of the life of the programme, the various experts employed were forced to

find ways around the terms of reference. One of the terms, for instance, demanded the project team provide career opportunities to at least 50 students in their final year of study in the area of media. No one knew what this actually meant, and nor did it seem possible for a group of international journalism educators to find 50 jobs in any area in Bulgaria. In the end, this was fulfilled by recommending that any job vacancies in the media area be advertised on a web site accessible to students, which was established by the BBC WST as part of the linking of universities and journalism lecturers.

The ToR insisted on a rigid upwards-reporting system, and the appointment of a working group that would oversee the work of the International Key Expert. The International Key Expert submitted a proposal suggesting a wide representation on the working group of university staff, working journalists and students. This was ignored and the final make up of the Working Group reflected the centralised nature of Bulgarian universities, with the appointment of two retired university professors, one being Professor Vesselin Dimitrov, the former Dean of the Faculty that was in such need of modernisation. The other member of the Working Group was also a retired member of the Faculty, Prof Konstantin Angov. The two-man Working Group elected Prof Dimitrov as chair. Professor Dimitrov's involvement was a clear indication of the persistence of a strong hierarchical structure. Professor Dimitrov was, however, a strong supporter of the project, and as became evident; his successor was not. It was never confirmed, but it was believed, that it was through Professor Dimitrov's efforts that the university was included in the project in the first place.

The ToR stated that the project should conduct an assessment of the modernisation needs of the curriculum. This was to be undertaken in co-operation with the Faculty but, at the same time, it was required to be independent (ToR, 2001:8). In time, this became the Assessment Report (See Assessment Report analysis Appendix 1). The Assessment Report was the team's assessment of journalism education in Bulgaria, the Faculty itself and how the International Key Expert envisaged the project being carried out. The other activities listed in the ToR included designing and implementing the Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives for which €100,000 had been set aside (ToR, 2001:8).

The project was also to create an Information and Exchange Network amongst the journalism faculties throughout Bulgaria, which ended up based around the aforementioned BBC WST website (ToR, 2001:8). And, finally, the project was also charged with producing a plan and strategy for the Faculty on how it would modernise, which the ToR referred to as the Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan. (see appendix 3) This was to be the result of all the work, and was to be done after consultations with the staff of the University, mainly those who had received one of the scholarships (ToR, 2001:8).

The Assessment Report

Following the appointment of the BBC's led consortium, the project was to begin in November 2003. The starting date was specified in the terms of reference. However, there were delays. The first report, the Assessment Report, produced in April 2004, was more or less a description of the *status quo*, and a plan as to how the project would move forward. (See Appendix 1) On the advice of the Vice Dean for International Affairs, Dr Teodora Petrova, the project hired Dr Lilia Raycheva, a former Vice Dean of the Faculty and a member of the Council for Electronic Media, to assist the International Key Expert in preparing the Assessment Report. Dr Raycheva is a well-published international media scholar. She was the first of a number of local experts hired by the project, which did have the effect of gaining some support for the project, as it offered quite lucrative payment for work to some of the academic staff. Her contribution was an extensive account of the state of journalism education and training throughout Bulgaria in general, and the University of Sofia in particular. In the case of the latter, she enumerated and described how the Faculty was run, what was contained in the various curricula, data on numbers of students etc.

Dr Raycheva carried out an evaluation of journalism education at Sofia University and elsewhere in Bulgaria and also administered a survey of both staff and students, devised by the International Key Expert.²² The responses to the survey were very disappointing, and indicative of the parlous state of education in the Faculty. All 605 undergraduates were invited to respond,

²² Dr Raycheva's Evaluation Report can be found separately in Appendix 7.

41 (6.7%) replied. Of the 39 full time lecturers, six (15.3%) responded, and of the 50 part time staff, five (10%) replied.²³

Broadly, amongst students, the results showed little interest in the media outside television. After first year, students admitted that they scarcely read newspapers or magazines or listened to radio. Unsurprisingly, their main ambition was to work in television, either hosting a programme, or as a reporter. All the respondents who had completed first year had already found work in the media and demonstrated increasing disinterest in their university studies. Many were critical of teaching methods and all asserted there was not enough journalism practice taught at the university. Another finding was the increasing pessimism of finding full time post-graduation work in the media.

Amongst the academics, only one had not worked previously as a journalist, and most were still working as journalists. All had PhDs and all had published academic articles or books but, it would appear, in as far as can be extrapolated from such a small response, their journalism experience was some time in the past, and many of those who claimed to still work as journalists were engaged in commentary rather than editing, producing news or features. Most of the academic staff had experience in either print or radio. The staff agreed with the students about the lack of equipment and resources in the Faculty. Most academics professed the belief that 30 per cent of a degree programme should be devoted to journalism practice, which

²³ See Appendix 7 for full details.

was some way off the 50/50 break down in most journalism education centres in Western Europe. It was noted by the project team that there was a remarkable consistency in response from staff, giving rise to the suspicion that the responses were pre-agreed.

Amongst the students, it appears that the low attendance problem meant most were not even aware of the survey at all. Among the academics, the low response rate appeared to reflect the ambiguity of staff towards the project, at that stage in its development. It might also explain the high number of staff responses from those who could claim a journalism practice background, as they were the lecturers who tended to be more supportive of the aims of the project.

These responses gave rise to serious concerns. As International Key Expert, this author, as required, conducted an analysis of Dr Raycheva's descriptive report that was, as it transpired, highly critical of the Faculty. It was clear that the optimism contained in the ToR, that had suggested that first steps towards modernisation had already begun, was unfounded.

The Executive Summary of the Assessment Report stated:

- The University of Sofia's Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications (FJMC) plays a pivotal role within Bulgaria's media environment
- However, no clear picture emerges as to the overall strategy being pursued by the Faculty

- By international standards, there has been little or no real curriculum development
- Modernisation work should be carried out in the field of undergraduate programmes, as it is from here that most new journalists will emerge
- There is a lack of journalism practice, and what practice does exist, is not adequately integrated into the courses
- Technical equipment within the Faculty is in an appalling state – conditions are so bad that international experts who visited the University doubted if the staff could deliver some of the courses scheduled
- Due to low survey response rates, it was difficult to gauge the attitudes of students or staff
- However, students feel there is not enough journalism practice
- Amongst staff, there is low morale (Assessment Report, 2004 see appendix 1)

Dr Raycheva later distanced herself from the analysis and findings of the International Key Expert in the analysis of the Assessment Report. And when the report was placed on the project website, the Dean, Associate Professor Totka Monova, also declared the analysis too negative and expressed the view that making it public would be detrimental to the interests of the Faculty. However, Dr Raycheva's own findings, although not always clear, were also very damning. The following was her summary of 'outstanding issues':

- Staying behind the present educational trends, methodology and tutorial techniques required by media industry (trans issues: Dr Raycheva meant the Faculty was not meeting the requirements of industry in terms of what was taught)
- Inadequately qualified lecturers. Lack of motivation and updated scientific qualification
- Poor and worn out equipment
- Lack of correlation between the universities and other educational centers
- Lack of correlation between the educational entities and the media industry
- Lack of sustainability in the training for working journalists.” (Evaluation Report, 2004: 8.1. Appendix 7)

The Faculty authorities and many staff, as intimated, were suspicious of the project and resistant to change. The Dean of the Faculty only met the project team when she had a complaint. The low level of responses to the survey, and the type of responses given, were a clear indication that staff had little interest in the project and were apathetic, if not actually hostile.

Student Response

The low level of the student response was also significant as it indicated one of the fundamental problems with the programme, the fact that attendance was so low. According to informal contact with former students, now working as journalists, after the first year, students find work and only turn up to take the examinations. At the end, they receive a degree with hardly any class or lecture attendance at all. Most cited irrelevance as one of the major reasons for non-attendance. The effect of this was, of course, to hand

on to a further generation of student journalists the unprofessional practices that has been identified elsewhere. It also serves to further undermine the Faculty and journalism education in the eyes of the media industry.

In this regard, the Assessment Report noted the boom in the Bulgarian media market had generated a new generation of journalists who had little regard for or knowledge of normally 'acceptable professional and ethics standards. This tendency is especially strong in regional media' (Assessment Report, 2004:1.1). The Assessment Report also noted few links between the industry and the Faculty, and little evidence the industry actually saw the need for better-educated journalists. As it later emerged, the University was highly suspicious of bringing working journalists to talk to students or give classes. A PhD was more or less an absolute requirement to teaching at the university, which tended to preclude most professional journalists from any but the most perfunctory involvement with the Faculty

Nevertheless, the assessment Report emphasised the importance of Sofia University as the leading journalism faculty in the country, whose curriculum was adopted by a number of regional universities. It also observed that given the high fees at a number of private universities, including the New Bulgarian University and the American University, the low fees and state subsidy meant Sofia University had a major role in democratising access to the media. The Assessment Report conceded that:

While aspects of the Faculty's history might be something of a millstone – due to its role during the communist era – it does have a broad range of expertise, and its graduates are found in senior positions throughout the Bulgarian media. (Assessment Report: 2004: 1.2)

Despite claims to the contrary by the Faculty, what was discernible from Dr Raycheva's research was a state of considerable confusion in journalism education throughout the country, with a range of different courses of varying standards being offered by individual public and private institutions. These numerous courses had, it appeared, grown haphazardly. And there was little attempt to ensure cumulative acquisition of knowledge and skills. The Report stated that

No clear picture emerges as to the overall strategy being pursued by the Faculty. There is no evidence to indicate that there is any logical relationship between the various modules and courses, with one course leading to another, or of knowledge and skills being accumulated as a student moves from year one to two, and so on, or from primary to post-graduate degrees. (Assessment Report: 2004: 1.3.3)

The journalism curriculum at Sofia University had developed out of the previous regime into something unrecognisable to Western European journalism curriculum norms. Most Western European universities constantly review the curriculum to ensure students accumulate knowledge and skills as they progressed through their degree programmes. They had

also put in place quality assurance procedures with a system of external examiners. None of this was evident at Sofia University. Nor was there any indication of the aims and objectives, the assessment, or the expected learning outcomes, either of overall programmes, or of individual modules.

There was little evidence from Dr Raycheva's findings of real journalism practice being taught, and what existed was not integrated into the programme. One of the major problems was that senior academic staff had told the BBC Phare project team the undergraduate programme had been already reviewed, and approved by the Ministry for Education. No further developments could, therefore, take place. However, the project was of the view that it was precisely at the undergraduate level where the developments had to take place, as it was from there that most new journalists would emerge. It did transpire, however, that the university was seeking to at least put its present programme into a form that would provide detailed information about each module, and that Bulgaria was a signatory to the Bologna Agreement.

The Faculty's own working party identified a number of areas where the project team and its experts might be of some assistance. These included developing a number of modules, mainly at Master's level, which would then be incorporated into existing programmes. The international experts did not feel this was adequate. They, and the Team Leader, were of the view that a review of all programmes, rather than simply individual modules, was

more in keeping with the terms of reference and the overall aims of the project.

Equipment

The lack of equipment was a major problem identified early on in the life of the project. 'The conditions are so bad that the group of International Experts who visited the University doubted if the staff could deliver some of the courses listed' (Assessment Report: 2004: 3.2). On one occasion, when a group of international experts were visiting the Faculty and shown the stores for radio equipment, most thought they were being shown a college museum of old radio equipment. Some of those present, who were BBC radio journalists, had never worked with the sort of equipment that was available to students, it was that outdated.

The Assessment Report noted what a modern journalism school should be able to present to students. None of this was available at Sofia University. Where there were computers, they often had the CD drive removed, or if they had access to the Internet, it was through a dial-up system. There was no portable recording equipment, and at one stage experts attended a class where a number of students presented a news item looking at a cardboard tube fixed to a wall, which replicated a camera lens. Unfortunately the opportunity to allow students to research a news item themselves to present

was not taken and they were simply reading an item taken from the radio that morning. The Assessment Report recommended that:

International standards in journalism schools now require a newsroom environment for students to work in, replicating, as far as it is possible, the world of work. In such a newsroom, students carry out practically all work, producing newspaper and magazine articles, researching projects, and possibly editing radio programmes. This emphasizes the place of practice within a journalism programme. For this to work, students should have access to the Internet for research purposes at all times, as well as access to telephones in order to interview and check on news stories. Students taking radio must have access to portable recording equipment, and editing equipment with the necessary up-to-date software. Students doing television must be able to put together news packages, have access to portable cameras and sound equipment. They must have access to a range of studio types, from small self-op studios, to larger studios for producing discussion and magazine programmes. For TV work, studios should be flexible and able to handle everything from presentation to studio-based discussions. (Assessment Report: 2004: 3.3)

The Assessment Report reiterated that the lack of adequate equipment ‘forces the Faculty to rely on academic courses to the detriment of practice, which leads to cynicism among students and the industry’ (Assessment Report: 2004: 3.4).

Equally, the lack of funding for equipment, within the context of the project, was seen as a major drawback. There was little incentive for staff to co-

operate with the project, as it would appear that, in many instances, if new modules were designed, it was difficult to see how they could be delivered. The lack of funding for equipment suggested the inclusion of the University in the project was an afterthought, as was indicated above, as the other elements of the project could be delivered within the terms of an EU Phare project, which does not allow for any capital equipment. (A later project, in Ukraine, at the Kiev University Institute of Journalism, while similar in many ways to the University element of the Bulgarian project, was under the TACIS programme and did include equipment and the training for staff to use it; the resulting enhancement of the programme and commitment of academic staff was discernible).

One of the major problems encountered was the lack of skills among the academic staff. The traditions of highly theoretical teaching with practical skills taught in the workforce, as the Faculty had inherited from its Communist era predecessor, meant employment in the University without a doctorate was almost impossible. And of those few staff who had some journalism skills, these were outdated. The International Key Expert recommended that:

The Faculty should adopt the model of professional education as is seen in medical faculties, engineering or architecture, or the model of the applied arts areas such as music and art, where there are strong links with working practitioners, rather than a simple academic model. (Assessment Report: 2004: 8.1.3)

The plan for the remainder of the duration of the project was outlined as such:

- That the serious equipment deficiencies must be addressed
- That the International Experts begin, as soon as practicable, to work with the Faculty's own working group, to prepare a strategic report for the next five years
- That International Experts, working with the University staff, revise and prepare a new undergraduate degree, that corresponds to European quality standards, that will increase the amount of journalism practice to near 50 per cent, and integrate theory and practice in order to produce critical practitioners, and design new assessment methods
- That International Experts work with individual members of the Faculty to develop individual modules and courses
- That a scholarship initiative be planned and implemented
- That communications between journalism educators within Bulgaria be developed in order to encourage innovation and creativity in course content, delivery and assessment. (Assessment Report: 2004: 8.2)

At the end of the project, the equipment issue remained unresolved. The ToR explicitly stated that no equipment could be provided, even ensuring computer equipment purchased for the project team would not be handed over at the end of the project. Given the importance of equipment in teaching journalism, this meant some aspects of the project would always remain aspirational. Projects that followed in other countries included finance to purchase equipment and were, as a result, more successful. The only way the team saw to address this issue was to suggest ways of raising

funds that were contained in the Strategy and Action Report, published at the end of the project.

The project was designed with three actions, the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative, designed to give academic staff some experience of what was being taught in Western European journalism faculties; an Information and Exchange Network, to help disseminate ideas throughout the community of Bulgarian journalism teachers; and the Strategy and Action Plan, which would, it was hoped, draw together ideas discussed following the scholarship initiatives and offer a plan for a way forward. What follows is a detailed description of the three strands.

Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI)

The CSI was central to the success of the curriculum modernisation element of the project (ToR, 2001:8). From the project's point of view, it would draw in academics, and allow them to see for themselves what was being taught, and how it was being taught in universities throughout Europe. There was €100,000 available for this aspect of the project. If there was no co-operation, then the CSI could not go ahead. Word got around that this money would be divided equally between ten successful senior applicants, giving rise to considerable tension in the Faculty.

In other respects, the Faculty had a say in who was employed by the project and nominated those who became local experts; it also decided who would

apply for the CSI. To counteract the negative perceptions of preferential treatment on the basis of seniority, the project went through a strict and formal interview process that included the Team Leader, the International Key Expert, Dr Julia Stefanova, and an external expert, who was an academic, but from a different faculty at Sofia University. By employing Dr Julia Stefanova of the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission for Education Exchange as a local expert, it meant the project adopted the defensible methodology used by the Commission in the selection and funding of applicants. It was insisted by the project team that:

The purpose must be for curriculum development, rather than for other research, and those who were awarded a scholarship had to agree in advance to write up and make available their findings, in order to create a store of accumulated knowledge within the Faculty, available to anyone designing new modules. The lecturing staff awarded scholarships must also be in a position to implement what has been learnt. (Assessment Report: 2004: 6.2 and 6.3)

The applicants had to outline their proposals, declare where they wanted to go and explain why. Some were imaginative and included an interesting mix of academic and practice-based experience. Others proposed visiting universities to see how their own subjects were being taught. Some used the opportunity to undertake private research with little reference to the purpose of the project.

However, by putting in place a strict and accountable system to fund and pay expenses, there was adequate funding remaining to design a second round of scholarship initiatives. Given that the project team, including Hans Steiger and the International Non Key Expert on the CSI, Mr David Quin, of the School of Media at DIT, were not happy with some of the projects submitted for the first round – believing that some proposals were more to do with private research than curriculum development – it was decided to design specific programmes for a further ten Faculty members.

The second round was delivered in London in July 2005. It consisted of a number of seminars at the BBC, with academics from a number of UK and Irish universities leading seminars on curriculum development, developing learning by doing strategies, and integrating theory and practice. Academics from DIT led a number of seminars on curriculum design, concentrating on the demands of the Bologna Process and Quality Assurance. The seminars included visits to universities based in or around London, as well as to BBC newsrooms and some newspaper newsrooms. This conference-type initiative was not included in the ToR, but worked well and was used in later projects by the BBC WST. It allowed the project team to retain control of what the Sofia academics were being exposed to and so addressed the problem of what was being researched, the issue identified in the first round.

The ToR stipulated that at least 10 academics be recipients, in the end 20 members of staff at the Faculty benefited from either round one or two.

Comments from participants can be read in the full Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan.

Part of the process was that each participant design a modern curriculum for their own subject area, which was done. This means that the basis of a modern curriculum now exists within the Faculty.

Information and Exchange Network

The Terms of Reference called for the establishment of an ‘information and exchange network between at least three faculties of journalism’. It called for a communications system for the exchange of information. And the project was also required to provide career opportunities for at least 50 students (ToR: 8. F 1).

In relation to the latter, it was not entirely clear what the framers of the ToR had in mind. Ultimately, the final element, the career opportunities, would be delivered by having a jobs section on a planned website.

Members of the Faculty were sceptical about a communications strategy. With such a centralised system, they could not see any benefit in communicating with other faculties. Sofia was the lead school of journalism and communications in the state system, so others had to follow. That was how the Ministry of Education worked, we were told. The project was remitted to improve communications between Bulgarian journalism schools,

but staff at Sofia University was not enthusiastic about this, claiming that as there was a national curriculum, based on the Sofia model, and as many of the staff taught at more than one institute, such a strategy was unnecessary.

The International Key Expert determined to *interpret* the terms of reference, and a conference was held at the University, which would itself be an information exchange. It would also be used to establish an association of journalism educators in Bulgaria. The conference was a great success, if the number of faculties who attended is a criterion: academic staff from nine universities, including a number of private ones, participated. It was decided to encourage the attendees to form an association of journalism educators.

The model of the Association of Journalism Educators (AJE), in the UK and Ireland, was offered as one that had succeeded and the president, Professor Chris Frost of John Moores University, Liverpool, spoke and gave advice on the role of the AJE and other issues. The conference decided it would proceed and investigate such a body. A committee was established with Prof Milko Petrov of Sofia University as the first chairman. It was felt that the establishment of such a body would fulfil the ToR.

The project gave a donation towards the legal fees for establishing the association under Bulgarian law and, on November 3rd 2005, the Bulgarian Association of Journalistic Education was formally established two months after the conference took place. The Association was given space on the BBC's iLearn web site, but it is inactive today and the Association appears to be redundant.

However, the main outcome of the project was the Curriculum Modernisation, Strategy and Action plan, which drew together all the outcomes and activities and offered something of a plan for future developments within the Faculty. The importance of the Action Plan and its place within the project warrants it be given a chapter to itself. The following chapter looks at the Strategy and Action plan in some detail.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CURRICULUM MODERNISATION, STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) was delivered in November 2005. Its preparation and completion was one of four general objectives of the Curriculum Modernisation component, the other three being the participatory assessment of the modernisation needs of the curriculum, in effect the Assessment Report; the designing and implementation of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives; and the creation of an Information and Exchange Network amongst at least three faculties of journalism in Bulgaria.

The Strategy and Action Plan was the most important document produced by the curriculum modernisation element of the overall project. It was both a synthesis of the work that preceded it, and also a plan for the development of journalism education in Sofia University, and other universities.

Strategy and Action Plan

The production of a Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) was probably the most important activity for the University element of the overall project. It was to offer the Faculty a blue print and a way forward. The Plan was also to be the result of discussion and debate between the various interested parties,

whether international experts, the staff of the University and other journalism academics and especially the recipients of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative. It was also stipulated as a ‘specific activity’ in the terms of reference as follows:

- 1 Drafting and offering to the WG (working group) for approval a curriculum modernization strategy based on the suggestions, recommendations and successful findings of the CSI (Curriculum Scholarships Initiative) which will be approved by the Faculty of Journalism at Sofia State University.
- 2 ...approval and developing an action plan with concrete practical steps and operational timeline for implementation of the curriculum modernization strategy. (ToR: 8)

The SAP, arguably the lasting contribution of the Curriculum Modularisation component of the project, was prepared by the International Key Expert (the author), assisted by an International Non-Key Expert, Marek Bekerman, a former university lecturer from Poland, who had worked for many years as a journalist in London for the BBC. He was on secondment to the World Service Trust (and was to be an International Key Expert, succeeding the author in a later project in Ukraine). There were also two local experts, both of whom were academic members of the Faculty of Journalist and Mass Communication (FJMC), Dr Vesselina Valkanova and Dr Snezhana Popova.

The SAP noted one of the major problems with the project was the time frame allowed to carry out its work, not just for the Curriculum Modernisation component, but on all four sub projects. Even though the project started late, the completion date remained fixed, apparently giving it only 11 months to complete its work. It was always understood by the project team that an extension would be required, though they were instructed not to take this for granted. When the extension was officially sought, it was finally granted, so the project actually lasted 23 months.

The SAP, in referring to the level of activity towards the end of the life of the project as compared to the early days, explained that the extension allowed for the necessary level of reflection, consultation and exchange of information ‘improving in turn the climate of cooperation in the project’ (SAP: 4.1). This was a diplomatic reference to the atmosphere of distrust that had existed at the start of the project. The inclusion of the University as part of the project had been the idea of the then Dean of the Faculty, Prof Vesselin Dimitrov. His successor, Prof Totka Monova, was never enthusiastic about the project, and one was left with the distinct impression that it was foisted on her. Prof Dimitrov, even though retired, remained an influential force; he was chairman of the two-member but important Curriculum Modernisation Working Group.

As mentioned earlier, the International Key Expert met Prof Monova only on a very few occasions, official contact was usually through Prof Teodora Petrova. One meeting with Prof Monova was called specifically to complain

about the publication of the Assessment Report, with its critique of the Faculty, on the project website. This was a condition of the EU, and ensured transparency. Prof Monova also chaired a meeting of the Faculty called in February, 2004, at which the Team Leader, Hans Steiger, and Michael Randall of the BBC WST, were asked to justify the inclusion of the Faculty in the project at all.

Some distrust of the project remained to the end. However, it is clear from the reports of the Scholarship Initiatives, some of which were included in the SAP, that some, if not a majority, of the staff began to see benefits. The language of the report was also designed to ensure that it was perceived as a synopsis of thinking that had taken place within the Faculty, albeit guided by international experts.

In the Plan, emphasis was placed on the debates taking place world wide about the future of journalism education, in order to ensure an international context, and also to make sure the Faculty did not think it was being singled out. The SAP noted:

The FJMC is not unique. A few years ago the president of Columbia University in New York, home of the prestigious Columbia School of Journalism, announced he was suspending the process of appointing a new dean of the School of Journalism while Columbia re-evaluated the role of the School. He said: 'There is a role at the university for skills training, but it should not be the dominant position.' His action provoked a debate among journalism teachers, journalists and graduates who were split as to whether they agreed or

not; some supported the president's demand for a rethink; others denied Columbia was a 'trade school'; some defended the emphasis on skills training; while others maintained that what is considered training in 'mere' skills is in fact a rigorous intellectual training. (SAP:2.0)

The inclusion of this sort of reference was to let Sofia University understand that the debates about the balance between theory and practice, as well as what theory the theory that was taught was often outdated and what practice, were similar to debates taking place in many countries. It was, the project maintained, entirely appropriate that such discussion also take place in Bulgaria.

The SAP also attempted to show that the project team and the report's authors were sensitive to the concerns of the Faculty: 'Without doubt the project's emphasis on skills acquisition has been the most problematic for the Faculty. It must have appeared that we were only concerned with foisting upon the Faculty a model that is not without its own critics' (SAP: 2.0). However, the report goes on to deny that this was the case, offering an argument for the inclusion of more journalism practice in the curriculum:

There can be no doubt that if Sofia University's graduates are to effect improvements in Bulgarian media they had better be great practitioners themselves before they begin to suggest how practice should be improved within the newsrooms of Bulgaria's newspapers, radio and television stations. (SAP: 2.0)

The SAP emphasized the sort of journey staff was expected to make:

Sofia University's Journalism Faculty is moving from a different journalism teaching tradition and going through the pain of embracing a tradition that grew up in a different place, a tradition that gives greater value to practice and craft skills. It also has to do it at a speed no one in Western Europe was ever forced to do. (SAP: 2.0)

It took two years to create a climate of receptivity, to prepare staff for change and to identify what needed to be done. And although significant progress had been made, for a variety of reasons, much was outstanding at the end of the two-year period. However, the production of the SAP in itself, and the language therein, made it clear that the production of the Plan was a collaborative effort. 'The past two years has been one of tensions, often creative; of suspicion; as well as a partnership and a learning experience for all of us involved' (SAP: 2.0). The process was one designed to be inclusive (even if the Dean of the Faculty never acknowledged receiving the Strategy and Action Plan). The SAP

was produced by a team, and that team includes many members of the Faculty. Those who took part in the two Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives will find echoes of the ideas contained in their own reports, in this action plan. They will also find included the comments and discussions that took place at the final review and evaluation meeting, as well as results from the survey.

Others also contributed. Local experts gave their views and thoughts, and ideas also came in more informal settings, in London, Dublin and in Sofia. The other parts of the team were the international experts who came to Sofia at different times during the life of the project, who visited the Faculty and talked to members. They also contributed ideas, based on their own experience in teaching journalism, which are included in this Action Plan. (SAP: 2.0)

The Strategy and Action Plan is a long and detailed document of over 20,000 words. It acknowledged the difficulties in implementing the recommendations, noting the nature of academic institutions in moving slowly, given that they work in cycles corresponding often to the length of degree programmes.

Some of the key recommendations included:

- A Curriculum Review Committee, which will spearhead the modernisation process and see through its successful implementation
- Moving towards a 50/50 theory and practice model when sufficient resources were made available
- Working towards implementing the Bologna Agreement and satisfying quality assurance criteria
- Staff training needs to be identified, and staff to be retrained in order to deliver a modern curriculum
- Within three years of the Plan being presented, continuous assessment to be introduced, along with a student portfolio system of assessment and a fully assessed work placement scheme
- Foreign languages to be introduced as an integral part of the degree programme.
- A student newspaper or magazine to be launched, and the student radio station to be revamped

- Plans to be drawn up to address the serious shortage of equipment
- Schemes to improve links with the industry to be devised and implemented
- The Faculty to develop certain specialist areas of research in order to attract foreign students and researchers
- Within three years, the undergraduate programme to be overhauled
- A student newsroom to be established and used actively as a teaching space
- A Faculty strategy and business plan to be developed within a three-year period. (SAP: 1.0)

The SAP not alone suggested a blue print for future development, but also reviewed the project, based on the view that the Plan was informed by all that had gone before. The Strategy and Action Plan drew heavily on earlier reports, such as the Assessment Report; reports submitted by the beneficiaries of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives; and discussions with Faculty staff.

Following the initial suspicion and hostility, it was clear that during the second year, and especially during and following the Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives, the academic staff was more forthcoming and willing to debate issues concerning the curriculum. Much of this took place during the London seminars, but also, more informally, in Sofia. The London seminars allowed academics from Sofia, Britain and Ireland to meet and talk informally, which led to friendlier relations. The conference held in Sofia to establish the Association of Bulgarian Journalism Educators, also helped improve relationships.

By clearly quoting comments included in the CSI beneficiaries' reports, it was the authors' intention to show that staff was involved and so meet head-on criticism of the process and its aims from those who remained hostile to the project.

Again, the Strategy and Action Plan noted the problems associated with the time scale. As the extension was not finalised by the Bulgarian and EU authorities until the last minute, the project had to operate and deliver paperwork based on the original final date. Had the extension not been granted, it is unlikely that the outcomes, specified in the terms of reference for the project overall, would have been met.

There was also an assumption in the Strategy and Action Plan that the outcomes, as articulated, were a beginning, and that the real impact would be felt over time. This was based on the necessity of phasing in change, given the academic cycle of four or five years; the length of time it could take to review a total curriculum; and a need to examine the post-graduate programmes. The SAP declared:

It would not be helpful to accept the idea that the Curriculum Modernisation project at Sofia University is a complete and self-contained entity. It is rather an open-ended process, the continuity of which and its eventual success require sustained support and monitoring, as well extra resources. (SAP: 23)

In reality, several of the final recommendations were made with the considerable shortcomings of the project design in mind. The lack of

finance for technical equipment, as outlined, was a major problem for the project from the outset. The terms of reference might have envisaged the implementation of the outcomes ‘beyond the end date of the project’ (ToR: 23), but without financial support, that would be difficult to envisage.

The upshot was that some modules would be impossible to implement. It also meant the project team was not in a position to advise on developments that were taking place in the Faculty independent of the project, including a major building restoration that included television studios.

Throughout the life of the project, the International Key Expert emphasised the need for a greater emphasis on teaching journalism practice. This was evidently missing from the curriculum, and was identified by the media industry as critical. The emphasis in the curriculum modernisation process had always been on integrating theory and practice – the project was as concerned with the teaching of theory as it was of practice. Some of the seminars in London addressed media history and ethics, for that very reason. The project stressed the importance of producing reflective practitioners; to this end considerable emphasis was placed on teaching by doing. What was actively discouraged was the separation of practice, traditionally done one afternoon a week, or outside the normal timetable.

An important element of the project was the Bologna Process that sought to create a common education space, allowing student mobility.

Bologna served the project well, in that it was one area where the Faculty agreed advice and help from other higher education institutions was of value. It also offered a framework within which curriculum development could take place.

As well as introducing the Faculty to modern learning and teaching methods, including workshops and more imaginative assessment of modules, it was also considered useful for the degree programmes to include a foreign language. All the recommendations that were made were done so in the context of the above.

The team were concerned that the momentum created by the project, especially the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative, would be dissipated, given that there was no provision for follow up or Faculty support. To this end, it was recommended a team be established to implement the work of the project. However, the team was fully alert to one of the major flaws within the Bulgarian system, the centralised nature of curriculum and the rigidity of the system. It was felt that if an international figure could be seconded, the Faculty would be able to draw on outside support. The international expert would be able to work with the staff in delivering short training courses in interactive teaching, and learning and teaching in the Faculty. This proposal, however, depended on the Faculty finding the funding or lobbying the University

or the EU to fund such a post. Given the negative attitude of some of those in authority, it was overly optimistic to see this taking place and, of course, it did not. As is explained later it became impossible for the EU to continue funding a project designed to aid Bulgaria's entry to the EU.

It was also recommended that those who took part in the CSI be formed into a Curriculum Review Committee to act as informal validators and to advise colleagues on how to modernise their own curricula. Given the centralised nature of Bulgarian academic life, such devolution of power was unlikely to happen, and indeed it did not.

CHAPTER NINE

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Media development was a quick and a highly ideological response to the events following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the final dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Those funding media development and journalism training avoided the traditional institute for journalism education and training, the state funded universities and also the journalists' trade unions, which often had a training role under the communist regimes. The purpose of funding journalism training was twofold: firstly, to strengthen democracy, to ensure political institutions were open and transparent and that election, in particular, were covered fairly. Secondly, to strengthen the market and encourage the development of a free media funded mainly by the market, which did have the effect of allowing investment from Western media organisations, in the case of Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries, from Rupert Murdoch's News Corps and the German newspaper company, Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ).²⁴

As the former editor of London based journal, Index On Censorship, Judith Vidal-Hall, put it, rather extremely, in the online cultural journal, *Eurozine*,

For the West, democratic pieties aside, this was all about markets.

²⁴ As of December 2010 both *Trud* and *Chasa 24* as well as WAZ's other Bulgarian assets were sold to a Vienna based investment group led by Karl Hapsburg, BG Privatinvest GmbH. However, during the period under discussion the newspapers were owned by WAZ

For the media conglomerates staggering under the impact of globalization and the threat of new technology, with further expansion on home ground inhibited by anti-monopoly legislation, this was what they had been waiting for. (Vidal-Hall, 2009)

Those supporting the funding of media development, did, of course argue a traditional liberal view, that a free and open media had to be supported by the market, as the alternative was state funding, which had been the normal under the communist regime. However, by the time media development organisations entered Eastern Europe asserting the primacy of the liberal theory of the media it was already under scrutiny and being questioned. As James Curran suggested in 2000, the free market, rather than supporting a free press, actually restricted the freedom to publish rather than enhanced it (Curran 2000: 128). He pointed to the high cost of entering the market, adding that low cost alternatives were marginal and without the same communicative powers, the very fact that made outside investment possible and necessary.

The growth of human-interest stories at the expense of public affairs had meant the majority of people were less informed and public debate more restricted because the market generated information rich elites and information poor media for the majority. He also suggested market oriented media tended to:

Generate information that is simplified, personalized, decontextualised, with a stress on action rather than process,

visualisation rather than abstraction, stereotypicality rather than human complexity. (Curran, 2000: 129)

It was public service broadcasting systems that come closest to embodying the liberal ideal of informed, rational and inclusive public debate because they put 'the needs of democracy before those of profit and are supported in this by government legislation' (Curran 2000: 129). In the former communist countries of Eastern and South Eastern Europe public service broadcasting was the most marginalised, as it was often seen as state broadcasting, with all the connotations that had in former communist countries. Other forms of ownership, such as ownership by trusts, similar to *The Irish Times*, *The Guardian* or *Le Monde*, or by co operatives have rarely been encouraged by media development agencies.

As we have seen already, Colin Sparks argued that what was being developed was an idealised version of Western media, or as he suggested, an amalgam of the BBC and the New York Times (Sparks, 1998).

What has been argued in this thesis is not that there is no hope, or that the idea of media being an integral part of democratic accountability is a charade, but rather the model that had been developed in the west over the past 200-years or more, was not necessarily the only model, nor was it the ideal model to export. The issue was the training associated with media development was not only promoting a model that appeared to be outdated and unrealistic, but that it was also done badly. As Ekaterina Ognianova wrote:

Most training sessions have been too short; they have been too theoretical and general; and they have insulted the participants by revealing the visitors' total ignorance about their countries and by preaching the ABCs of journalism to experienced professionals. (Ognianova, 1995: 36)

It was her last point that is probably most interesting. Media development often failed to have an understanding of the educational and cultural context of the transitional democracies. Lack of professionalism in the media in the former communist countries was often because of corruption and lack of democratic values, an unwillingness to invest and bad pay. Also, journalists and journalism educators were being forced to switch from one system to a system of journalism that had been developed for a different place and culture. It might be argued that it was the failure to understand the cultures and journalistic traditions that led, in part, to a lack of professional standards, as there was no understanding of how journalists in Eastern Europe and other former communist transitional democracies might have developed their own practices and values.

It has not been suggested in this thesis that Western trainers have no role. As will be argued later, specific training has its place and value. Such training, however, would be more effective if the journalists taking such courses were already educated journalists who understood their role in their own society, who had been part of discussions and debates about values and had developed a practice that reflected their own culture and experience.

Given the acknowledged failure to develop a professional media in much of Eastern and South Eastern Europe, as indicated in the various indexes and measurements, such as the Report Without Borders (RSF) or the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) and other journalism bodies, it would appear time to look for some other way to instil ideas about journalism, civic society and democracy. So instead of practitioners from a different culture imposing an ideal from somewhere else, why not offer the task of taking charge of professionalising journalists to those involved in defining and critiquing their own values and culture: That is those in the universities journalism faculties?

It appears the reason journalism trainers and educators ignored the existing journalism faculties was partly because of the debates in the west about the place of journalism educations and a strong residual belief that journalism is best taught on the job and not in universities at all. The nature of journalism training and media development was, to large extent, influenced by an ongoing debate in the west, a debate that had been decided in Eastern Europe. How else can we explain the antagonism to the journalism faculties? Other institutions were also in transition, or had operated under the previous regime, including teachers, the army, lawyers, even politicians and policemen. The point of Western intervention was to help with the process of change. Replacement was not an option, even if one wanted to.

The importance of the BBC Phare project, which was hardly noted at the time, was it offered an alternative, that was long term and workable. Even if

the outcomes of the project were not ideal, as is discussed later, the idea of working with journalism educators and equipping them to make their own curriculum changes started to take off.

Assessing the project

European Union funded projects normally go through a rigorous evaluation and assessment procedure following completion. As mentioned in the introduction, the EU Phare project for improving media standards in Bulgaria did not go through this procedure, other than ensuring the finance was properly accounted for and that all tasks listed in the terms of reference were carried out to the satisfaction of the Bulgarian Ministry for Finance and the EU. No evaluation as to the outcome of the project, and whether it has any lasting impact was undertaken. When the BBC WST was asked why this had not taken place a spokesman said the final project report, which was available online was, in effect, the final assessment of the project. This, of course, could hardly count as an independent evaluation. All documentation relating to the project was available on the BBC's iLearn distance learning web site.

However, following completion of the project informal qualitative research was carried out as to the efficacy of the project for the university sector. Although the Strategy and Action plan did recommend continued contact between the Faculty staff and international expertise, this did not take place,

as there was no budget for this. It was recommended that a post-project implementation team be established:

It should consist mainly of Faculty members and local experts, assisted on a periodic, or on-call, basis by an international expert: an experienced, innovative teacher/trainer in journalism with an academic background. (Strategy and Action Plan 5.1)

The other issue was, of course, Bulgaria became a full member of the EU on January 1st, 2007, which meant it could not be in receipt of aid finance designed to help it complete the integration process. The project was to help Bulgaria complete its transition process, to establish democratic norms, including a free press. Entry into the European Union, of course, implies that has taken place, so it would be deemed inappropriate to continue with democracy building projects after the country became an EU member.

On subsequent visits to Sofia University, for research purposes, it was clear that those staff who had taken part in the Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives, especially those who were at the Dublin Institute of Technology and those involved in the second round seminars in London in July 2005 were taking a lead in redesigning their own curriculum. A Bulgarian investigative journalist had been hired to deliver a module, rather than rely on an academic member of the Faculty and further links had been made with universities outside Bulgaria. The Strategy and Action Plan quoted

comments from a number of participants and it was clear they found the experience a positive one.²⁵

Following the completion of the project Faculty members who took part in the Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives were surveyed in March 2008. Two thirds responded, a better response than the original survey received and, it should be added, the responses were made with more enthusiasm.

All respondents claimed the project had been useful and all said they had made changes in their own teaching following on from exposure to other pedagogical models. All agreed staff with practical experience but without a doctorate should be hired – a major change in Bulgarian academic practice, if it took place. All agreed more practice should be introduced into the curriculum. There were some differences of opinion as to whether the early stages of the project were tense or co-operative, but those who responded that there was a spirit of co-operation from the outset were younger members of faculty and probably not aware of the tensions between senior faculty members and the project team. Although the Association of Bulgarian Journalism Educators was established as a legal entity, with Prof Milko Petrov as its first chair, it appears not to have been active, even though it was offered space on the BBC's iLearn website²⁶ where the BBC WST announced the Association had been established, and even had a link to the Association's web site. The site offered no further news or developments. As mentioned earlier the Association appears to be dormant.

²⁵ See Strategy and Action Plan 3.7.2; 3.7.2/1/2/3 Appendix 3.

²⁶ See <http://www.ilearn.co.uk/BulgariaEN/News/2005/09/26/News8548/>

The Bulgarian project was not first and foremost directed towards journalism faculties and, as has been discussed elsewhere, the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications was only included at a late date, which might explain some of the negative attitudes towards the curriculum sub-project. The overall project aimed at professionalising the Bulgarian media, with a mix of training in journalism, human resource management for media companies and in establishing a code of ethics for the Bulgarian media. However, following the completion of this project, a number of projects, aimed exclusively at journalism education were funded. The BBC, with the Dublin Institute of Technology and other partners successfully completed a project at the Institute of Journalism at Kyiv University and three other Ukrainian Universities. This was an EU TACIS project. Another, at the Slavic University of Baku, Azerbaijan was set up with Council of Europe finance. A further project, aimed at journalism and the coverage of children's rights, organised by UNICEF was also established and again it took place within university journalism faculties rather than as training schemes aimed exclusively at working journalists.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS

Did the project work? Probably yes, but not necessarily in the short term.

Did it point to a new way of delivering media development? The answer to that is unequivocally yes.

At first it might appear the outcomes of the project's involvement with the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications at Sofia University were somewhat slight. Staff did say they had effected some changes in their own teaching and modules but, in the main, the same overall curriculum remained in place. However, there is no doubt the project and the links made between the faculty and visiting journalism academics from Great Britain and Ireland in particular, had an impact. Individual academics at Sofia University did say they had made differences to their own teaching both in content and delivery. Some flexibility was noted in the hiring of working journalists to teach some practice areas, in line with the recommendations in the Strategy and Action plan. There is, of course, a full modern curriculum now prepared and ready to be implemented, if and when that can take place, produced by the recipients of the scholarships.

There is little doubt that the slowness of the process of change has to do with some within the faculty who were wary of change, but there are also institutional hindrances, including the centralised nature of education in Bulgaria, where the Ministry for Education, through a number of councils, oversees what is taught.

The process is a slow and conservative one. However change in education generally tends to be slow, due in no small measure to academic conservatism, the academic year and the cycle of the four year or three year degree programmes. Changes in third level education must also be responsive to both industry and second level schooling.

However, Bulgarian university education is finding itself being pushed towards change, partly because of the Bologna Process, which the Bulgarian Ministry of Education has signed up for. The failure to affect the sort of changes demanded by Bologna means Bulgarian education will be left behind. The changes are radical, demanding a modular system, with choice offered to students instead of the strict centralised system Bulgarian academics are used to. The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications does now have a blue print that conforms to the Bologna process.

Bulgaria's media is competitive and varied. There are many television stations, radio stations and newspapers. According to the IREX Media

Sustainability Index for 2010 there are 446 newspapers, 97 radio stations²⁷ and a huge 189 television stations. That is a lot of media for a population of 7.5 million people, with much of it unregulated. The bigger outlets are demanding better journalists. The daily newspaper, *Dneven Trud*, accounts for nearly one quarter of the entire newspaper circulation.

Many newspapers are tabloid or so-called hybrid tabloids, with a few serious quality newspapers. Three television stations, bTV, NOVA and BNT dominate the market. All media are looking for trained journalists to ensure their competitive edge. If Sofia University is to maintain its place as the pre-eminent journalism school it will have to ensure its students are able to work in newsrooms and have the required skills. Sofia University has a further responsibility, to society at large. The IREX Media Sustainability Index reports that under a number of headings Bulgaria's media falls short, including in the standard of reporting, self-censorship and corruption. The most recent Press Freedom Index from the Paris based *Reporters Without Borders* shows Bulgaria has slipped from 34th place in 2003 to 70th place in Oct 2010.²⁸ There is also a need for debates and research into transparency of media ownership, the licensing process for broadcasting organisations and the level of entertainment as opposed to news and current affairs. All are areas a university journalism and mass communications faculty should be concerned.

²⁷ Such an enormous amount of media has not been unusual in the former communist countries. The development of so many media outlets was tied to both the growth in politics and political parties, who all wanted their own outlets and also to the marketplace, where there was a strong suspicion of regulation and state control.

²⁸ See http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=1034

An Alternative to the Training Model?

So are there lessons from the Bulgarian experience that would suggest an alternative to the training model to professionalize and strengthen journalism in the transitional democracies of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe?

Increasingly journalism schools in Western Europe are seeking to produce the reflective practitioner, the young journalists who can argue for a better way, because they are well trained and educated. They have absorbed the current way of doing things, but are in a position to suggest alternatives, they have been trained to be critical and ask questions, not just of the political or economic system, but also of their own profession. Critically aware journalists are desperately needed in transitional democracies. And it can be argued that only universities can produce them. Eastern European universities can operate in partnership with Western European counterparts, because of existing academic traditions of exchanges, conferences and other links, that are in place already, or ready to be developed. The universities can educate large numbers of young journalists, who will eventually be the majority of at least a sizeable minority of journalists in a particular country.

Universities are publicly funded bodies that are repositories of knowledge and culture. They also inform the culture and interpret it. If journalism is about certain values – truth, accuracy, verification – and is also involved in story telling and informing public opinion, the inculcation of those values

should take place within an intellectual context that will allow new journalistic voices to emerge within the parameters of those values. Going back to Colin Sparks, it means Bulgarian and other post-communist countries can develop their own media systems without appearing to have failed, because they cannot deliver a Western model that is itself an idealised system. Western journalism schools can provide one side of the partnership – teaching skills, curriculum development and contacts – the universities in the region, as public trustees, can ensure the specific cultural relevance of international initiatives with journalism education acting as part of a broader process of educational and cultural exchange.

There is still a place for international funding for short courses in new skills or to upgrade skills. If, however, something new is to emerge that reflects Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia or any other country, then it can only come about by the West ceasing to see in journalism a way of strengthening the marketplace, and instead work within the culture to strengthen democracy, broaden education, and ensure that people have ways of hearing stories that are relevant to them, and told in a truthful way that they also understand.

Journalism education in Bulgaria emerged from a particular set of circumstances relating to the Communist victory in 1947. It also mirrored developments in the Soviet Union, probably more so than any other so-called ‘People’s Democracies’ in the post-war years. Unlike its communist neighbours, Yugoslavia and Romania, Bulgaria remained loyal to the USSR,

a reflection of its view of Russia as a friend and liberator, a national view that went back to the 1870s. So loyal was the Peoples' Republic of Bulgaria that it was the only Warsaw Pact country never to have Soviet troops stationed on its soil.

Future prospects

The main assumption of this research has been the view that short term training as the dominant model for media development is being replaced by a new model, longer term journalism formation, based in higher education institutes as a way of both improving journalistic professionalism and by extension, democracy.

As stated, since the completion of the Bulgarian project the BBC World Service Trust has led two more projects, a major one in Ukraine, that improved and modernised curriculum in Kyiv's Institute of Journalism and three other journalism schools in other parts of the country, and also a further project at the Slavic University in Baku, Azerbaijan, funded by the Council of Europe. In a further development, UNICEF, the United Nations Children's agency, which until recently offered a few short training courses designed to help journalists cover issues relating to children, including covering HIV/AIDS and other health issues, has worked with DIT on developing a module for journalism schools on children's rights and journalism practice, initially for Eastern Europe, but is expected to be adopted more widely and is already being adopted in a number of universities in East Africa.

All this suggests that the old suspicion, that the traditional journalism faculty, if not breaking down, is at least recognising that there is more complexity involved in journalism training and education than might have been understood in the past. There was, of course, a major ideological motivation for ignoring all institutions that could be traced back to the previous regime. If we were witnesses to a systemic shift, an end to history itself, there was no need to refer back to the previous communist era at all. It was assumed that in the important matter of democracy building, there was nothing within the communist system worth holding onto. That proved not to be the position.

In the case of journalism, the existing faculties of journalism and mass communications stubbornly held on, taking on students and producing graduates who had studied a modified communist-era curriculum. Private schools, mostly modelled on American academic models, were expensive and were attended by an elite who, were often, not really interested in working for the local media anyway.

The oft-stated purpose of media development is to strengthen democracy and build civil society. That means journalists need to acquire a sophisticated understanding of the ethical and societal values that should drive journalism. Discussion and debate concerning ethics, democracy and journalism needs time and space, that offered by universities, rather than a weekend long training course. It also needs to be discussed in the context of

journalism and its responsibilities. If the purpose is to produce the oft-mentioned reflective practitioner, the journalist graduate must not alone be able to discuss the values inherent in good journalism, but must also have the practical skills to apply them.

Short courses are fine for imparting skills, layout, using a new software, but where journalists need ethics, to debate values or engage with abstract concepts to give their journalism a foundation then something more substantial is necessary, and that something more is probably best provided by university journalism faculties.

As was stated in the literature review, there is still a dearth of research into this area. Given the sums involved, this is a strange omission. Given the nature of the work, building democracy, providing the basis for a professional media, the possible problems associated with government funding, the nature of the media market being created, it is clear serious research is necessary. If the experiment in media professionalising has had an impact, and if money spent on media development impacts on good governance, then it is important that it be researched and its findings analysed, so it can be exported to other areas of the world, especially Africa. However, if it is to be exported, we must know what models works, so funding earmarked for media development is used in the most efficient way, and so has the most desirable impact, the inculcating of values that strengthen democracy and civil society.

Instead of a training model that tries to squeeze the media systems in post-communist countries into an idealised system based on a cross between the *New York Times* and the BBC, it would be so much better to allow the development of certain values – accuracy, truthfulness, etc – and analyse the media systems as they develop, based on the social realities of which they are a part. It might also help develop a real partnership where both sides, the media in the former communist countries and that in the west along with the journalist academics, would learn from each other and that eastern and south eastern Europe join and contribute to the debate about the future of journalism.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Appendix One

Assessment Report Analysis

PHARE /BBC

Technical Assistance for Improving the Professional Standards of Journalism in Bulgaria Assessment Report Analysis

1. Introduction

The boom in Bulgaria's media market in recent years has produced very quickly a whole new generation of young journalists. This has resulted in an overall lowering of professional standards with little regard for normally acceptable professional and ethical standards. This tendency is especially strong in regional media.

The project for Technical Assistance for Improving the Professional Standards of Journalism in Bulgaria is not a number of totally separate modules, but one project. This means that the universities have to change in the light of what is taking place elsewhere in the media sector.

The university should start teaching ethics in the light of the proposed code of conduct and press council. Media management could become a subject taught in the light of the human resource module of the project, but above all the university syllabus should ensure that it is able to produce reflective practitioners, able to move from the university into newsrooms, either print or electronic, and be capable of working at any editorial function and bringing with them high professional and ethical standards.

Dr Lilia Raycheva carried out the assessment during April 2004. Dr Raycheva is a former Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications, and now a member of CEM (Council for Electronic Media). This analysis and recommendations should be read in conjunction with Dr Raycheva's report, which is included.

Dr Raycheva's assessment concentrated on a description of the state of journalism education within Bulgaria, in general, and of the state of journalism education at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications (FJMC), in particular. Her assessment also reported the results of a survey of attitudes of both students and teaching staff.

The importance of the University of Sofia's FJMC within Bulgaria's media environment cannot be overstated. Not alone is it the oldest journalism school in Bulgaria, but its curriculum is used by a number of other institutions. While aspects of the Faculty's history might be something of a millstone – due to its role during the Communist era - it does have a range of expertise, and its graduates are found in senior positions throughout a media.

There is also a question of the democratization of journalism. The FJMC at Sofia University plays a major role in that its courses are considerably cheaper, especially compared to courses offered by private institutions such as the New University or the American University, and so allows greater access to journalism from among those who might not be able to afford the huge fees demanded by the private colleges.

The picture that emerges from Dr Raycheva's report is of considerable confusion, with a range of different courses being offered in a mix of public and private institutions. At the University of Sofia, there are numerous courses whose precise function is not often made explicit. It appears that these courses have simply grown haphazardly.

No clear picture emerges as to the overall strategy being pursued by the Faculty. There is no evidence to indicate that there is any logical relationship between the various modules and courses, with one course leading to another, or of knowledge and skills being accumulated as a student moves from year one to two, and so on, or from primary to post-graduate degrees.

2. Curriculum

By international standards, there has been little or no real curriculum development. The curriculum at Sofia University is presented as a series of modules with contact hours and credits attached. There is no indication as to the contents of each module, what the module aims and objectives are, or the expected learning outcomes. What Dr Raycheva was able to put into her report is almost useless in terms of telling us what goes on at the university. Some things are evident though. There is a lack of journalism practice and what practice does exist is not adequately integrated into the course.

The PHARE project team had been told by senior faculty staff that the undergraduate programme had already been reviewed and no further developments could take place, as a new degree was only recently approved. However, if the project is to have any impact on professionalizing journalism in Bulgaria, it is precisely here that work must be carried out, as it is from here that most new journalists will emerge. Two factors must be taken into account. The first is the recent request from the University authorities for all modules to be fully described on a new form, which asks for details of course content and other information. The second is the

pressures to standardize university courses across Europe, to allow for student transfer and mobility. This is known as the Bologna Agreement. The Bologna Agreement envisages a high degree of openness and transparency, in order for academics and students to access courses right across Europe. Theoretically students will be able to move from country to country, accumulating credits that will finally add up to the required number necessary for a degree. Such moves will demand a clear curriculum document, which lays out the aims, objectives and outcomes of particular modules, and what credits are offered.

This is an area where international expertise should be employed as many universities and colleges in western European are well advanced in ensuring that curriculum and the syllabus documents conform to the demands of Bologna and Quality Assurance schemes that are not in operation nationally.

The Faculty's own working party, with the International Key Expert, identified a number of areas we could work on. These were listed in the inception report. These included developing a number of specific modules, mainly at MA level, which could then be incorporated into existing programmes. In the light of Dr Raycheva's report, this is inadequate; much more fundamental curriculum development must be carried out.

3. Equipment

Equipment within the Faculty is in an appalling state. The conditions are so bad that the group of International Experts who visited the University doubted if the staff could deliver some of the courses listed. International standards in journalism schools now require a newsroom environment for students to work in, replicating, as far as it is possible, the world of work. In such a newsroom, students carry out practically all work, producing newspaper and magazine articles, researching projects, and possibly editing radio programmes. This emphasizes the place of practice within a journalism programme. For this to work, students should have access to the internet for research purposes at all times, as well as access to telephones in order to interview and check on news stories. Students taking radio must have access to portable recording equipment, and editing equipment with the necessary up-to-date software. Students doing television must be able to put together news packages, have access to portable cameras and sound equipment. They must have access to a range of studio types, from small self-op studios, to larger studios for producing discussion and magazine programmes. For TV work, studios should be flexible and able to handle everything from presentation to studio based discussions.

The state of the equipment is a major problem, as it forces the Faculty to rely on academic courses to the detriment of practice, which leads to a cynicism among students and the industry.

4. Students

It is extremely difficult to gauge the attitudes of the students. The response to the survey was disappointing, with only a few questionnaires returned (41 responses were received and this includes responses from PR and publishing students who are not taking journalism). One reason given for this was indicative of what is happening at the Faculty: students do not turn up. Informal contacts with former students seem to suggest that attendance is a major problem, with students turning up to take exams only, and otherwise working in the media from second year. This undermines the University in that its graduates have a low level of skills, picked up on the job, but they also have a university degree. This would indicate that the assessment is old fashioned, relying on an end of year of semester examination solely, rather than a range of assessments. One point that the students were in total agreement on was that there was not enough journalism practice.

5. Staff

Even though the number of responses to the survey among staff was low, it is clear that morale is low. This was found to be the case by Dr Raycheva as well as the international experts who visited the Faculty. It appears that the staff work very long hours by international standards. One of the International Experts who questioned staff on working conditions reported the following:

They say they have 37 Faculty staff. I took this to mean Associate Professors and Professors. They are contracted to teach 120 hours of lectures or 240 hours of practical sessions per semester. In practice, they say they do much more than this – in some cases as much as 500 hours per semester. Average contact hours per week depended on whether they were teaching full or part time students. In part time weeks, they could be teaching as much as 12 hours per day for a period of three weeks to a month.

While these allegations need to be verified, such a regime works against encouraging innovation.

6. Scholarship Initiative

This is an important part of the curriculum development aspect of the project. A scholarship scheme worth €1000,000 will be designed, planned and implemented. Its function will be to add to the contribution of international experts, so that lecturing staff can see how courses are delivered in other parts of Europe. The purpose must be for curriculum development, rather than for other research, and those who are awarded a scholarship must be willing to write up and make available their findings, in order to create a store of accumulated knowledge within the Faculty, available to anyone designing new modules. The lecturing staff who are

awarded scholarships must also be in a position to implement what has been learnt.

Dr Julia Stepanova of the Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange (Fulbright) has already been approved as a Local Expert to plan and put in place the Scholarship Initiative. It is planned that she will commence her work as soon as possible.

7. Communications

Part of the project's remit includes improving communications between the journalism schools within Bulgaria. Staff at Sofia University have suggested that this might not be necessary, as many teach in more than one institute, and that the syllabus at Sofia is more or less a national curriculum. However, in some other countries, associations of journalism teachers have been established, which have had a very positive affect on journalism teaching. The Association of Journalism Educators (AJE) in Britain (now includes journalism lecturers from Ireland amongst its membership) is a good model. All those who teach journalists, with an emphasis on lecturers of journalism practice, attend a number of conferences a year, deliver papers and share experiences. Such a model would benefit journalism professors in Bulgaria.

8. Conclusions.

Dr Raycheva summed up her own findings thus:

“Outstanding issues:

- Staying behind the present educational trends, methodology and tutorial techniques required by media industry.
- There aren't enough qualified lecturers. Lack of motivation and updated scientific qualification.
- Poor and worn out equipment
- Lack of correlation between the universities and other educational centers.
- Lack of correlation between the educational entities and the media industry.
- Lack of sustainability in the training for working journalists.”

There is no doubt that there are few links between the industry and the Faculty and anecdotal evidence suggests that the industry was not convinced of the need for better educated journalists. That must change. It might be achieved if the Faculty could develop a more flexible hiring policy and that suitably qualified working journalists might be employed to teach modern practical journalism. Such a policy would also build bridges between the

faculty and the industry if journalists with standing were involved in teaching.

The Faculty should adopt the model of professional education as is seen in medical faculties, engineering or architecture, or the model of the applied arts areas such as music and art, where there are strong links with working practitioners, rather than a simple academic model.

As the International Key Expert, I recommend the following:

- ❑ The serious equipment deficiencies need to be addressed as it would be difficult to deliver a modern journalism degree with the current equipment.
- ❑ The team of international experts must, with the teaching staff of the Faculty, address the areas already listed in the inception report.
- ❑ The team should also work with the Faculty's own working group, to prepare a strategic report for the next five years.
- ❑ The same groups should also revise and prepare a new undergraduate degree, that corresponds to European quality standards, that will increase the amount of journalism practice to near 50 per cent, integrate theory and practice in order to produce critical practitioners and design new assessment methods.

Michael Foley
International Key Expert
Curriculum Modernisation component.
ends

Appendix Two
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TERMS OF REFERENCE

for the implementation of project BG0104.04:
**TECHNICAL ASSISTENCE FOR IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS IN JOURNALISM, INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL
2001 PHARE PROGRAMME**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Beneficiary country

Bulgaria

Contracting Authority

CFCU

Ministry of Finance number

Relevant country background

The 2000 EC Regular Report notes that:

“The National Council on Radio and Television examines if the principle of pluralism is observed in Bulgarian national television and radio, and it monitored the behaviour of media during the pre-election campaign for the local elections in 1999. Given these important tasks, the administrative capacity of this body still needs to be further improved.”

The 2001 EC Regular Report notes that: “In almost all electronic media, there is minority participation through specialised programmes. Bulgarian National TV broadcasts news in Turkish and has two programmes addressing minority issues and produced by minorities’ representatives. Roma Cable TV from Vidin has received a license to broadcast nationwide. Some local radio stations also broadcast programmes directed at the Roma population. There are a number a regular Roma newspapers and magazines. ”

Following the meeting of world media regulators in December 1999, the European Union has acknowledged that media should be governed by co-regulation through a partnership between the state and media industry. This is confirmed by COM 657 (Final), which outlines EU audiovisual policy for 2001-2005.

Current state of affairs in the relevant sector

The Bulgarian media sector is fragmented, with over 130 radio stations, 129 TV operators, and over 180 newspapers and magazines at present (according to recent survey by Market Test Ltd.). Over the last 10 years such proliferation of new media and the lack of self-regulation has led to a decline in standards of professional journalism. This is most visible by the continuing incidence of media reports that promote prejudice, especially towards various ethnic groups;

Efforts have been made by civic organisations to draft common ethical standards of reporting. Such initiatives have failed because they were not based on wide consultations and participation of media community. The most notable have been of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists in 1991 and later of Centre for Independent Journalism. The emergence of so many media outlets has also put a strain on the education system of the country to

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produce competitive journalists with professional skills that can reflect society's needs.

Based on interviews with key stakeholders (journalists, media managers and academia) the following four factors can be identified as accounting for this decline of the professional standards in journalism:

- *The lack of voluntary self-regulation and dispute resolution in the media sector, based on consensus among media and journalists;*
- *Outdated and inefficient standards of journalist teaching at university level;*
- *Weak or non-existent human resource development policies in media;*
- *Limited opportunities for professional training of practicing journalists.*

Any intervention that aims to build sustainable and independent media in Bulgaria needs to tackle the four aforementioned factors in a comprehensive manner.

The Radio and Television Act (RTA) of 1998 created the National Council on Radio and Television (NCRT) as a public body, entrusted by law with protecting freedom of speech, independence of radio and TV operators and the public interest. Legislative changes in the Radio and Television Act (RTA) in 2001 led to the dismissal of NCRT and the formation of Council on electronic media. The latter perimeters of rights have been enriched with the authority to provide licence rights for radio and TV broadcasting, previously regulated by the Law on Telecommunications.

Related programmes and other donor activities:

There are no linked Phare projects in this area. The proposed project is a unique intervention aimed at strengthening the independence of media through improving professional standards among Bulgarian journalists. Under the Project Preparatory Facility within Phare 2000 budget an assessment of training needs of journalists has been undertaken during July 2001. Its main purpose was to provide a clear picture of the training requirements of Bulgarian journalists and formulate recommendations in what areas training courses should be further developed.

The only other significant source of support for Bulgarian media development is the Pro Media programme - a USAID funded program, which has as its leading goal the survival, growth and self-sufficiency of independent media in Central and Eastern Europe. In Bulgaria the programme focuses on skills training for journalists only from electronic media.

During 1999 – 2002 under Tempus programme, the Faculty Journalism at Sofia State University implemented a project aimed to create a University centre for tailored education of journalists.

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CONTRACT OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED RESULTS

Overall objectives

The overall objective of the project of which this contract will be part is as follows:

To strengthen the independence of media through improving professional standards in Bulgarian journalism.

Specific objectives

This is to be achieved by pursuing the following specific objectives:

Objective#1: To develop a system of voluntary self-regulation of media sector through undertaking a *participatory assessment* of leading issues and challenges that affect media, *issuing a Code of practice* which should reflect the highest European standards of professional ethics, *establishing a Complaints Commission (CC)* as enforcement mechanism of the Code and *design and deliver training and support programs* for media, CC and Council of Electronic Media;

Objective#2: To initiate reform of media human resource management policies in accord with the Code of practice through *assessment of current needs* of media HR management policies, *delivery of HR management training* and provision of on-going *individual assistance to media*;

Objective#3 To deliver a professional training programme to mid-career journalists for at least 300 mid-career journalists of whom at least 70 of minority origin¹;

Objective #4 To modernize journalism teaching at Sofia University through undertaking a participatory assessment of University Curriculum needs, developing a Curriculum Modernization Strategy and Action Plan, designing and implementing a Curriculum Scholarship Initiative and creating information and exchange network amongst at least three Faculties of Journalism in Bulgaria.

Results to be achieved by the Contractor

The work of the Contractor should result in the production and delivery of the following services and products:

- Three participatory assessments, respectively on the needs, gaps and problems for the main national and regional media development, participatory assessment on current state of media resource management policies, consistent with the Code of Practice and participatory assessment on the modernization needs of the curriculum at the Sofia University Faculty of Journalism;
- Code of Practice
- Complaints commission
- Training and Support Programme for media, Complaints Commission and Council of Electronic media
- Professional training programme for mid-career journalists

¹ A preliminary assessment on the training needs of journalism has been undertaken in August 2001, which results will be at full disposal of the Contractor.

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- Development of Curriculum Modernization Strategy and Action Plan
- HR management training and individual assistance to media
- Curriculum Scholarship Initiative design and implementation
- Universities information and exchange network

ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

Assumptions underlying the project intervention

The successful beginning of the contract is pre-defined by the following assumptions:

A. Assessments of issues facing the media sector, training needs and human resource policy in media, and curriculum at Journalism Faculty are vital for the successful implementation of the project activities. It is important that all assessment reports are undertaken in a professional manner and involve a wide consultation process at all levels of the media community. This should guarantee that their results reflect the true needs of Bulgarian media.

B. Commitment to develop and uphold a Code of Practice is key to the success of the project. Many previous attempts in this direction have failed for two reasons – the drafting process has not been undertaken in a participatory manner and an arrangement for grievances review has not been integrated into the approach

C. Media need to demonstrate willingness to develop human resource policies and journalists need to actively pursue their mid-career training needs. For mid-career training to be successful a commitment needs to be made by the journalists themselves and the media need to articulate their human resource development policies. The Contractor should provide for the development of human resource development strategies in the media to those that uphold the Code of Practice.

Risks

The above-mentioned assumptions are not met.

As far as the improving the professional standards in journalism is concerned the Contractor's work may be affected by members of the journalist community that will refuse to recognise the need for improving professional standards in the sector.

SCOPE OF THE WORK

General

Project description

The project aims to strengthen the independence of media through improving professional standards in Bulgarian journalism through the development of a system of voluntary self-regulation of media sector, initiation of a reform of media human resource management policies, delivery of professional training programme to mid-career journalists and modernization journalism teaching at Sofia University. The project methodology includes the conduction of three participatory assessments, development of professional Code of Practice, formation of a Complaints commission, development and delivery of training and support Programme for media, Complaints Commission and Council of Electronic media,

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professional training programme for mid-career journalists, development of Curriculum Modernization Strategy and Action Plan, delivery of HR management training and individual assistance to media, Curriculum Scholarship Initiative design and implementation and maintenance of a Universities information and exchange network.

Geographical area to be covered.

The activities will be implemented throughout the country (and as identified by the needs assessment of training needs of journalists which will be given to the short-listed candidates).

Target groups

The target groups considered beneficiaries under the current Contract are Bulgarian Media Coalition, CEM, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridsky” (Faculty of Journalism), Union for Daily Newspapers Publishers in Bulgaria.

Specific activities

The Contractor should undertake specific activities in order to accomplish the purposes of the current TOR. It should follow strictly the order of the activities that follow each of the individual contract components in order to keep the Contract’s overall execution sequence. The activities under each of the components accompanied by relevant instructions and timeline and are shortly depicted below.

Subproject 1: Media self-regulation system development

The media sector is uniquely suited to voluntary self-regulation. Since the 1990s Bulgarian society has frequently debated the need and format of regulation of the media sector. Over the last 10 years couple of representative for the national electronic and print media have emerged such as Bulgarian Media Coalition (BMC), Union of editors of print media, etc. who act as professional media associations uniting the interests of the individual electronic and print media.

Specific Activities:

a) Collaborate with the Working group on self-regulation through:

- 1) Providing comments to the proposed list of WG members by the PIU.
- 2) Suggesting and developing, after the approval of the WG, the design and contents of all products and services envisaged under Subproject 1.

Note: The Contractor and the Working group need to achieve broad consensus amongst media associations on the core values of the Code.

b) Undertake a participatory assessment of on the needs, gaps and problems for the main national and regional media development in Bulgaria by:

- 1) Drafting, under the supervision and approval of the WG on self regulation, the design and methodology, which will integrate the specific assessment components such as questionnaires, focus group discussions with journalists and media managers, direct interviews with a select group of key

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journalists and media managers, review of past efforts in developing self-regulatory mechanisms.

c) develop Code of practice and establishment of a Complaints

Commission by:

1. Suggest for approval to the Working Group on Self-Regulation the design and the specific self-regulation chapters in the Code (based on the assessment of the media sector).
2. Suggest for approval to the Working Group on Self-Regulation a statute, structure and functions of a voluntary Complaints Commission.
3. Facilitating the process of adoption of the Code by media professional associations particularly the Union of Daily Newspapers Publishers and the Bulgarian Media Coalition. This will include agreement to observe the rulings of the Complaints Commission.
4. Facilitating the enforcement of the Code of practice through integration of values of the Code in the media internal rules and regulations by all members of media associations.

d) designing a programme and delivering training for the implementation of the Code of Practice:

1. At least 8 trainings of 3 days each delivered to at least 20 media representatives per training;
2. About 100 consultations to individual national and regional, electronic and print media delivered on how to apply the Code;
3. At least 3 days training for Complaints Commission members to apply the Code of Practice;
4. 3 days training delivered to the members of CEM.

Outputs under Subproject 1:

Conducted a **participatory assessment** on the needs, gaps and problems for the main national and regional media development in Bulgaria;

Developed **Code of Practice**, widely consulted with the Union of Daily Newspapers Publishers and Bulgarian Media Coalition members

Established **Complaints Commission (CC)**, which acts as an enforcement mechanism of the Code of Practice addressing disputes and grievances arising from infringements of the Code;

The **Code of Practice integrated** in the Bulgarian internal media rules and regulations;

Developed training programme for the implementation of the Code of Practice;

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At least 5 licensed national and regional electronic media and 5 national and 10 regional print media willing to sign up for the Code;

CEM and CC's members trained and informed on the Code of Practice contents and procedures of functioning of the Complaints Commission.

Subproject project 2: "Media human resource management policies, consistent with the Code of Practice"

Media need to develop human resource management strategies if they are to be competitive in the fragmented Bulgarian market. There is a lack of tradition to provide on-the-job training and professional development to practicing journalists. Few, if any, media have formulated and implemented human resource management policies that are consistent with EU practices. Not having such policies in places, leads to a decreased capacity of media to retain good professionals who often migrate between various media.

Special activities:

a) undertaking a participatory assessment of the current state of media human resource management policies

1. To review current media policy on staff retention and career development, professional development opportunities including trainings and other policies consistent with the need of strengthening its human potential, equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

2. To conduct the assessment and formulate recommendation for development of training and support programme for human resource policy. Based on the outputs of the assessment at least 30 national and local media are selected to receive training. At least 10 national and 10 local media receive individual assistance and support to develop and implement such policy.

b) designing and delivering media human resource management training and TA.

1. At least 30 national and local media receive training to develop human resource management policies. The trainings should be prolonged no longer than 3 days.

2. At least 10 national and 10 local media receive individual assistance and support to develop and implement human resource management policies. The individual assistance should be provided through on the spot visits and should be prolonged at least 1 day each.

Outcomes under Subproject 2:

1. Assessment report of current status of human resource management policies of media.
2. Training delivered to at least 30 national and local media to develop human resource management policies.
3. Individual assistance and support provided to at least 10 national and 10 local media for improvement of their human resource management policies.

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Subproject 3 “**Professional training programme designed and delivered to mid-career journalists**”

Limited opportunities for training of mid-career journalists further weaken professional standards in media. According to the aforementioned Monitor by Market Test on average Bulgarian journalists have 10 years of professional experience. 76% of them admit that they have received no professional qualification after university graduation. The same survey confirms that some 80% of practicing journalists articulate the need for further professional qualification. The lack of on-the-job training also leads many journalists to disillusionment with the profession and also contributes to a high level of turnover. Efforts to undertake curriculum modernisation are not likely to have any effect on this target group. They have specific training needs that need to be addressed in order to strengthen the professional standards of media. Areas which have been identified as needing support are reporting skills, investigative journalism, working with sources, ethnic minorities reporting, EU accession, etc.

Special activities:

a) designing and delivering training programmes for mid-career journalists² by:

1. Designing and implementing modern training programmes (the preliminary assessment held in 2001 on needs of training of journalists should be used)
2. Providing training to at least 300 journalists, of whom at least 70 representatives of ethnic minorities that will receive skills and subject specific knowledge in (a) Professional ethics and ethnic minorities reporting (promotion of tolerance); (b) European integration and reporting on EU accession; (c) Reporting skills for mid-career journalists, working with sources, investigative journalism; (d) Media management skills.

The trainings should be non-residential and should be prolonged at least 4 days each.

Outcomes under Subproject 3:

1. At least 70 representatives of ethnic minorities are given access to modern journalist professional skills acquisition.
2. Designed, and distributed adapted to the local conditions training manuals and handbooks.
3. Delivered tailored trainings to at least 300 journalists, of whom at least 70 representatives of ethnic minorities, in accordance with the needs outlined in the preliminary held assessment.

Subproject 4: “**Modernisation of the teaching of Journalism at Sofia University as a model for other faculties in Bulgaria**”

The general under-funding of higher education has also impacted on the training of journalists. The Faculty of Journalism and Mass

² The programme should be based on the recommendations and analysis of the training needs of mid-career journalists, given in the preliminary assessment made in August 2001. The assessment report will be at the Contractor's disposal.

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Communications at the Sofia University is the largest journalist faculty in the country and is a member of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA). Despite the fact that it is still training over 70% of practicing journalists in Bulgaria, the Faculty programmes remain outdated and lack resources and support. Important first steps have been made to reform its teaching methods and curriculum. These include the development of a bachelors and masters programmes in journalism and mass communications; opening up to cooperation with NGOs and participating in international networks like EJTA. Despite this, faculty staff admits that there is need for further support in updating teaching methods and methodology, introduction of new courses and techniques, including internships for students. A significant gap can be identified in ethics training and inter-cultural awareness.

Special activities:

a) Collaborate with the Working group on self-regulation through:

- 1) Providing comments on the proposed list of WG members by the PIU.
- 2) Suggesting and preparing, after the approval of the WG, the design and contents of all products and services envisaged under Subproject 4.

Note: the Journalism Faculty Council at the Sofia State University should also endorse The WG members.

b) undertake a participatory assessment of the modernization needs of the curriculum at the Sofia University Faculty of Journalism by:

1. Designing and conducting an independent assessment of the needs of modernization of the curriculum of the Faculty of Journalism at Sofia University which will include targets, methodologies of data gathering and analysis techniques.
2. Formulating key areas of concern and recommendable set of practical measures for further modernization of the University curriculum.

c) design and implement Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI) by:

1. Developing guidelines and requirements for attracting additional academic human resources in support of the implementation of the action plan of the modernized University curriculum of journalism.
2. Supporting at least 10 individual scholars initiatives that target the modernisation of teaching methods and content of the University curriculum of journalism.
3. Suggesting and implementing, after the approval of the WG, the overall design and implementation of the CSI, following the basic rules for grants within the Practical Guide to contract procedures financed from the General Budget of the European Communities in the context of external actions.

d) develop Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan by:

1. Drafting and offering to the WG for approval a Curriculum modernization strategy based on the suggestions, recommendations and successful findings of the CSI, which will be approved by the Faculty of Journalism at Sofia State University.

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2. Suggesting for approval and developing an action plan with concrete practical steps and operational timeline for implementation of the Curriculum modernization strategy.

f) create an information and exchange network amongst Faculties of journalism by:

1. Setting up information exchange network between at least 3 faculties of journalism in the country set up.
2. Developing adequate services and effective forms of communication, exchange of curriculum patterns information and effective representation of the interests of the academic community.
3. Providing various career opportunities to at least 50 students that are at their final stage prior graduation and young researchers in the area of media development.

Outcomes under Subproject 4:

1. Curriculum assessment report for Sofia University, Faculty of Journalism completed serving to inform the design of strategy and action plan.
2. Curriculum modernisation strategy and action plan drafted and approved by Faculty.
3. Curriculum Scholarship Initiative set up and functioning in support of the implementation of the action plan by providing support to small projects that contribute to the modernisation of teaching methods and content.
4. Information exchange network between at least 3 faculties of journalism in the country.

Note: The Contractor should give a particular attention to ensuring the sustainability and dissemination of all project results under each of the Subprojects. It must also observe the latest visibility guidelines concerning acknowledgement of EC financing of the project, which are available at the following address:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/visibility/index_en.htm"

Project management

Responsible body

The Contracting Authority under this contract is the Central Finance and Contracts Unit (CFCU) Directorate at the Ministry of Finance. The CFCU Directorate consists of two Departments - Contracting Department and Financial Department. Both departments of the CFCU (the "Contracting Authority") will be responsible for managing this contract.

The **Project Implementation Unit (PIU)** is the **European Institute (EI)**.

Management structure

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The CFCU Directorate is headed by the CFCU Director. The CFCU Director will be the Project Manager of this Contract as per Article 8 of the Contract Special Conditions. The project management structure includes the Project Manager and the Project Steering Committee. Decisions related to the technical implementation of the project will be taken by the Project Manager following the decision of the Project Steering Committee. Decisions related to financial issues, may be taken by the Project Manager alone.

The **Project Implementation Unit (PIU)** will be the **European Institute (EI)**. EI will be responsible for the day-to-day management and supervision of the Contractor's overall performance.

The PIU task's and responsibilities include:

- **the establishment of a Steering Committee** prior to the commencement data of the current Contract which will consist of not more than 10 members of which 4 representatives of project key beneficiaries (Bulgarian Media Coalition, CEM, Faculty of Journalism at Sofia State University, Union of Daily Newspapers Publishers), 2 representatives of PIU (EI), 2 distinguished journalists (national and local media), 1 representative of the Contracting Authority and 1 representative of the Delegation of the European Commission.

The Steering Committee will meet every four months and will:

- Oversee the project as a whole;
- Provide a national endorsement to the initiatives and actions approved by the WG on self-regulation and the WG on modernization of University Curriculum
- Approve the proposed by the PIU, after consultations with the Contractor, members of the 2 Working groups (WG) on self regulation and WG on Curriculum Modernisation and monitor their work under the Phare BG 0104.04 project for better transparency and accountability. The WGs should consist of representatives of core project beneficiaries.

The Contractor should propose activities in full accordance with the current TOR. The Contractor should perform the services under the contract with due care, efficiency and diligence, in accordance with the best professional practice. The Contractor should comply with the following instructions.:

- a. The Contractor should provide the PIU and the Contracting Authority with monthly working time and activities schedules a week before the start of each working month
- b. The Contractor should provide the PIU and the Contracting Authority with progress interim reports on activities performed a week after the completion of each working month.
- c. The Contractor should copy the PIU and the Contracting Authority in its entire in-country correspondence to related to this TOR's activities execution.
- d. The Contractor strictly lies under the obligation to consult with the PIU and with the Contracting Authority all changes in

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external environment or circumstances as well as any changes that might occur during the process of this TOR's execution.

- e. The Contractor should declare any conflict of interest that appears in the course of contract execution.

The Contractor should follow all the requirements and regulations regarding the nature of services delivered under this contract as well as on the overall contract performance, payments, finances, expenditure and reports, enlisted in the General conditions for Service contracts, financed by the EC.

Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties

Neither the Contracting Authority nor the PIU will provide any technical or other facilities to the Contractor.

LOGISTICS AND TIMING

Location

The activities planned will be implemented throughout the country (as identified by the assessment report of training needs of journalists, mentioned in the Subproject 3).

Commencement date & Period of execution

The intended commencement date is 24 November and the period of execution of the contract will be 11 months from this date. Please refer to Articles 4 and 5 of the Special Conditions for the actual commencement date and period of execution.

REQUIREMENTS

Personnel

Key experts

All experts who have a crucial role in implementing the contract are referred to as key experts. The profiles of the key experts for this contract are as follows:

Key expert 1: Team Leader (International expert)

Qualifications and skills

- University degree in a related field
- managing a team composed of international and local specialists;
- supervising and co-ordinating all technical aspects of a contract;
- ensuring good communication amongst all the experts, PIU, SC, WGs and the Contracting Authority;
- organising and overseeing administrative and logistical support;
- knowledge of media development sector.

General and specific professional experience:

- at least 7 years of experience in media development field;

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- knowledge of the current modern media trends;
- knowledge of the European standards of media professional training and academic teaching;
- project management experience.

The Key Expert 1 will be engaged average 15 working days a month during the official duration of the Contract.

Key expert 2: Senior expert on media self-regulation (International expert)

Qualifications and skills:

- University degree in a related field
- knowledge of media self-regulation system development;
- ability to plan and design participatory assessment of leading issues and challenges that affect media development in Bulgaria;
- knowledge of media self-regulation systems in EU member countries ;
- knowledge of designing training programmes with regard to self-regulation

General and specific professional experience:

- at least 5 years of experience in media self-regulation field;
- successful track record in drafting professional Code of practices;
- track record in formation/consultations of Complaints Commissions;
- track record in consulting/designing training for self-regulatory bodies.

The Key Expert 2 will be engaged average 10 working days a month during the official duration of the Contract.

Key expert 3: Senior Expert on professional training and media human resource management (International expert)

Qualifications and skills:

- University degree in a related field
- knowledge on media human resource management policies;
- ability to design and monitor the implementation of a participatory assessment of the current state of media human resource management policies;

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- ability to design and monitor media human resource management training programmes;
- knowledge on training methodologies on professional ethics and ethnic minorities reporting (promotion of tolerance); European integration and reporting on EU accession; Reporting skills for mid-career journalists, working with sources, investigative journalism; Media management skills.

General and specific professional experience:

- at least 5 years of experience in the area of media capacity building programmes;
- track record in successful designing, implementing and assessing training programmes related to strengthening HR management policies;
- track record in advising media senior management on HR policy improvement and individual employees advancement;
- track record in developing individual employees appraisal performance.

The Key Expert 3 will be engaged average 12 working days a month during the official duration of the Contract.

Key expert 4: Senior Expert on University curriculum (International expert)

Qualifications and skills:

- University degree in a related field
- ability to assess and analyze academic needs for curriculum modernization at the Sofia University Faculty of Journalism;
- knowledge on modern Curriculum Modernisation Strategies;
- skills to develop guidelines and requirements for attracting additional academic human resources;
- **knowledge on information and exchange network amongst Faculties of journalism in Bulgaria would be an advantage.**

General and specific professional experience

- at least 7 years of experience in the area of academic journalism teaching and training
- successful track record in advising/designing University curriculum
- experience in advising University Faculty Councils how to modernize existing University teaching
- successful track record in participating/maintaining academic networking

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The Key Expert 4 will be engaged average 10 working days a month during the official duration of the Contract.

Key Expert 5: Financial Officer (International expert)

Qualifications and skills

- University degree in a related field
- knowledge on operational management, accounting under Phare programmes
- knowledge on financial management under service contracts
- good knowledge of Phare general contractual conditions
- financial management of the Contract funds (book-keeping)
- ability to execute all payments
- ability to prepare financial reports

General and specific professional experience

- at least 3 years of experience in the area of book keeping under Phare service contracts
- track record in maintaining overall financial management
- experience in preparing interim and final reporting under Phare programmes
- track record in preparing contracts under Phare programmes

The Key Expert 5 will be engaged average 7 working days a month during the official duration of the Contract.

Key Expert 6: Technical assistant/interpreter (Local expert)

A Technical assistant/interpreter shall also be appointed under this Contract. He/she will assist the team leader and the senior experts in all matters related to this contract. He/She has to have at least 3 years of administrative and technical support experience.

The Key Expert 6 will be engaged average 15 working days a month during the official duration of the Contract.

The minimum percentage of time, which international experts should work in the beneficiary country, should be 90%.

Non-key experts

CVs for experts other than the key experts are not examined prior to the signature of the contract. They should not have been included in tenders. The Consultant shall select and hire other experts as required according to the profiles identified in these Terms of Reference. These profiles must indicate whether they are to be regarded as long-term/short-term,

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international/local and senior/junior so that it is clear which fee rate in the budget breakdown will apply to each profile. For the purposes of this contract, international experts are considered to be those whose permanent residence is outside the beneficiary country while local experts are considered to be those whose permanent residence is in the beneficiary country.

The Consultant should pay attention to the need to ensure the active participation of local professional skills where available, and a suitable mix of international and local staff in the project teams. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities accorded to them.

The Contractor shall select and hire the following non-key experts:

Subproject	Activity	Type of expert	Requirements	Recommended minimum missions for the international experts in the beneficiary country	Required minimum working days for the whole contract period
Media self regulation	<i>Participatory assessment</i>	2 short-term local experts	at least 5 years experience in the field of assessment of media sector		30 days total
	<i>Development of Code of practice and establishment of a Complaints Commission</i>	2 short term international experts 4 short-term local experts	At least 5 years experience in the field of media self-regulation At least 3 years experience in the field of media.	1 mission	20 days total 60 days total
	<i>Design and Deliver a training for applying the Code of</i>	2 short-term international experts	At least 5 year relevant experience in delivering	1 mission total	10 days total

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Subproject	Activity	Type of expert	Requirements	Recommended minimum missions for the international experts in the beneficiary country	Required minimum working days for the whole contract period
	<i>Practice</i>	4 short-term local experts	training At least 3 years of experience in training delivery		160 days total
• Media human resource management policies, consistent with the Code of Practice	<i>Undertake a participatory assessment</i>	2 short-term local experts	At least 3 years experience in the field of media		30 days total
	<i>Design and deliver media human resource management training and TA.</i>	2 short term international expert 4 short term local experts	At least 5 years of experience in developing human resource management policies and at least 150 training hours spent on the ground At least 3 years of experience in developing human resource management	1 mission total	10 days total 88 days total

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Subproject	Activity	Type of expert	Requirements	Recommended minimum missions for the international experts in the beneficiary country	Required minimum working days for the whole contract period
			t training		
Professional training programme designed and delivered to mid-career journalists	<i>Design and deliver training programmes for mid-career journalists</i>	3 short term international experts 6 short-term local	At least 3 years of experience in designing professional training programmes and at least 200 training hours spent in actual training At least two years in implementing training programs and projects including training programs in media sector	Two missions total	30 days 480 days total
Modernization of the teaching of Journalism at Sofia University as a model for other faculties in Bulgaria	<i>Participatory assessment</i>	1 local short-term expert	At least 5 years of teaching experience in higher institution.		20 days total

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Subproject	Activity	Type of expert	Requirements	Recommended minimum missions for the international experts in the beneficiary country	Required minimum working days for the whole contract period
	<i>Design and implement Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI):</i>	1 short term international expert 3 short-term local experts	At least 3 years of experience in developing and implementing similar facility at University level. At least 3 years of experience in developing and implementing project facility including at University level.	2 missions	20 days total 45 days total
	<i>Develop Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan</i>	2 short-term international experts. 1 short term local expert	At least 7 years of experience in developing and modernizing University Curriculum. Faculty of Journalism Members (Sofia University)	2 missions total	30 days total 15 days total

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Subproject	Activity	Type of expert	Requirements	Recommended minimum missions for the international experts in the beneficiary country	Required minimum working days for the whole contract period
	<i>Create an information and exchange network amongst Faculties of journalism</i>	1 short term international expert	Experience in establishing and maintaining of an academic network Sound knowledge of academic environment	1 mission	10 days total
		1 short term local expert			20 days total

The selection procedures used by the Contractor to select these other experts shall be transparent, and shall be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, language skills and work experience. The findings of the selection panel shall be recorded. The selected experts shall be subject to approval by the Contracting Authority.

NOTE: The civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the beneficiary country cannot be recruited as experts.

Support staff & backstopping

Backstopping costs are considered to be included in the fee rates. The costs of supporting staff must be included in the fee rates of the experts

Office accommodation

Office accommodation of a reasonable standard for the experts working on the contract is to be provided by the Contractor.

The costs of the office accommodation are to be covered by the fee rates of the experts.

Facilities to be provided by the Consultant

The Contractor shall ensure that the key and non-key experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it shall ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support its activities under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

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The Contractor within the fee rates of its experts should provide all administrative and secretarial provision in terms of supplies, communication, documentation, and logistical support. The Contractor bears the costs of the translations from/to Bulgarian language.

If the Contractor is a consortium, the arrangements should allow for the maximum flexibility in project implementation. Arrangements offering each consortium partner a fixed percentage of the work to be undertaken under the contract should be avoided.

Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority as part of this service contract or transferred to the Contracting Authority at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract, which is to be acquired by the beneficiary country, must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

Incidental expenditure

The Provision for incidental expenditure covers the eligible incidental expenditure incurred under this contract. It cannot be used for costs, which should be covered by the Contractor as part of its fee rates. It covers:

- Travel costs and subsistence allowances for missions to be undertaken as part of this contract in the beneficiary country;
- Travel cost and subsistence allowances for trainees envisage under the subproject 1,2 and 3;
- Rent of meeting/training rooms outside of the beneficiary institution premises;
- Production of information materials;
- Interpretation/translation;
- Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI) distribution of scholarships (at least 10 scholarships of up to Euro 10 000);
- Training materials distribution under relevant subprojects (1, 2 and 3).

The Provision for incidental expenditure for this contract is EUR 400 000. This amount must be included **without modification** in the Budget breakdown.

Any subsistence allowances to be paid for missions undertaken as part of this contract from the base of operations in the beneficiary country must not exceed the per diem rates published on the Web site http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/index_en.htm at the start of each such mission.]

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REPORTS

Reporting requirements

Three types of reports are to be delivered by the Contractor under this contract:

- a. **The inception report** should come on the second month³ of the contract execution. It should contain between 10 to 20 pages report on the initial ToR's implementation design, working groups members and the details of the design and methodology envisaged for data gathering and analysis for the participatory assessment of leading issues and challenges that affect media development in Bulgaria contracted under Subproject# 1 and participatory assessment of the current state of media human resource management policies, contracted under Subproject # 2. It should also state the details of the trainings design of the mid-career journalists (Subprojects#3) and media HR management training (Subproject#2). A section should be included on the initial status of Code of practice development.
- b. **The progress interim reports** should be prepared on the fifth and ninth month during the contract execution. They should report on the contract's current advancement and individual contract's components implementation. Each of the report should be no longer than 15 pages and should be accompanied by any relevant data, products, memos, copies of sub-contracts, etc.

In addition, an updated financial report must be submitted with each of the above progress reports. The updated financial report must contain details of the time inputs of the experts and of the incidental expenditure. The final progress report must be accompanied by the final invoice and an audit certificate (as defined in Article 30 of the General Conditions and in accordance with the template in Annex VI of the contract) confirming the final certified value of the contract.

- c. **The final report** should be delivered by the Contractor in the first week of November 2004 and should be no longer than 50 pages. It should contain general and specific information per Contract's components achievements as well as some statistics on target beneficiaries involvement and participation. It should contain a special section on the overall contract's execution impact as well as on Contractor's recommendations on the future possible developments in Bulgarian media.

A corresponding invoice must accompany all the reports. The draft final report must be submitted at least one month before the end of the period of execution of the contract

The structure of each report should contain the following sections:

- Executive summary
- Introduction/context

³ The second month is considered one month after the project operational start.

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- Methodology/Approach
- Immediate results
- Status of beneficiaries
- General and specific findings
- Areas of future concern
- Recommendations
- Annexes

Submission & approval of progress reports

A copy of each report referred to above - in both English and Bulgarian - should be submitted to each member of the Steering Committee, which should initially approve them. The PIU, prior to the submission of the report to the CA, should develop short comments on both the narrative and financial part's credibility, objectiveness and quality. The CA will finally approve the reports. Hence 10 copies of the reports must be written in English and 10 in Bulgarian.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Definition of indicators

The indicators under which the Project manager will monitor and evaluate the Contractor's overall performance will be divided into general and specific as follows:

A. *Qualitative indicators*

- Level of consensus achieved amongst media associations on the contents of the Code of Practice
- Practice of the Complaints Commission, including resolved cases;
- Knowledge and type of skills acquired by mid career journalists.
- Compliance of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative design and implementation with the basic rules for grants within the Practical Guide to contract procedures financed from the General Budget of the European Communities in the context of external actions.
- Usefulness of training materials developed and delivered training

B. *Quantitative indicators:*

- Number of participatory assessments conducted
- Code of Practice developed

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- Complaints Commission established
- Number of trainings delivered for acquainting media with the Code of Practice contents;
- Number of national and local media adopted human resource management policies
- Number of licensed national and regional electronic media and # of national and regional print media willing to sign up for the Code;
- Number of trainings delivered to CEM and CC's members
- Number of trainings delivered to Number of national and local media on human resource management policies.
- Number of days individual assistance provided to number of national and local media for improvement of human resource management policies.
- Number of representatives of ethnic minorities who are given access to modern journalist professional skills acquisition.
- Number of training manuals and handbooks distributed
- Number of trainings delivered to # of mid-career journalists
- Curriculum modernisation strategy and action plan drafted
- Number of Curriculum Scholarship Initiative scholarships provided to # of University scholars
- Number of Universities/Faculties working in an information exchange network

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Appendix Three

Curriculum Modernisation. Strategy and Action Plan

Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism, Bulgaria

EuropeAid/113392/D/SV/BG

Curriculum Modernisation: A Strategy and Action Plan

Prepared by:

Michael Foley, International Key Expert on Curriculum Modernisation

Marek Bekerman, International Non-Key Expert on Curriculum Modernisation

Vesselina Valkanova, Local Non-Key Expert on Curriculum Modernisation

Snezhana Popova, Local Non-Key Expert on Curriculum Modernisation

On behalf of the Project Consortium:

BBC World Service Trust (UK); Media Development Centre (BG); Human Dynamics (A);
International Federation of Journalists (B); University of Leipzig (DE); Dublin Institute of
Technology (IRL)

“By the end of the Project, the implementation team will have produced a range of viable proposals for further improving the new curriculum at Sofia University’s Journalism Faculty. These proposals will be based on the findings of a specially designed Curriculum Scholarship Initiative, and on the input of experienced experts. Focusing largely on optional subjects, MA programmes and teaching methodologies, the action plan will be formally adopted by the Working Group on Curriculum Modernisation and implemented beyond the project end date.”

Excerpt from the Consortium’s “Project Information” Document, January 2004.

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The end of the Curriculum Modernisation component of this project must be seen as a beginning for the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications at Sofia University. This **Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan** envisages a Faculty development that will go beyond a **five-year period** of sustained hard work and planning by the Faculty.

Implementing modernised curriculum is by its nature a long-term project: simply because of the university cycle of four or five years. In order to ensure change takes place and is planned it is recommended that a **post project follow up implementation team** be established. It is also observed that external support in terms of expert contribution will be necessary to ensure the Action Plan can be implemented.

The Action Plan recommends a move to a **50/50 split between theoretical and practice** modules. However, the state of the technology at the Faculty means it will be difficult to deliver some important modules that depend on computers, recorders, cameras and specialist software. The Project had no provision for supplying equipment, but **without a serious up-grade of equipment it is hard to envisage a modern curriculum being in place or delivered.**

Some of the key points envisaged in this document are:

- A Curriculum Review Committee, which will spearhead the modernisation process and see through its successful implementation.
- The Faculty to embrace the provisions of the Bologna Agreement which means culling outdated modules. It will mean identifying core elements of the new curriculum.
- Staff training needs to be identified and staff to be retrained in order to deliver a modern curriculum.
- Within three years of this Action Plan being presented, continuous assessment to be introduced, along with a student portfolio system of assessment and a fully assessed work placement scheme.
- Foreign languages to be introduced as an integral part of the degree programme.
- A student newspaper or magazine to be launched and the student radio station to be revamped.

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- Plans to be drawn up to address the shortage of equipment along with schemes to improve links with the industry.
- The Faculty to develop certain specialist areas of research in order to attract foreign students and researchers.
- Within three years, the undergraduate programme to be overhauled
- A student newsroom to be established and used actively as a teaching space.
- A faculty strategy and business plan to be developed within a three year period.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

“Following the London seminar, we have to adequately answer the question: What is it that we want to produce: journalists or university graduates?” (Curriculum Scholarship Initiative Participant)

The above quotation from a report of one of the recipients of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI) in a way encapsulates the debates that have been taking place since journalism schools were first established in 19th century America. Should journalism be taught in the university at all? Is journalism a craft skill rather than something based on a body of knowledge?

The answer to all these questions is probably yes. Journalism should be taught in a university to ensure it is taught as a practice that is about society and democracy rather than simply the servant of one individual media conglomerate or owner; and yes, journalism is a skill, or practice, but one that engages with how society works, with social issues and public life.

Having said that, deciding what and how to teach journalists is not quite so simple; the journalism teacher is left with questions about how much theory and how much practice, and then - what practice and what theory.

These are the issues that have been that have been part of the debate that has been taking place – not only within the framework of this Project – at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University for the past two years. The FJMC is not unique. A few years ago the president of Columbia University in New York, home of the prestigious Columbia School of Journalism, announced he was suspending the process of appointing a new dean of the School of Journalism while Columbia re-evaluated the role of the school. He said: “There is a role at the university for skills training, but it should not be the dominant position.” His action provoked a debate among journalism teachers, journalists and graduates who were split as to whether they agreed or not; some supported the president’s demand for a rethink; others denied Columbia was a ‘trade school’; some defended the emphasis on skills training; while others maintained that what is considered training in ‘mere’ skills is in fact a rigorous intellectual training.

In May of this year (2005) the heads of five of the United State’s most prestigious journalism schools announced a three year project with a budget of \$6 million to elevate journalism in academe and find ways of preparing journalists better. They plan to revitalise journalism education by

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undertaking nationally important investigative journalism projects, as well as finding ways to influence the discourse on journalism related issues.

The process in Sofia has perhaps been more difficult than that at Columbia, or any other school in the US or Western Europe, where similar debates periodically take place. Sofia University's Journalism Faculty is moving from a different journalism teaching tradition and going through the pain of embracing a tradition that grew up in a different place, a tradition that gives greater value to practice and craft skills. It also has to do it at a speed no-one in western Europe was ever forced to do.

Without doubt the project's emphasis on skills acquisition has been the most problematic for the Faculty. It must have appeared that we were only concerned with foisting upon the Faculty a model that is not without its own critics. That is not the case; however, there can be no doubt that if Sofia University's graduates are to effect improvements in Bulgarian media they had better be great practitioners themselves before they begin to suggest how practice should be improved within the newsrooms of Bulgaria's newspapers, radio and television stations.

The past two years has been one of tensions, often creative; of suspicion; as well as a partnership and a learning experience for all of us involved.

This Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan was produced by a team, and that team includes many members of the Faculty. Those who took part in the two Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives will find echoes of the ideas contained in their own reports, in this action plan. They will also find included the comments and discussions that took place at the final review and evaluation meeting, as well as results from the survey.

Others also contributed. Local experts gave their views and thoughts, and ideas also came in more informal settings, in London, Dublin and in Sofia. The other part of the team were the international experts who came to Sofia at different times during the life of the project, who visited the Faculty and talked to members. They also contributed ideas, based on their own experience in teaching journalism, which are included in this Action Plan.

As the International Key Expert charged with the Curriculum Modernisation module of the Project I am delighted to acknowledge and thank a number of people. The team leader, Hans Staiger, for his immense management skills, who has steered this Project through to completion with authority and above all diplomacy. If he ever lost his temper, he did so in private. He was also great company for lonely International Key Experts. As was the

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Technical Assistant to the project, Elisaveta Alexandrova. Thanks also to Nadezhda Hadzhikocheva, of the BBC/Phare office in Sofia.

The local experts: Dr Lilia Raycheva; Dr Julia Stefanova; Prof Milko Petrov; Dr Vesselina Valkanova, and Dr Snezhana Popova. The international experts: David Quin, of the Dublin Institute of Technology, who gave way and above the time allotted to his part of the project as those from Sofia who recall drives in the Dublin Mountains with him would testify. Prof Chris Frost of John Moores University, Liverpool, UK, also gave his expertise in organising the Association for Journalism Education in the UK and Ireland.

Marek Beckerman of the BBC World Service Trust deserves a special thanks. Marek contributed so much to the writing of this report and showed huge professionalism and friendship.

Many thanks must also go to Prof Vesselin Dimitrov, the Chairman of the Curriculum Modernisation Working Group, for all his support and back-up.

The Curriculum Modernisation aspect of the project is also grateful to all those who gave time translating or sitting on interview boards, and to all those journalists who put up with questions about journalism education.

A huge thanks is also due to Daire Higgins of the BBC World Service Trust in London, who gave so much time and effort to the Curriculum Scholarship Initiatives but also ensuring that experts, both key and otherwise, actually got to Bulgaria. To Michael Randall, who actually approached DIT and suggested we join with the BBC in applying for the project. It is he we must either thank or blame.

A very special thanks must go to Assoc Prof, Dr Teodora Petrova, Vice Dean of the Faculty. Dr Petrova gave support and help from the start and ensured the Curriculum Modernisation component would work and happen, even at times when we thought that was in doubt. Her charm and diplomacy meant misunderstandings did not occur too often by explaining where we were going wrong or were being insensitive.

Thanks also to those of the Faculty who showed friendship and solidarity between colleagues from either end of Europe. I hope this collaboration can continue.

My colleagues and students at the Dublin Institute of Technology are also to be thanked for their patience and support. Dr Brian O'Neill and Dr Nora French ensured I was able to head to Sofia whenever it was necessary by juggling timetables and finding replacements for me.

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It must be said that the Dublin Institute of Technology was honoured to be part of this project, which we at DIT viewed as an act of solidarity with our colleagues at the FJMC.

My immense thanks to my wife, Niamh, who put up with my constant travelling at a time when she was carrying on with her own academic career as well as going through personal problems of her own.

Finally, the BBC PHARE Project is about improving the professional standards of the media in Bulgaria. This is one of the few international media projects that has been imaginative enough to realise that without reaching out to young journalists at university, those who have not even started careers, it is impossible to improve professional standards in any sustained way. Hopefully this Strategy and Action Plan will contribute to a long term future for good journalism in Bulgaria. It is hoped that the Faculty will now take up the running on this.

Michael Foley
International Key Expert
November 2005

Terms of reference

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

3.1 The Overall Objective of the Project

The overall objective was stated as follows in the Terms of Reference of the Project:

“To strengthen the independence of the media through improving professional standards in Bulgarian journalism.”

3.2 The Structure of the Project

The Project was divided into four constituent and largely self-contained parts. The present report deals with the part described in the Terms of Reference (“TORs”) as **Sub-Project 4**. It was entitled:

“Modernisation of the teaching of Journalism at Sofia University as a model for other faculties in Bulgaria.”

The Terms of Reference stated the following with reference to journalism teaching at Sofia University:

“The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications at the Sofia University is the largest journalism faculty in the country. Its graduates constitute about 70% of practicing journalists in Bulgaria.

The Faculty programmes are outdated and lack resources and support.

Important first steps have been made to reform its teaching methods and curriculum. These include the development of a bachelors and masters programmes in journalism and mass communications; opening up to cooperation with NGOs and participating in international networks.

But the Faculty staff say that there is a need for further support in updating teaching methods and methodology, for the introduction of new courses and techniques, including internships for students. A significant gap can be identified in ethics training and inter-cultural awareness.”

3.3 General Objectives of the Teaching Modernisation Project

The Terms of Reference stated the following general objectives with reference to **Sub-Project 4**:

1. *To carry out a participatory assessment of the modernisation needs of the curriculum at the Faculty of Journalism at Sofia University.*
2. *To design and implement a Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI).*

Terms of reference

3. *To create an information and exchange network amongst at least three Faculties of Journalism in Bulgaria.*
4. *To develop a Curriculum Modernization Strategy and Action Plan.*

3.4 Specific Objectives

The Terms of Reference stated the following specific objectives in relation to each of the general objectives:

1. Participatory Assessment:

- a. to assess the needs of modernisation of the curriculum at the Faculty of Journalism;*
- b. to identify and specify targets, methods of data gathering and analytic techniques;*
- c. to formulate key areas of concern*
- d. to recommend a set of practical measures for further modernisation of the Faculty curriculum.*

2. Curriculum Scholarship Initiative:

- a. to develop guidelines and requirements for attracting additional academic human resources in support of the implementation of the action plan of the modernised University curriculum of journalism.*
- b. to support at least 10 individual scholars' initiatives that target the modernisation of teaching methods and content of the University curriculum of journalism.*
- c. to suggest and implement, after the approval of the WG, the overall design and implementation of the CSI, following the basic rules for grants within the Practical Guide to contract procedures financed from the General Budget of the European Communities in the context of external actions.*

3. An information and exchange network:

- a. to set up an information exchange network between at least 3 faculties of journalism in the country.*
- b. to develop adequate services and effective forms of communication, exchange of curriculum patterns information and effective representation of the interests of the academic community.*
- c. to provide various career opportunities to at least 50 students who are at their final stage prior to graduation and to young researchers in the area of media development.*

4. Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan:

- a. to draft and offer to the WG for approval a Curriculum modernization strategy based on the suggestions, recommendations and successful findings of the CSI, which will be approved by the Faculty of Journalism at Sofia State University.*

Terms of reference

b. to suggest for approval and develop an action plan with concrete practical steps and operational timeline for implementation of the Curriculum modernization strategy.

Terms of reference

3.5 Ramifications

The following terms and conditions were set by the Terms of Reference:

3.5.1 The above objectives should be secured by subsequently ensuring the **sustainability** and proper **dissemination** of the achieved outcomes. They also needed to observe the latest **visibility guidelines**.

3.5.2 The intended commencement date was stated as **24 November 2003** and the period of execution of the contract was originally stated to be **11 months** from that date.

3.5.3 The project would be delivered by the appointed **Contractor** on the basis of a competitive tender, led by the overall Project's **Team Leader**, who would in turn select the following personnel for the delivery of Sub-Project 4:

- a. **One Key International Senior Expert on University curriculum**, who would be working 10 days a month for the duration of the Contract
- b. **Non-key experts:**
 1. One local short-term expert to prepare a participatory assessment;
 2. One short-term international expert to design and implement Curriculum Scholarship Initiative during two missions;
 3. Three short-term local experts to design and implement Curriculum Scholarship Initiative;
 4. Two short-term international experts to develop Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan during two missions;
 5. One short-term local expert to develop Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan;
 6. One short-term international expert to create an information and exchange network amongst Faculties of journalism;
 7. One short-term local expert to create an information and exchange network amongst Faculties of journalism.

3.5.4 No equipment was to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority as part of this service contract or transferred to the Contracting Authority at the end of this contract.

3.5.5 Incidental expenditure for the whole Project included the cost of the distribution of at least 10 scholarships as part of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative (CSI) at up to a maximum of EUR 10 000 per scholarship.

3.5.6 The Terms of Reference imposed specific **reporting requirements** for the Project, of which the following applied to the Sub-Project 4:

- a. To produce a general **Inception Report** at the beginning of the Project;
- b. To produce a **Participatory Assessment Report**;
- c. To produce General periodic **Interim Reports**;
- d. To produce the **Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan** (the current document)

3.6 Sequence of Key Activities and Events

The Contractor and the appointed members of the team have conducted the following actions in the course of achieving the objectives:

Terms of reference

February 2004:

Following the Inception Report in January 2004, an **International Curriculum Experts** meeting convened.

March 2004:

Working Group on Curriculum Modernisation set up and operative.

April 2004:

Participatory Assessment conducted.

May 2004:

Findings of the Assessment presented to the Working Group.

June 2004:

A more comprehensive and forward-looking analysis report prepared for debate and consultations on the basis of the Assessment Report by the Key Curriculum Expert entitled: **Curriculum Modernisation: Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations.**

July 2004:

Guidelines and requirements developed and drawn up for the **Curriculum Scholarship Initiative** by the Key expert and local and international experts.

August 2004:

Details and conditions for the **Curriculum Scholarship Initiative** announced, published and circulated with the deadline for applications set at 30th September 2004.

September 2004:

A **meeting** of the Key Expert and Team Leader with the **University authorities**, Faculty members and the Project Implementation Unit convened on 29th September to discuss concerns raised by the findings and recommendations of the Key Expert's **Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations.**

October 2004:

An **Evaluation Panel** established to assess CSI applications consisting of the Key Expert, an international expert, a Sofia University representative, a media industry representative and a local expert in scholarship and exchange programmes disbursement.

November 2004:

- Approval of nine applicants for the CSI first round by the Evaluation Panel after selection interviews on 3rd and 4th November.
- Formal approval of the extension of the Overall Project to run till November 2005.

December 2004 – January 2005 – February 2005:

Finding, agreeing and arranging **CSI placements** for successful candidates at European universities and institutions; development and design of scholarship itineraries and schedules.

March – July 2005:

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First round of CSI scholarships takes place.

May 2005:

Second round of CSI scholarships conceived and the new “seminar” formula designed.

June 2005:

- **Applications officially invited** on 3rd June for the second round of CSI. **Selection interviews** conducted on 28th June.
- Advanced preparatory work by international and local experts on establishing a **Faculty Network for exchange of information**.

July 2005:

Two-week **Curriculum Modernisation programme** takes place as the second round of CSI in London, attended by seven Faculty members.

September 2005:

- A **one-day review and evaluation meeting** of all recipients of both rounds of CSI takes place on **13th September** with the view to carrying its benefits over into the curriculum modernization process.
- A **two-day conference** held on 15-16th September in Sofia attended by representatives from nine journalism-teaching universities in Bulgaria to establish and found a faculty **information exchange network**.
- Agreement by consent to establish a countrywide “**Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications in Bulgaria**.” Organising Committee set-up, timeframe agreed. **Press release** published and circulated on the 20th September.

October 2005:

- Appointment of one international expert and two local experts to assist the Key Expert in finalising the **Curriculum Modernisation Strategy and Action Plan** and starting **advance implementation action**.
- Work on adoption of a **unified template** with guidelines for individual module construction by all Faculty members.
- Work on designing a **student course-book** with simplified module templates.
- **Analysis** of findings, conclusions and recommendations in post-CSI reports and surveys of all recipients.
- Advanced work on compilation and adaptation of post-CSI reports to produce a Faculty **internal publication** to inform further curriculum modernisation programme.
- Consultations with faculty members on identifying **leadership structure and roles** for the future **Curriculum Review Committee** (Curriculum Action Group).
- Identification of the proposed new modules for selection to run as **experimental/pilot courses**.

November 2005:

- **Unified module template** adopted for the Faculty subject to formal approval
- **Student workbook** drafted along the Bologna lines
- First draft of internal publication on the **findings and benefits of the CSI**
- Further consultations on setting up the **Curriculum Review Committee**
- Further work on the launching of the **Association** of Journalism Educators in Bulgaria

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- **Association** of Journalism Educators in Bulgaria **established**. First executive established and **association registered in court**.
- **Curriculum Strategy and Action Plan to be presented to Working Group**

3.7 Essential Details of Major Events and Documents

3.7.1 The Key Expert's **Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations**, drawn in June 2004 on the basis of the Preparatory Assessment document, caused a considerable stir within the Faculty and wider, at the Sofia University. A series of informal meetings and consultations followed, which culminated in a meeting of the Key Expert and Team Leader with the University authorities, Faculty members and the Project Implementation Unit on 29th September 2004 to discuss concerns raised by the findings and recommendations of the Report. The meeting dispelled fears that the Report would undermine the position and standing of the Faculty within the academic community, and made it clear that it was an interim discussion document to engender debate and engage more Faculty members in the modernization process.

The key findings and key recommendations of the original assessment report are summarised below:

3.7.1.1 Key findings:

- **No overall strategy** identified with regard to teaching or modernizing the curriculum, or responding to changes in the media industry;
- Little or **no organized and coordinated curriculum** development by international standards;
- **Little journalism practice** in the teaching process; and the existing practice inadequately integrated into the courses;
- **Technical equipment in an appalling state**, raising doubt about the viability of delivering successfully any of the modernized courses; no possibility of providing a simulated newsroom environment essential for modern journalism training; **acute equipment shortage** a major problem in genuine implementation of curriculum modernization;
- **Atomized teaching** with no logical connection between individual modules, and with **no logical progression** built into the courses; no content description of existing modules;
- An institutional stumbling block encountered as the Project coincided with a recent curriculum review of the undergraduate programme, which envisaged no further improvements in the near future.
- Members of staff are generally research-active, but there is little evidence of **dynamism** or **creativity and openness** in the teaching component;
- **Students skeptical** about the usefulness of some of the courses, and unhappy about the low practical content;
- **Low attendance**, with students often working already from the second year, and attending to take exams only in order to secure a degree;
- **Inflexible employment policies** and insufficient links with the media industry.

3.7.1.2 Key recommendations

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In his June 2004 document, the International Key Expert drew up the following set of recommendations:

- The Faculty should adopt a **model of professional education in journalism as seen in medical studies, engineering or architecture**, or the model of applied arts such as **music or design**, where there are strong links with working practitioners, rather than continue with a simply academic approach.
- The Faculty should aspire to increase its teaching of journalism practice to about 50%, and to **integrate theory and practice** in its courses.
- The modernized syllabus should ensure that the Faculty produces **reflective practitioners**, with practical skills underpinned by theoretical knowledge.
- Comprehensive modernization work is necessary in undergraduate programmes, as they currently produce the majority of entrants into the media industry job market. A **new undergraduate degree programme** should be developed, conforming to European quality standards.
- Further international expertise should be employed to ensure that the Faculty programmes fully comply with the **Bologna Agreement**, and implement **quality assurance schemes** as well as **modern assessment methods**.
- **New modules** should be developed taking in the latest requirements in the media industry. They should include the teaching of **media ethics, media law and media management**. They should not be developed in isolation, but rather be part of completely new programmes. New modules developed on the MA level need to be properly incorporated into the programmes.
- **The CSI beneficiaries should be actively involved in the modernization process**, and should participate in the Faculty's strategic report for the next five o
- More flexible employment procedures should be adopted to enable **the hiring of practitioners from the industry** as well as recognized names to boost the teaching of journalism practice.
- Technical deficiencies must be addressed by the Faculty. Students should have **access to the Internet** at all times, and to the **telephones** for some of the classes. **Sound recording equipment and cameras** should be available for the relevant courses, and **a range of studios** with built-in flexibility to cater for the needs of the practical courses.
- Communication with other journalism-teaching establishments should be improved. It is recommended that an organization similar to the British **Association for Journalism Education** be established in Bulgaria to subsume and fulfill the functions and tasks of the information exchange network postulated in the Terms of Reference.

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3.7.2 Curriculum Scholarship Initiative

3.7.2.1 CSI-1 Scholarship Recipients and their placements:

Asst Prof Dr Vyara Angelova	–	University of Dortmund
Prof Dr Christo Kaftandjiev	–	Dublin Institute of Technology, and University of Westminster, and BBC. Prof Kaftandjiev also attended second CSI round seminars in London.
Asst Prof Dr Svetlozar Kirilov	–	University of Westminster
Assoc Prof Dr Zdravka Konstantinova	–	CNRS / EHESS in Paris
Asst Prof Dr Manuela Manliherova	–	City University, London
Asst Prof Dr Maria Neykova	–	BBC, Cardiff University, and Thames Valley University
Assoc Prof Dr Teodora Petrova	–	Dublin Institute of Technology, Thames Valley University, and BBC
Assoc Prof Dr Vessela Tabakova	–	Dublin Institute of Technology, and University of Stockholm

3.7.2.2 CSI-2 Scholarship Recipients: Curriculum Modernisation Seminar

London, July 2005:

Assoc Prof Dr Greta Dermendjieva
Assoc Prof Dr Efrem Efremov
Assoc Prof Dr Petranka Fileva
Asst Prof Ivo Piperkov
Asst Prof Latchezar Totchev
Asst Prof Dr Veronica Valkanova
Assoc Prof Dr Minka Zlateva

3.7.2.3 Impact and Usefulness of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative

- Curriculum Scholarship Initiative has played a central role in ensuring the success of the Curriculum Modernisation project, and of the overall Project.
- The Contractor exceeded by far the requirements set by the Terms of Reference to extend the CSI to at least 10 qualifying members of the Faculty. In the end, as many as 15 staff members benefited from the scheme.
- Its purpose concentrated on curriculum development, rather than research, obliging successful recipients to write up and make available their findings to assist other Faculty members in designing new modules.
- Most recipients found the CSI extremely helpful, which was reflected amply in their reports:

“I would like to start with expressing my gratitude for this wonderful project. My visit to London was very useful, as it confirmed that I am moving in the right direction trying to adopt a more practice-based

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approach to teaching. There were interesting lectures which presented well the points of view in question. I was also relieved to find out that the ethos and subject matter in journalism teaching is largely shared by my British colleagues and that the differences between us are not that significant in that respect.”

“My participation in the academic curriculum modernisation seminar in London was very satisfactory for me. It confirmed the value of the project I put forward as part of the CSI. My visit to a real newsroom in England helped me to formulate better the parameters of my course for students of journalism at Sofia University”.

“The Curriculum Scholarship Initiative was an opportunity for many of us to update our courses in compliance to the Bologna Agreement. The project also enabled us to do research to acquire books for the new-design courses.”

“The scholarship initiative made it possible to “open a file” on each of the problems discussed which would be particularly useful for seminars and practical work with students.”

“J’avais une grande chance de travailler parmi les collegues de l’EHESS – toujours prete de m’aider non celement ‘sur le terrain’ de l’EHESS, mais aussi de faire d’autres contactes et de voire d’autres horisonts.”

“The participation of a large number of the Faculty staff members in the BBC-run project was more than a very good investment in the profession’s future at Sofia University.”

“Ich schaetze meine Fellowship als erfolgreich fuer mich - erstens als wissenschaftliche Qualifizierung und zweitens als Erfahrung und Vorstellung, die ich vom deutschen Ausbildungssystem mitbekommen habe. Das, was ich oben genannt habe als Elemente, die wir eventuell auch benutzen koennen, werde ich mit meinen Kollegen besprechen und nutzen.”

“Such programmes are extremely useful, particularly the possibility to learn more about the foreign teaching experience. They also help to integrate the teaching of journalism on the European scale.”

- The participants were asked not only to produce a detailed report, but also to design one or more syllabus documents for their courses, informed by the demands of modern curricular design. This proved hugely successful and has the potential to form the core of a new curriculum at the University. It was clearly reflected in a number of post-CSI reports:

“I will update my course on the New Media in accordance with the online module I have seen at the Dublin Institute of Technology”

“A significant contribution to my study was the technique of structuring a module, presented in detail by the Head of School of Media at the Dublin Institute of Technology.”

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“Je suis tres contente de possibilities, qui m’a donne ce projet. J’ai travaille sur une theme de projet – complex et profonde. Avec une chance unique – de cree un nouveau programme de cour sur l’histoire de la publicite pour la premiere fois en Bulgarie a l’aide des meilleurs specialists dans ce domaine en France.”

“Both hosting institutions I have visited are experienced in developing distance learning modules. In cooperation with them, their good practices and experience can be used when designing our distance learning modules.”

“The meetings dedicated to curriculum modernisation with colleagues from British universities and with BBC experts were a big contribution to my work on the module I have designed. The way the seminar was organised helped me identify precisely the current issues in journalism and the ways of addressing them in the teaching process.”

- A considerable number of the CSI beneficiaries stress that the scholarships have also made a direct impact on their way of teaching journalism:

“In Bulgaria, there is often an antagonism between theory and practice, and I am really glad that the UK experience showed us how to connect the two.”

“The modernisation of the methods of assessment of knowledge in journalism was the focus of the meeting with an expert from City University of London who provided us with a valuable insight into the application of various techniques to evaluate a student on an interim or periodic basis.”

“As a whole, the seminar was very efficient and useful, since all the different meetings with leading English universities in the field of journalism gave us a clear idea of the academic training in journalism in the UK.”

“I came out of the London seminar experience with a clear goal in mind: to produce analytical practitioners and to give academic background to all practical skills. I can guarantee that I will apply in a practical way all the benefits obtained during the seminar.”

- Most CSI beneficiaries said that the programme brought to their attention the necessity to **“strike the complex and dynamic balance between theory and practice in the academic teaching of journalism.”**
- Several praised the CSI organisers for their placements; captured in the words of one of the recipients: **“a very careful choice of the universities relevant to my field of work and research.”**

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- There were several critical comments in the reports about the CSI delivery, but they were in a clear minority, and all are quoted for the record below:

“The application and selection process ended on late October 2004, and yet until mid March 2005, when the first recipients travelled for their assignments, the Project Team had not arranged a single meeting with the scholarship beneficiaries. Such a meeting would have been of great importance in tailoring the scholarships to our needs and stated preferences.”

“Due to the late start of the project, some of the components had to be implemented in a shorter period of time. They might have been designed and timetabled in a different way. This led to some difficulties in the implementation of the project.”

“Greater attention should have been devoted to the Bologna Process, on which only one lecture was delivered. This process is of particular importance to Bulgarian universities at the threshold of Bulgaria’s membership of the European Union.”

“The implementation of the scholarship initiative could not have been aimed at radically changing the syllabus nor is it necessary: the course syllabus has already been discussed and approved by the FJMC Faculty Council and complies with existing academic standards. Yet, the goal was to develop and improve the syllabus in two respects: the development of journalist practice and the introduction of aspects of ethical standards studies and elements of self-regulation.”

- All participants in the CSI have produced valuable recommendations and proposals, ranging from practical measures concerning their immediate areas of activities, to long-term and strategic solutions and changes. The wealth of their proposals has been incorporated, and is quoted extensively in the main body of the present document.

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3.7.3 Faculty Network Meeting: 15-16 September 2005

3.7.3.1 Hosts

The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Sofia and the BBC PHARE Media Support Project jointly hosted the Network Meeting, and the Project wishes to express its gratitude to the University of Sofia for providing the meeting room for this event free of charge.

3.7.3.2 Participants

The following journalism teaching institutions were represented at the September 2005 meeting:

Sofia University, Plovdiv University, Shumen University, University of National and World Economy in Sofia, Veliko Tarnovo University, Burgas Free University, New Bulgarian University Sofia, Varna Free University, and the American University in Bulgaria (Blagoevgrad).

3.7.3.3 Outcomes

3.7.3.3.1 The Conference participants all agreed to set up an Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications in Bulgaria.

3.7.3.3.2 They established an Organising Committee which was given the task of preparing all necessary steps for the creation of the Association.

3.7.3.3.3 The Committee was chaired by Prof Milko Petrov (FJMC Sofia).

3.7.3.3.4 The Association subsumes all the functions and tasks of the Faculties information exchange network envisaged by the Project's Terms of Reference:

(i) to develop adequate services and effective forms of communication among participating members;

(ii) to exchange curriculum patterns information, and to constitute an effective representation of the interests of the academic community.

3.7.3.3.5 As an initiative to facilitate the creation of new career opportunities for students at their final stage prior to graduation, and to young researchers in the area of media development, the Association will post advertisements of job vacancies made available by the media industry on its website.

3.7.3.4 Registration and Administrative Charges

Following the Faculties Network Conference, a request was submitted to the Project Consortium for a financial contribution towards the legal and court costs of setting up and registering the Association.

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This was agreed to, and the Association, with the official title “Bulgarian Association of Journalistic Education” (BAOJ), was formally established on 03 November 2005 at a meeting at the premises of the Faculty of Journalism, following which the necessary documentation for legal registration were lodged with the relevant court. The first Chairman of the Association is Prof Milko Petrov of the FJMC Sofia.

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3.7.3.5 Internet and Intranet Website

In order to support the activities and the work of the newly-established Association, the BBC WS Trust has undertaken to provide the Association with a tailor-made Internet and Intranet website. The two part of the site will have two distinct functions:

- The **Internet** part will be bi-lingual and of course publicly accessible; it will enable the Association to publicise its own and its member institutions' activities, to advertise events which are organised by the Association or its member institutions, to provide documents and other information relevant either to the general public or to particular interest groups (potential students, either domestic or foreign; the media; etc), and it will also have the facility to provide a "job market" where media outlets will be able to advertise job vacancies and job seekers (for example, students from any of the member faculties) will be able to place advertisements seeking media-related work. It will in addition have the facility to provide internet links to related institutions (such as journalism faculties, etc) and associations on an international level.

- The **Intranet** part of the site will be password-protected and therefore not accessible to the general public; it is designed to help facilitate the exchange of information between members of the Association (either institutions or individuals). It will be up to the Association to decide how its members wish to use this internal or restricted part; however the specifications foresee a number of document repository areas, a news and events area, etc. In addition, there will be facility for alphabetical listings (for example, of lecturers and of students), as well as a message board / discussion forum facility.

The BBC WS Trust has offered to develop and host this site free-of-charge to the Association on one of its own servers; however, should the Association at some point in the future decide to host the site on one of its servers, it will be possible to easily migrate the site to a different server.

At the time of writing this Report, the site is still under construction and is available only as a pilot site; it is expected that full functionality will be achieved within three to six weeks.

4.0 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

4.1 General Comments

The present document draws heavily on the findings and recommendations of reports submitted by the beneficiaries of the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative, an analysis of the survey of CSI participants, and various discussions and consultations with Faculty members, Sofia University officials, local and international experts, and students. It also refers back to the findings and recommendations of the Key Expert in his **Curriculum Modernisation: Analysis of Assessment Report – Conclusions and Recommendations**.

It also strives to reflect the local realities and sensitivities, the political and socio-economic conditions in Bulgaria itself, as well as to respond to likely developments in the media industry in general, and in the region in particular.

It has to be said at the outset that the part of the project relating to the improvement of journalism teaching at Sofia University was defined by the original Terms of Reference within a framework and timescale which could only see partial and incomplete results. **The timeframe of 11 months** was immediately found to be severely **limiting** by both the Contractor and the Beneficiaries. It is little wonder that there was a **request for an extension** at the outset of the project rather than towards the end, as is the more common occurrence. This created **delays and structural difficulties**, until a project extension of 12 months was eventually approved.

The extension allowed the Contractor to successfully **achieve all the outcomes** relating to Curriculum Modernisation and Improvement in Teaching envisaged in the Terms of Reference. The original time-compression factor made it much more difficult to carry out the constituent parts of the teaching modernization project in a coherent fashion in the first stage of the project.

The timeframe extension allowed for the necessary level of reflection, consultation and exchange of information, improving in turn the climate of cooperation in the project. That had an immediate positive impact on the delivery of the desired outcomes, as can be seen from the schedule of performed activities, which grew in intensity towards the end of the project. The extension facilitated the execution of the rest of the project in a **systematic and logical sequence, and with sustained momentum**, as well as with continuity and professionalism.

Given the above, the present document makes a central assumption that the objectives set in the Terms of Reference need to be seen as **seminal** in the overall process of curriculum modernization and raising the standards of teaching of journalism, and that the achieved outcomes should be seen as the **necessary groundwork** in improving teaching and instituting real change. The reasons for this assumption are as follows:

- The development and modernisation of a curriculum is a **phased process** introduced over a period of at least **several years**. Given that an undergraduate programme on average takes three years to

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four years, the results of introducing a new curriculum can be tested and evaluated only after one student cycle has gone through the system.

- It can take up to a year to **review** an existing curriculum, and then, depending on a whole range of factor, perhaps another year to have a new one **validated** or approved by relevant bodies.
- This basically means that a typical curriculum modernisation plan takes about **five years** to execute fully.
- A comprehensive faculty-wide project to take in post-graduate courses as well needs to extend even further in time, and can probably be properly installed, tested and evaluated over a period of about **seven years**, even if performed as an ongoing, self-updating procedure.

Therefore it would not be helpful to accept the idea that the Curriculum Modernisation project at Sofia University is a **complete and self-contained entity**. It is rather an **open-ended process**, the continuity of which and its eventual success require **sustained support and monitoring, as well extra resources**. The Terms of Reference envisage the implementation of the outcomes “**beyond the end date of the project**”, but it is difficult to see that without further outside support for the Faculty, its members could bring the process to a successful conclusion on their own. This would be wishful thinking, while ending the institutional support at the cut-off date of the Project would verge on abandonment.

The present document makes several recommendations how to **secure the long-term future of the modernisation process** as a continuation of the Project without extra financial outlays and on the basis of self-supporting processes at the Faculty.

One of the severe and troubling shortcomings identified in the Participatory Assessment Report and the subsequent interim report on modernisation recommendations was the **deficiency and lack of technical equipment** at the Faculty. And yet, the Terms of Reference clearly stated that no equipment was to be purchased on behalf of the Contracting Authority as part of the service contract or transferred at the end of the contract.

The Terms of Reference did not state, however, whether it would be useful to carry out **an initial assessment** of what were the most urgent needs of the Faculty as far as **technical equipment** was concerned. We consider it necessary and helpful to identify some of these needs and therefore attempt to make a – at least cursory – assessment of the most pressing shortages that should be immediately addressed to secure the implementation of the Teaching Modernisation process. **It must be stated that it is difficult to envisage certain important practice areas being capable of delivery without investment in computers and other technology.**

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4.2 General Assumptions

Before any recommendations, strategy or action plan can be designed and adopted for the Faculty, a set of assumptions and parameters need to be compiled to form a preferred model that best reflects the needs and the realities of the Sofia University Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications. The present document makes a set of assumptions deemed to be best suited to the Faculty's circumstances, external and internal, and based on the Experts' findings and also on recommendations by Faculty members themselves. The following assumptions are used to inform the strategy and recommendations of this document:

- The preferred ratio between theory and practice in the curriculum should be **50-50**, but the split should not be based on a mechanical division of contact hours, but be a logical consequence of the structure of particular modules.
- Priority to be given to the practical component of the curriculum, based on the philosophy that **practical/skill-oriented/vocational/creative components** of the curriculum should be informed by the **theoretical/academic/analytic/reflective portion of the curriculum**. The current tendency at the Faculty is to use the practical components to illustrate or to help assimilate the theoretical academic knowledge. This is thought to have limited value in teaching the journalistic profession in the Bulgarian context.
- **Theoretical areas to be upgrade** to offer a relevant critique of modern journalistic practice. While we have emphasised practice we are aware that once the practice elements have been upgraded and modernised this will have a necessary impact on the theoretical contents of the programme.
- **Practical teaching to become equal** in the educational process at the Faculty, and should be informed by theory.
- **Teaching to become a central activity** at the Faculty, with academic research becoming a constituent part underpinning the teaching process. The tradition of using teaching and students as adjuncts to the academic research process becomes obsolete and is abandoned.
- A **strictly modular approach** with a realistic credit system to be put in place and to fully comply with the Bologna Agreement.
- Modules to be arranged around a core of practice and theoretical subjects. **Optional modules** to ensure choice and flexibility, as well as diversification and specialisation.
- **Simulation and role-playing**, peer teaching-learning to be at the core of teaching techniques provision with a **project-based approach**, and an introduction of students' non-linear progress.

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- Preference for **workshop-type activities, group activities with differentiated tasks** and roles, diversified time-structuring of learning activities.
- The philosophy of **continuing assessment**, the principle of **individualised student assessment**, and the introduction of assessment based on the evaluation of **students' work portfolios**.
- The degree award to be based on a **cumulative approach**, where the constituent part of the degree award, preferably at the rate of 50% or even 60%, should be the continuous assessment of a student's work, which will reflect attendance, commitment and active participation by a student in a range of work inside and outside the lecture room over the years of the degree.
- The culmination of the degree course still to be a **proper academic written dissertation** based on the student's own research to show ability to work critically and reflectively, and with autonomy. This should be produced with scholarly rigour and journalistic clarity.
- The recognition that **practical activities** in the course of the study are a fully legitimate part of the learning process and **feed into the intellectual effort** to jointly create the preferred type of graduate commonly described as a "**reflective practitioner**".
- The assumption of the **strand approach**, where the practical/vocational path runs **parallel** to the theoretical/academic path in roughly equal proportions throughout the course.
- It is thought that in the Bulgarian academic and political/economic context, there should be a **third parallel strand** – most preferably a foreign language. The Faculty should investigate the possibility of students taking up placements in universities abroad, preferably at journalism schools, to improve language skills, using the EU's various programmes, such as ERASMUS and TEMPUS.
- Adequate provision for **on-line delivery** of some teaching.
- Adequate **technical and technological support** for teaching and learning activities.

The subsequent recommendations and the strategy and action plan found in this document build upon the above initial assumptions, and are contextualised in detail below.

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5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGY

5.1 Follow-up implementation

The present document expresses the view that all efforts and available measures need to be taken to **retain the momentum for change** at the Faculty achieved throughout the Project. To ensure the continuity of the modernisation process **immediate action is necessary** in order not to waste the outcomes of the project arrived at in spite of so many difficulties. It is felt strongly that the instituted changes cannot be sustained alone by the members of staff at the Faculty who have personally benefited from the CSI. A dissipation of benefits from the project is a real danger at the Faculty if the modernisation process is not properly supported and continued. It is believed that external support will be still necessary for some time.

→ **We strongly recommend** the setting up of a **post-project follow-up implementation team**.

It should consist mainly of Faculty members and local experts, assisted on a periodic, or on-call, basis by an international expert: an experienced, innovative teacher/trainer in journalism with an academic background. In ideal circumstances, funding permitting, a secondment position should be created at the Faculty for such a consulting/monitoring job as the most efficient strategy of securing transition to a self-sustained change process at the Faculty.

An analysis of the reports submitted by the recipients of the CSI shows their high level of commitment to change and a strong sense of responsibility towards their Faculty. At the same time, however, there is a pervasive feeling of powerlessness to address the institutional and systemic limitations at the university (and wider, in the educational system). This is a clear indication that the Faculty should not be left to its own resources in the modernisation process, and still needs a degree of outside help.

It is felt that a **minimum period** of such supported transition should be **12 months** from the cut-off date of the present project. During that time, the external expert (or expert on secondment) would not only **oversee the transition period**, but also address one of the obvious problems at the Faculty: that of staff members' lack of close familiarity with **modern, interactive teaching techniques**. This external expert would be able to deliver on-the-spot short, intensive courses in modern teaching techniques. These would be supplied on an ad hoc basis as the need for them emerges during the transition period.

Such a post-project strategy is fully in line with modern trends in consultancy and project management, where commercial consulting firms make sure that members of the team responsible for recommendations and an action plan also see these through, and are possibly also judged by results. Such an approach – based on accountability – is not possible within the timeframe of this project, but can still be achieved, if the post-project implementation recommendation is followed through.

While it is true that the Project has achieved all the desired (and required) outcomes, we see them, in a **wider context**, as only partial results, which

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can easily become undone without the suggested strategy. A follow-up post-project implementation team is seen as the most efficient way to fully institute most of the measures achieved by the Project on a scale and to a degree guaranteeing sufficient impact on the educational component in Bulgaria, and in due course on the media market itself. Without such an approach, the clear achievements of the present Project may be eroded and become peripheral to the developments in the industry.

5.2 Curriculum Review and Validation

As the pivotal element in the delivery of the Teaching Modernisation Project, the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative has produced a group of committed modernisers, whose acquired knowledge and expertise needs to be employed and put to more formalised use.

→ **We strongly recommend** that the Working Group at the Faculty, and the most active participants in the CSI, be organised into the **Curriculum Review Committee**, which will spearhead the modernisation process and see its successful implementation.

This aspiration was aptly expressed by one of the CSI recipients:

“I think that it will be particularly useful to organise roundtable talks at the Faculty at which the lecturers, having taken part in the Curriculum Development Initiative, should present their observations and ideas that they consider relevant for the improvement of the educational process.”

The added importance of establishing and formalizing the **Curriculum Review Committee** is that there is no substantive accrediting or validating body, with specialist knowledge of journalism, for the new curricula, unlike in Britain, the US and other countries, where professional bodies lend their formal support to syllabuses developed at individual universities teaching journalism. In other countries a very formal process of review and validation exists, relying heavily on professional practitioners and external, often foreign, academic experts in journalism. In the absence of such accreditation formulae in Bulgaria, the Curriculum Review Committee would perform the function of validating within the Faculty, bringing in outside industry and academic experts. It is hoped other universities may want to undergo a similar procedure on a voluntary basis.

The establishment of the Curriculum Review Committee is essential also for the institutionalisation of most of the recommended modernisation processes, if its members agree to oversee and lead their particular aspects, such as continuous assessment, student portfolio development, module construction and design, tutorial and mentoring system, top-up learning, or management of special projects.

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5.3 Flexible employment policies

The University's rigid employment structure hampers the establishment of more flexible hiring policies, essential in **attracting practitioners from the industry** to boost the practical, skill-based teaching at the Faculty. One of the ways of improving the teaching provision before such a flexibility is achieved is to offer Faculty members appropriate re-training to bring their teaching methods in line with modern requirements – an issue dealt with in more detail in the next section.

A number of CSI recipients spoke strongly in favour of attracting people from the industry:

“I found in-house training courses of particular usefulness and importance for the improvement of students’ practical skills. Our department should attract more practising journalists to assist in such in-house training process.”

→ **We strongly recommend** the establishment of **visiting professorships** for leading practitioners from the industry, even if they hold no relevant academic qualifications.

Formal titles could be awarded on an honorary basis for a period of time to address the traditional attachment to formality at the University. The visiting professorships themselves should be contractually awarded for the period of between one term to one academic year. In some cases practising journalists might work part time, possibly delivering maybe one module, while continuing to work in the media industry. In many countries, it has been shown that seasoned practitioners would be interested in taking up such positions on an interim basis without demanding high salaries. In turn, such gestures – clearly in the educational interest of the Faculty – will engender offers of **work placements and internships** for students within the industry, as well as work and training opportunities outside for Faculty staff members and students. This has already happened at one private university in Bulgaria, and in time such a practice will attract the best students, leaving state educational provision as being seen as second best unless they are able to provide similar arrangements

Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the Faculty to invite **outside contributors**, particularly practitioners from the industry to supplement the teaching provision. It is regrettable that in many cases, they are expected to substitute for the lecturer and supply the same type of teaching, which many of them – having come from the practical or experiential sphere – simply cannot deliver. They can deliver either practical or concrete ingredients, and appropriate arrangements need to be made to facilitate that. Such an approach will also serve to institutionalise **links with the industry**, which currently are mainly cultivated on an informal basis only.

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5.4 Teacher training and re-training

The introduction of new modules, new courses and subjects as well as modernised programmes is practically meaningless and may only remain a modernisation on paper, if it is not accompanied by modern teaching techniques and methods. These cannot be effectively delivered if there is no appropriate programme of **re-training teaching staff**. Faculty members may feel justified in resisting elements of modernisation without a guarantee that they will be offered appropriate training.

→ **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty develops and offers a coordinated in-house training programme for Faculty members.

Such **investment in staff training** needs to be a constituent part of the curriculum modernisation, and calls for the establishment of the **in-house training coordinator** – a function that can initially be fulfilled by the external / international expert as part of the main recommendation to set up a follow-up implementation project. As a matter of urgency, Faculty **staff** need to be surveyed for their immediate **training needs** to assist them in introducing modernised teaching in the curriculum.

Further more, **it is recommended** that **CSI participants** will design and organise an in-house curriculum training programme for all staff members. This training programme is to be seen as the initiation of the **continuous in-house training** and re-training programme for Faculty members. It is becoming increasingly common for new staff at universities around Europe to have to undertake formal courses in education. In some British universities it is compulsory for new teaching staff to undertake a part time Post graduate diploma in higher education teaching. Staff will need training in areas such as assessing journalism practice, working with continuous assessment, team teaching, assessing team work and problem solving learning.

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5.5 Foreign Language Teaching

There is strong rationale for combining journalism courses with an **aggressive foreign language teaching policy** at the Faculty. The need for that has been identified by one of the CSI participants in these words:

“The Faculty should not consider Bulgaria as the only target for employment of its graduates, and look at the European Union as a whole. The Bulgarian media market with eight million people as the audience is too small to be significant both economically, including the media, advertising and PR. The country’s industry cannot offer enough career prospects, or sufficient salary levels. A lot of students are interested in working abroad, and this aspiration should be appropriately addressed. Courses in English, French and German should be designed and put in place.”

→ **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty explores all available options to add language teaching to its journalism courses, and offers such courses to students as quickly as possible.

A number of West European universities have opted for joint degrees with journalism and another subject. In the Bulgarian context, a joint journalism and language degree should be offered as an option to students. The example of many Dutch, Swedish or German journalists getting successfully into the English-language job market could be quoted. Bulgaria’s impending membership of the European Union will increase such opportunities.

A further reason to include language courses is that research indicates that understanding of a second or even third language improves one’s general use of language and makes a student more aware of language. Language and story telling is at the heart of all journalism regardless of technologies. Language training makes all journalists better journalists.

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5.6 The Faculty and Business

It is absolutely essential for the Faculty to start thinking of itself as a going **business concern**, which needs to secure its future interests on the educational market place to stave off competition from private educational provision. Private journalism teaching in Bulgaria may be limited, and limiting, in its academic offer, but tends to be far more efficient by exploiting weaknesses of the state institutions and by acting in a 'parasitic' fashion in relation to them.

It can be expected that private educational providers will exploit Bulgaria upon EU entry. A number of concerns have already expressed interest, and some of them provide journalism degrees.

The practice of individual staff members of state universities teaching or "moonlighting" at private journalism courses need not and cannot be stopped, as it supplements their modest state salaries; but it needs to be done in a way that is not damaging to the Faculty itself, and does not create a conflict of interest. This can only be done through open constructive competition, or competitive co-operation, and not through covert activities, which lead to a further weakening of the Faculty as an educational business on the market, and which play into the hands of the private sector.

→ **We strongly recommended** that Faculty members **register their outside employment interests** with either the Dean of the Faculty or an appointed member of the Faculty, to make sure that their activities are in the interest of the University.

Alternatively, they should either seek permission, or demonstrate in what way their activities are benefiting the Faculty as a whole.

The Faculty would benefit greatly from the establishment of a **business manager** who would explore possibilities of new teaching provision on the open market, giving the teaching staff incentives to increase their salaries in-house, rather than seeking outside supplementary employment. The business manager, or alternatively, **the Faculty Strategy Coordinator**, would help forge the Faculty's Business and Strategy Plan that would combine academic and research aspirations with economic and market realities.

Several CSI recipients have recommended in discussions and in their reports the necessity of having a **projects manager** selected from amongst the staff to explore all activities that might benefit the future of the Faculty and which would facilitate information flows, staff mobility, exchanges, new projects, co-operative enterprises, and similar schemes.

It has to be stressed at this point that although **we support such a recommendation**, it must not be seen as a core activity of the Faculty but as a self-supportive element of the core activities, which are the educational and research provision. Most CSI recipients have pointed out that the possibilities of introducing new initiatives and ideas, creating more activities and bringing new business to the Faculty, are severely constrained by the University regulations and current legislation.

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But this should not prevent the Faculty designing and developing its own autonomous, integrated and unified Faculty Business and Strategy Plan.

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5.7 Technical Equipment and Technology

While the PHARE BBC Project had no budget or terms of reference that allowed for the provision of equipment, it would be remiss not to comment on the state of equipment, as it impinges hugely on the ability of the staff to deliver some courses. The state of equipment available to students and staff is **highly unsatisfactory**. While some improvements have been made over the period of the project's life, with the provision of new studio space as part of a general renovation of the Faculty building, the equipment position is such that it is impossible to see how some courses can be taught.

→ **We consider that** there is an **overriding need** to provide a **newsroom environment** for the delivery of some of the modern courses.

The current facilities with either non-working or un-networked computers, and no continuously available, high-speed and direct access to the Internet, are seen as simply useless. A teaching space emulating a "newsroom" – the most common working environment of a journalist – needs to be set up as **priority** within a university setting. It would require about 30 net-worked computers, all linked to the internet, and with layout and design software installed, in order to teach journalism practice. The newsroom could also be used by students to prepare work for publication.

If radio editing and web design software is installed, the newsroom would be a flexible teaching facility catering for print, radio and on-line journalism practice classes, and also give students some autonomy as they could use it in their own time to prepare projects and other work.

A number of Faculty staff that took part in the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative visited such newsrooms at western European universities. They all agree that it is a necessary provision, but point out the lack of available funds:

“International standards in journalism schools require up-to-date software and technical environment for the students. The schools I have visited are all well equipped and meet the requirements of the industry for professional standards of students’ abilities. Most Bulgarian high schools lack technical equipment and do not meet the requirements of the media industry for both the journalistic profession and PR. State university budgets are not enough to update the equipment and software.”

These financial problems are compounded by little evidence of clear strategic thinking or the necessary know-how on the part of the authorities how to update and modernise the teaching on the technological / technical side. **We believe it would be a grave miscalculation** on the part of the Faculty to wait and count on the University-wide modernisation project to provide new hardware, software and networking to the Faculty in the near future.

Instead, **urgent steps need to be taken now**, if the Faculty does not want to be further seen as marginal in the eyes of the professional community because of its poor technical provision.

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→ **We strongly recommend** that the need for a computer-networked environment with Internet access should be addressed by an innovative approach which would require very little, if any, financial outlay:

Repeated visits to the Faculty premises appear to indicate a relatively poor utilisation of available office and other space by Western standards. This means that with some modest space-optimisation measures, a lot more office or teaching space can be made available. In order to quickly provide all day access to up-to-date computers and computing, as well as internet access for all students of the Faculty, a tender should be put out for an **outside contractor** to provide **Internet café facilities** within the building. Such a contract would offer free premises for the outside contractor and would have to clearly spell out equipment specifications and networking requirements, the necessary number of work stations, and other technical facilities.

Students will be entitled to limited free usage of the facilities in exchange for tokens received from the Faculty, or on the basis of their account credit. A credit clearing system would need to be installed to give the contractor remuneration on a pro-rata, or other, basis. In exchange, the contractor may receive sole catering rights on the premises, and may charge for extra usage beyond student credits. A careful business plan will establish how much capital outlay of the faculty budget (if necessary) can go towards remunerating the contractor against the projected costs of supplying computers, cabling, servers and software.

Such a solution by-passes the need to provide a large sum of money in the way of initial or start-up investment to fund a Faculty-internal newsroom, and may be also more efficient in the area of technical support and maintenance. This recommendation is in the spirit of **Private and Public sector finance initiatives**, used Europe-wide to bridge the capital and technological gaps in the public sector in exchange for advantageous conditions for a private contractor. It is an interim solution, to be taken in the face of no obvious prospect of funding in sight to cover the cost of equipment update and modernisation at the Faculty.

It might also be feasible to approach computer firms and seek their sponsorship in setting up a newsroom.

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5.8 Radio and Television at the Faculty

The Faculty justifiably prides itself on its university radio station, Alma Mater. Some CSI participants have, however, pointed out that it may be of limited use for teaching purposes:

“I will create a new momentum in my teaching by offering students professional broadcasting simulation. It is difficult because at Sofia University, there is no functioning radio station, open for students.”

The Faculty ought to make sure that there is full access and a range of possibilities for students to contribute to the radio, without restrictions. It is a matter of urgency to open the existing radio station to students for **live broadcasting on a regular basis**. Students should be rostered to **supply news and current affairs** for Radio Alma Mater, which is gathered and processed under the highest professional and ethical standards, and so offer students experience and serve as an example of good journalism for all listeners.

A problematic situation appears to hold for the **Faculty television studio**, where layout and equipment suggest little genuine activity.

The Faculty is also in dire need of acquiring portable sound equipment, and hand-held cameras, together with relevant editing software. These urgent equipment needs could be addressed by seeking innovative ideas similar to the suggested proposal with regards to Internet access and minimal newsroom-type technical provision. Students might also be encouraged to purchase their own mini disc recorders and broadcast quality microphones.

Lack of equipment, however, should not be an excuse for inertia. Many aspects of good journalism practice can be taught and learnt without hugely expensive equipment, such as good writing and scripting and research skills for investigative journalism, for instance.

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5.9 Forward Thinking

The Faculty needs **to look forward to identify** the likely shifts on the media scene, the evolving industry needs, trends and projected international developments. Therefore, it needs to identify events, problems and issues facing Bulgarian society, and the region. It needs to adequately plan for the future in its educational offer. As one of the CSI recipients put it, this would give the Faculty a chance for a quantum leap in offering **new courses** before anyone else does, either in Bulgaria, in the region, or in Europe. If they manage to create and adequately shape a course (or courses) unique to the faculty, they may attract a fair number of foreign students and engender further exchanges and international programmes. This will also remove a perception that universities in developing or transitional countries simply copy and emulate Western educational programmes and curricula.

Furthermore with the right programmes on offer, such as international journalism taught through English, for instance, Bulgaria would be seen as an attractive destination for many foreign students because of the low cost of living compared with western European countries.

→ **An immediate recommendation** for the Faculty is to work on the required expertise in reporting the European integration and enlargement processes and implications.

This expertise will be in growing demand in the next five years, and the Faculty is in a **unique position** to look forward to this projected demand on the media market and immediately institute appropriate modules to train journalists specialising in the European Union issues.

→ **We strongly recommend** that an expert journalist be employed on an **ad-hoc or short-term basis to help design practical modules related to this aspect of journalism.**

Given that the media generally applies short-term employment strategies, and starts training people only after a need for them arises for reporting and coverage purposes, the **Faculty can have a clear edge over other competitors** in providing this type of training and expertise. This may require hiring staff from outside, but would be a prudent investment.

Another clear area of specialisation which is expected to be in short supply over the next five to ten years across Europe is expertise in **Turkish issues**. Given the historical precedence and regional and cultural proximity of Bulgaria, the **Faculty is again in pole position** to train and provide journalist expertise in this area, by combining journalist training with relevant background and specialist knowledge.

This should immediately be looked into and pursued in conjunction with other faculties at the University.

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5.10 Additional Business

5.10.1 It is remarkable that a number of recipients of the CSI have had clear thoughts on the long-term future of the Faculty, and the need to plan ahead. Several spotted outside opportunities which they thought were too good to miss and which should be explored for the benefit of the Faculty:

“[The Faculty should] work quickly towards acquiring a significant position on the training market in Bulgaria and the region, as well as reach out to the Middle East, by offering short qualification courses for journalists from the practice and a range of courses in the English language for foreign students.”

5.10.2 The present Report fully endorses these aspirations, even though they run somewhat against the initial context-setting observations in the Project’s Terms of Reference, quoted below:

“76% [of the Bulgarian mid-career practicing journalists] admit that they have received no professional qualification after university graduation. The same survey confirms that some 80% of practicing journalists articulate the need for further professional qualification. The lack of on-the-job training also leads many journalists to disillusionment with the profession and also contributes to a high level of turnover. Efforts to undertake curriculum modernisation are not likely to have any effect on this target group. They have specific training needs that need to be addressed in order to strengthen the professional standards of media. Areas which have been identified as needing support are reporting skills, investigative journalism, working with sources, ethnic minorities reporting, EU accession, etc.”

We consider this limiting statement encapsulated in the above sentence *“Efforts to undertake curriculum modernisation are not likely to have any effect on this target group”* as running particularly against the grain of ambitions expressed by some of the Faculty members, and not in the spirit of recommendations from all quarters to open up business at the Faculty for working journalists, and to enrich the educational offer to include adult and mature learners, as well as post-graduate qualifications.

The statement referred to above is obviously true within the initial timeframe of the overall project. But if applied in the long-term, it would deprive the Faculty of a valuable student base in the future, and consequently of a substantial amount of business derived from offering **adult, lifelong and continuous learning, top-up courses and post-graduate** as well as **specialist qualifications**.

Attracting practising and mid-career journalists into the Faculty with well-targeted training and courses, and calibrated to respond to the media industry expectations would have a doubly positive effect:

- The deficit of skills among practising journalists in Bulgaria, perceived as acute in the Terms of Reference, and addressed through Sub-Project 3 (*“To deliver a professional training programme to mid-career journalists”*), could be targeted on a systematic basis on the local level in the near future, without waiting several years, until the University starts producing graduates who have gone through the modernised

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programme. In this way, adult and top-up educational provision can start having a qualitative impact on the Bulgarian media within a much shorter timeframe.

- Extra business and expansion, with more secure jobs and extra remuneration for staff, creating and exploiting a potentially lucrative student base. Such opportunities would in turn discourage Faculty staff from seeking outside employment, and enrich their teaching experience in the realm of more-peer based education.

The overall objective stated in the Terms of Reference, to improve the standards of journalism in Bulgaria by targeting, among other things, journalism teaching at Sofia University, could be only fully in evidence over a long period of time, since the Faculty's graduates in journalism taught through a fully modernised curriculum would reach positions of editorial and business prominence several years after graduation. It is strongly felt that extending modernisation and an educational offer to include practising journalists would speed up the overall improvement in journalistic standards.

→ **We strongly recommend** that ad-hoc training, specialist courses, part-time, and week-end only formats be inserted into the future patterns of teaching at the Faculty.

We believe that targeting mid-career journalists as adult students is a strategy which can bring a speedy impact on the quality and ethos of the media marketplace. A rounded academic offer of this kind is something that ad-hoc and remedial training extended by foreign donor bodies and aid organisations cannot achieve in a systematic way. A more profitable strategy would be for them to lock into that offer by providing valuable ingredients of the Faculty courses, thus boosting the Faculty's position on the training and educational market.

Such an approach could result in setting up a **training centre** for practising journalists based at the Faculty, where both members of staff, as well as outside trainers, could work.

A further benefit from this strategy is that practicing journalists would be visiting the faculty frequently and would become more aware of and familiar with its work. It will also provide the Faculty with a pool of talent from which it can draw visiting lecturers and professors

5.10.3 Another substantial area of possible expansion has been identified by several members of the CSI in the area of foreign student provision:

“Foreign students, mostly from Turkey, Greece, other Balkan countries, but also from Arab countries and China should be targeted. The major incentive for them to study at Sofia University would be to gain degrees recognised in other Western countries, but at a much lower cost. Lower tuition fees and the lower cost of living are powerful incentives, but have to be combined with high quality of teaching. It will require improving the programme at the Faculty to meet demands of foreign students: better organisation of study, teaching in English, and modern facilities and infrastructure.”

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While this is obviously a longer-term aspiration, the concept itself needs to be already looked into by forming part of the Faculty's **Business and Strategy Plan**, elements of which should be addressed immediately. These are already included in other parts of the recommended strategy and include: modernising teaching through in-house teacher training, development of specialist expertise, unique and desirable modules, and aggressive foreign language teaching policies. Other considerations must include careful calibration of competitive foreign student tuition fees, and competitive provision of facilities.

→ **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty starts to explore the option of targeting foreign students, within the framework of the Faculty's Business and Strategy Plan, as soon as possible.

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5.11 On-line Provision and Distance Learning

5.11.1 The Faculty can bypass some of the institutional and financial difficulties likely to hamper a dynamic and wholesale approach to modernisation, if more **concerted efforts go towards establishing the provision of some of the teaching and training on-line**. While updating technical equipment such as portable recording equipment, or cameras may require significant financial investment, and take some time, on-line courses and distance learning solutions may offer both economic and efficient ways of providing modern curriculum solutions. Some of the CSI recipients spoke enthusiastically about on-line learning as one of the ways of modernising the teaching:

“It was the first time for me that I got involved with different practices in distance and on-line learning. On-line university learning does not have much practice at our university, and we should explore the possibility of offering such courses to students.”

5.11.2 Nothing can replace the face-to-face contact in the teaching process, and the climate of an academic establishment also enhances the quality of learning, but on-line provision is a valuable form of training in the modern multi-media context, where the Internet has become an organic element of the journalistic process. The Faculty has already at its disposal a number of initial possibilities, including the use of several BBC training websites and courses, and should look into the option of adapting them and enriching them with its own content.

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5.12 Leadership

The **high level of commitment to the modernisation process displayed by the CSI Scholarship Recipients and various other members of the Faculty** requires a certain level of formalisation to give it institutional support, and also to make everybody aware of which areas of modernisation process are of particular interest to individual Staff members. The recommendation to transform the Faculty Curriculum Working Group into the Curriculum Review Committee, enlarged by leading members of the CSI, is meant not only to secure the continuity to the progress of modernisation, but also to establish leadership roles in the process.

→ **We strongly recommend** that the following **roles be established with in the Curriculum Review Committee** with the view to oversee, inspire, coordinate and advise on particular elements of the modernisation process:

- Continuous assessment schemes and quality assurance co-ordinator
- Post-graduate, adult learning, top-up courses, specialist training manager
- Module design advisor
- Curriculum integration leader
- New modules and experimental courses co-ordinator
- New media and on-line learning advisor
- Student portfolio development leader
- Foreign students strategic planner
- New developments advisor
- Business plan developer

More than one person can assume any of the roles, and similarly, one person may take up more than one role on the CRC. The concept is to establish clear reference points in the process so that Faculty members know who to turn to with particular issues and problems. The content of particular leadership roles is explained in more detail, where deemed necessary, in the section on Faculty Implementation Strategies.

6.0 Faculty Implementation Strategy

6.1 Introduction

Following the Curriculum Scholarship Initiative, the Faculty now has a core of lecturers who are familiar with curriculum developments in Western Europe in the context of the Bologna Agreement. They are also aware of how syllabus documents should be laid out and what must be contained in them in order for students to see what they will be taught, what they will know at the end of a module, and what skills they will have acquired.

What appears to be still missing is the ability to put all the elements of the Modernisation Programme together, and to infuse the process with the necessary drive and dynamism, which will carry the changes through in a relatively short period of time.

→ **We strongly recommend that on the internal Faculty level, the steps listed below are taken in there entirely rather than on a 'pick-and-mix' basis.**

6.2 Overhaul of Undergraduate Programmes

→ **We strongly recommend that the Faculty Curriculum Review Committee (CRC), once it is formed and settles down, concentrates **first** on developing a **new curriculum for the undergraduate programme** before undertaking an overhaul of the MA programmes.**

MA programmes typically tend to be an extension of the BA courses. Following approval, the undergraduate module combinations should be implemented one year at a time, starting with the first year.

There is evidence, however, that modernising changes have already been introduced by some of the staff members as the consequence of their scholarships, and more are being implemented at this time. It is highly laudable, and **this process should continue.**

Wherever gaps are identified in terms of modern requirements in the Years 2, 3, 4, and at MA level, newly designed modules should be used to fill them, even if at this stage the requirement of full cohesion and logical progression is not fully met. Such an approach will ensure that the updating process is not interrupted, and whatever asymmetries emerge, they will be rebalanced as the process progresses further.

As a result of such a strategy, a new curriculum will be introduced for new students as quickly as within one to two years, while students already in situ will benefit from improvements being made at the same time.

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6.3 Optionality

“The system of courses at the Faculty should become more flexible and should allow students to choose subjects. At present Hobson’s choice of compulsory studies prevails and they are firmly fixed within the academic year. There should be no more than two compulsory courses per semester, while other modules should be optional.”

The above comment, which could be seen as somewhat extreme, does not come from an external source, but from within the Faculty itself. It should be followed by the Faculty in the construction of the new curriculum. In its first step, core elements, or indispensable subjects, should be identified, after which other modules will be added on the optional basis. For example, news writing and reporting, media law, media ethics, and shorthand are seen in a number of countries as essential elements of the journalism curriculum. The rest of the programme should be built up around them. The CRC will need to identify and define the indispensable subjects in the Bulgarian context, and then add other modules, preferably on the optional level.

→ **We strongly recommend** that the CRC immediately starts a process of identifying **essential core elements**, to be supplemented by **optional modules**.

6.4 Fewer modules -- more choice

It may sound counterintuitive, but a curriculum with fewer modules offers more choice to students, by decreasing compulsory subjects and increasing the optional offer. The faculty needs to apply such a strategy by slimming down the obligatory provision, and enriching the optional one. On balance, it will most probably involve just as many subjects and modules as in the traditional curriculum, but will give the Faculty more flexibility. Unpopular optional modules can be speedily pulled, and replaced with new, or different ones. The old, rigid system would not allow this type of almost ad-hoc culling.

6.5 Balance between Theory and Practice

In the course of the present Project, more and more CSI recipients came to consider the concept of a more or less even split between theory and practice in the curriculum as the most suitable philosophy for the Bulgarian circumstances:

“Sofia University FJMC needs to continue to seek the appropriate balance between theory and practice in teaching journalism, putting more emphasis on the organisation and assessment of practical classes and on the students’ presentations skills.”

→ **We strongly recommend** a preferred 50-50 division between theory and practice in the curriculum.

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This should not be based on a mechanical division of contact hours, but ought to be a logical consequence of the structure of particular modules. Close attention needs to be paid to the way particular types of teaching activities are defined in the module descriptions. In the module descriptions supplied, it is a common practice for teachers to use the term “practical” for activities which differ little from the traditional lecture-type delivery.

It would serve no useful purpose to attempt to cover up the fact that little or no adjustment has been made in the methods of teaching, and that modernisation changes have been made on paper, but do not relate to reality. For many modules, in which the words “seminar” or even “workshop” have been used as the practical ingredient of a given course, the actual delivery method and the subject matter are still strictly theoretical. Adding the word “practical” just for the sake of achieving the required balance on paper is meaningless. There is little evidence of role-play, simulation, or creative components in much of the teaching, and the project-based tasks are not used often enough in the teaching process.

6.6 First Things First

In the construction of the modernised teaching programme, the Faculty ought to give priority to the practical component of the curriculum, based on the philosophy that **practical/skill-oriented/vocational/creative components** of the curriculum should be informed by the **theoretical/academic/analytic/reflective portion of the curriculum**. The current tendency at the Faculty is to use the practical components to illustrate or to help assimilate the theoretical academic knowledge. This is thought to have limited value in teaching the journalistic profession in the Bulgarian context.

In order to implement this shift of emphasis, it has to be recognised first that **practical activities, or learning by doing**, in the course of the study are a fully legitimate part of the learning process and **feed into the intellectual effort** to jointly create the preferred type of graduate commonly described as a “**reflective practitioner**”. This implies that practical modules are not secondary, or ancillary, elements, to be run by junior staff members without awarding them sufficient prominence in terms of the number of credits. If the Faculty sees one of its roles as improving Bulgarian journalists it must produce good practitioners. Journalists can only offer an alternative to current practice if they fully understand it and can do it themselves.

6.7 Bologna and Modularity

There has been uniform understanding of the need to implement the Bologna Agreement among the Faculty staff. In fact, Bulgaria was one of the original signatories to the Agreement in June 1999. We found, however, insufficient evidence of a curriculum fully conforming to Bologna, and to the attendant Quality Assurance criteria, or the principles of modularity to underpin the ideas of equivalence and student mobility. CSI Scholarship Recipients noted this perceived deficiency themselves:

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“It is both desirable and useful for all, including students and teachers, to synchronise the ingredients of the curriculum to a greater degree in compliance with Bologna agreement.”

→ **We strongly recommend** that a **modular system** be applied throughout the Curriculum to **comply fully** with the Bologna Agreement.

This should be seen in terms of enriching the education on offer, with a number of obligatory modules, indicating particular pathways (journalism, public relations, etc.), surrounded by an array of **optional modules** allowing a large degree of choice and flexibility, as well as diversification and specialisation.

A radical culling of out-of-date modules will have to take place, to be replaced with modern, relevant and practical subjects. Implementing Bologna can be quite a shock to faculties, in that while it offers students flexibility and choice it can be a very different experience for faculty members. The process limits the number of modules that can be taken by students, based on a five credit per module system, with 60 credits per year, or 30 per semester. Year-long modules are an exception, and half-modules are discouraged, which are not self-contained in their scope, and consequently in the number of credit awards.

6.8 Pilot Modules / Dummy Courses

One useful, efficient and relatively speedy way to introduce the testing of new modules is the concept of “dummy” or pilot modules. These are designed to run on a non-credit, experimental basis with willing and curious groups of students, to try out new ideas, teaching techniques and elements. **‘Dummy’ or pilot courses** can be used to test modules as well as offer something new to students. It also shows a university’s willingness to change and experiment, which can also attract good students. Such pilot or trial modules also reduce risks associated with introducing untested subject matter. Tested new modules are also more easily pushed through the approval process with the university authorities.

→ **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty, through the CRC, fully and urgently explores the practicalities of introducing a number of curriculum-relevant pilot courses.

6.9 Central Role of Teaching

“The main conclusion from my scholarship is that there is no difference in teaching journalism between Western universities and Bulgaria in terms of content. The differences are in presenting this content to students and making them work in a practical fashion on the teaching matter.”

The above statement from one of the CSI Scholarship recipients underlines the essence of the gap between modern and outdated ways of delivering subject matter.

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This is often characterised as moving from a teaching model to a learning one, one that puts the student at the centre of the learning experience. Students, we now know, respond to a “learning by doing” environment rather than what has often be called a “chalk and talk” method of teaching. While traditional teaching methods cannot be substituted in all areas, research has shown that the amount of information and knowledge retained by students who are taught by the traditional lecture system is frighteningly low. As is the case in many journalism schools around the world, **teaching must become a central activity** at the Faculty, with academic research becoming a constituent part underpinning the teaching process. The tradition of using teaching and students as adjuncts to the academic research process becomes obsolete and should be abandoned. The objective of using teaching as a way of elevating the quality of the subject matter requires modern approaches to the ways students are taught.

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6.10 Modern Teaching and Training Techniques and Formats

Many of the CSI participants noticed very quickly during their scholarship the qualitative difference between the teaching practised at leading institutions in journalism education and other establishments:

“In terms of content the teaching materials are very similar, [...] [but] the teaching methods are quite different not only in terms of the ratio between theory and practice, but also in the way classes are organised. The requirements of self-reflection on the part of the students, and the maximum objectivity of assessment are truly remarkable aspects of teaching here.”

The specific techniques of **real-life simulation and role-playing** are very common in modern teaching of journalism. They are based on the principles of **peer teaching-learning and team-work**, where the lecturer/academic assumes the roles of a **team-leader, editor, or advisor**. The hierarchical distance between lecturers and students is reduced to engender creative atmosphere.

The emphasis on practice entails a **project-based approach**, preference for **workshop-type activities**, and **group activities with differentiated tasks** and roles, as well as diversified time-structuring of learning activities. The difference in achieved results was easily noticed by Faculty members during their scholarships:

“Real-life environment is simulated, and students participate in what amounts to a real media process, while still remaining in the academic world. Although many of their Bulgarian colleagues have a chance to work for different media organisations, the skills they acquire through that experience are often not up to the required professional standards. In fact, in many cases the practical experience of the Bulgarian students contradicts the theoretical knowledge acquired at Sofia University. This in turn de-motivates students and causes low attendance rates at the Faculty.”

One of the CSI recipients was impressed by what can be achieved through a modern approach to teaching even with seemingly difficult and unwieldy material, when students were asked to write a feature article:

“The workshop was largely based on individual work with the students. In short, the feature article had to link large, seemingly nebulous concepts and government policies with people’s lives. I witnessed a brilliant example of integrating theory and practice in international journalism.”

➔ This strongly points to the urgent need to retrain teachers in modern and innovative teaching techniques – one of the key strategic recommendations of the document.

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6.11 Flexibility in teaching

In analysing the results of the CSI Scholarship Reports and their recommendations and conclusions, we felt that the overall impact could have been stronger in the area of modern teaching, not only in terms of teaching methods and techniques, but we also noticed a degree of rigidity and formality of approach. Some CSI Scholarship Recipients designed their modules in a way that adhered to the old ways of delivery primarily through lectures and theoretical formats, with little practical work or application on the part of the students. In a number of cases, the division into practical and theoretical components was a mechanistic split of contact hours into lectures and seminars or workshops, without specifying what was so practical about them. In practice, it meant little generic difference between them, apart from teaching “practical” classes in smaller groups, and devoting some time to checking the students’ level of acquired knowledge. For many of the modules, this artificial mechanistic approach needs to be abolished.

→ **We recommend** that a process be initiated to make objective and systematic decisions on what the best ways are of delivering the subject matter.

If it is found, for instance, that the lecture is the only necessary format, it should be stated so in the curriculum. On the other hand, if there are subjects for which only genuinely practical formats are most suitable, there is no need to provide any lecture-type delivery.

Another aspect of flexibility in teaching is the time-differentiation of formats. Most modules continue to use only one-hour or two-hour building blocks, irrespective of what type of teaching technique is deployed.

→ **We recommend** utilising a **block-teaching / training approach** for many of the modules, based on projects or workshops requiring continuous, uninterrupted work.

Therefore, half-a-day or full-day projects, or even projects running over several days, need to be designed in the overall temporal structure of the curriculum. This can only be achieved with in-built flexibility of the curriculum. Such flexibility does not as yet exist, with rigid structuring of teaching hours to suit the teaching staff routines and schedules rather than to reflect students’ genuine needs.

6.12 The Two-Strand Philosophy

The common perception that the Bologna Agreement implies a degree of randomisation in the construction of curricula is misconstrued. Modularisation actually means the opposite: the initial deconstruction of the teaching programmes into separate building blocks serves to create more flexibility, and subsequently allows more logical and sophisticated options in the creation of a curriculum. One of the central principles used in constructing curricula is the **strand approach**.

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In the case of journalism, **Journalism Practice** and **Journalism Theory** constitute two separate and parallel strands, which act like masts on a sailing ship. All the tackling is attached to them in a way which allows smooth sailing, and gives the sailors immediate flexibility to change most of the parameters to reflect changing weather conditions. Unfortunately, in many transitional countries this lean and mean concept of education is quite foreign, and preference for over-structuring and rigidity still prevails.

The “two masts” or “two strands” approach assumes the equal height of both strands, meaning that Journalism Practice (the practical / vocational path) runs **parallel** to Journalism Theory (the theoretical / academic path) in roughly equal proportions throughout the course and each strand informs the other .

Several members of the Faculty staff have expressed preference for a different model, where the first years are treated as Foundation Courses in journalism, giving students a theoretical and general platform, from which they move on in Year Three (and Year Four for the four-year courses) to the applied sphere of the knowledge they acquired.

There is no room in the present document to discuss the philosophical disadvantages of such an approach. Suffice it to say that such an approach widens the gap between the theory and practice elements of the programme, with students confused as to the relevance of the theory. If the two go hand in hand, then the purpose of the theory and its relationship to the practice can be emphasised. Excessive theorising in a profession largely perceived as an applied and vocational activity can also drive students away from the central objective of becoming journalists, rather than commentators on journalists’ activities and their work. Students can also get frustrated. After all they have chosen to study journalism and so want to be engaged in that from the start.

There is also an approach where the ratio of practical teaching increases together with the growing extent of specialisation – traditionally divided into print, radio and television, with more recently added on-line journalism as a fourth field. But given the extent of the convergence in the media, we advocate preference for multi-skilling in the teaching of journalism. Students should be given the flavour, or tasters, in all aspects of journalistic activity in the first two years, with specialisation, if necessary at all, towards the end of the programme.

6.13 A Three-Masted Ship

After an analysis of the Bulgarian academic and political / economic context, it is believed that the Faculty could profitably follow the model of **three parallel strands**, adopted by a number of universities in Western Europe: they combine Journalism with another realm of knowledge, such as Political History, Law, or Modern Languages, to award joint degrees.

Given Bulgaria’s political circumstances, the adoption of **Foreign Languages** as the third strand appears to be the optimum solution. The language strand should also run parallel to the other two strands. It is assumed that foreign languages would be taught in that language, and that students be given some introduction to the media in the language area they

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are studying. When looking for placements abroad it is advisable to choose journalism schools rather than language schools, to ensure that students receive a different view of the media and how it is produced. Staff from the Faculty would also benefit from being included in such exchange schemes.

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6.14 Continuous Assessment

Most CSI participants realised the importance of assessment in the teaching process. With falling levels of attendance at the Faculty and the University, many of the CSI participants were relieved to discover the principles and methods of Continuous Assessment as effective instruments to motivate students and re-energise the teaching process:

“Sofia University has had a problem with students’ attendance since some of the classes, particularly lectures, were made optional. This problem is even more pronounced at the Faculty of Journalism and Media, where many students undertake employment in the course of their studies. There is no doubt that a system of continuous assessment – once put in place – would successfully address this problem and increase the involvement of students in their coursework.”

One of the CSI participants had this recommendation how to address the problem:

“A new system of assessment needs to be developed and put in place, which will test the quality of disciplines taught, and the degree of absorption by students, as well as the applicability of the knowledge acquired to real working conditions.”

One of the central assumptions of the modern assessment methods is that students need to be assessed continuously – a concept captured in the words of one CSI participant:

“Students’ performance needs to be assessed in the course of their modules, and not only at the end. To this end, three tests on the separate parts of the course need to be combined with the preparation of the final paper and/or discussion. This will increase the motivation and levels of attendance and involvement of the students in lectures and seminars”

The introduction of optional classes has exposed the fact that compulsory attendance had little to do with the levels of knowledge or skills acquired by students. One of the CSI participants has stressed that compulsory classes will not help engage the students better, while new assessment methods will:

“The study of literature on assessment methods, analyses of academic documentation on assessment and my consultations with experts, proved particularly important in furthering my research into how to turn assessment into a stimulus for students to be more active and involved in the educational process.”

→ The sub-section below deals briefly with how the Faculty can use the constituent elements of Continuous Assessment to bring students closer to the teaching:

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6.14.1 Elements of Continuing Assessment

(i) Individualised student assessment

Most CSI contributions dealt with assessment within a particular module or subject. Few have commented on the need for a comprehensive approach of student assessment across a range of classes and throughout the course. But one of the recipients noted the need to **individualise assessment** in order to boost the quality of teaching. Such an approach enhances unique talents and predispositions of the student, and at the same time identifies areas of special concern:

“I firmly believe now that assessment should not only consist of several components, but also closely reflect individual students’ intellectual ability, their unique talents and predispositions and the level of their commitment and involvement.”

Such an approach requires the **introduction of students’ non-linear progress**. It means that students are not assessed against each other, but against **benchmarks** in skills and competence. This requires measurement of progress not within one given task or project, but over a range of projects and tasks, and over a longer period of time.

(ii) Benchmarks

→ **We strongly recommend** the early introduction of a benchmark system.

The development of quality assurance and continuing assessment methods at the Faculty should over a period of time produce a list of benchmarks, against which students’ skills and competence can be objectively measured, without comparisons to other students.

The **benchmark list** should not be subject-specific, but formulated in a way that can be used throughout the Faculty for a range of modules.

The systematic use of well defined benchmarks should in the end be developed into an **interim system of undergraduate assessment**, which can increasingly reflect requirements set by professional or vocational bodies in the industry.

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(iii) Student Portfolio Development

→ **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty sets up the position of a **student portfolio developer** who will oversee the process of creating and integrating individual students' portfolios as a constituent part of the degree award process.

There is a clear process of degree inflation in many transitional as well as West European countries, caused by upgrading many tertiary educational establishments to university level or by setting up private establishments without proper academic tradition and support. Bulgaria is also a victim in this process, and journalism standards appear to have suffered as a result. What it means in practice is that a degree alone is increasingly not enough to secure a job. While still a formal requirement with many employers, it is less significant for jobs requiring specific skills and experience. Journalism is one such area.

In order to address this, the Faculty has a unique chance to impact the job market in the future both nationally and abroad, if degrees are augmented by the **student and graduate portfolio development strategy**.

A candidate for a job with a strong portfolio of autonomous professional work will have an edge against a candidate short-listed purely on the strength of the degree. Such candidates can also compete successfully against competitors with actual work experience. Student portfolios can even out any deficit of proven practical skills.

This requires setting up a programme of **student portfolio development** and a coordinator for this project who will make all members of the faculty aware of the necessity to build individual students' portfolio of coursework.

(iv) Cumulative Degree Awards

→ **We strongly recommend** that the Faculty moves away from the tradition of awarding degrees almost solely on the basis of the final piece of work.

The degree award should be based on a **cumulative approach**, where the constituent part of the degree award, preferably at the rate of 50%, should be the evaluation of the student's portfolio of work and projects accumulated in the course of study which will reflect attendance, commitment and active participation.

The culmination of the degree course should still be a **proper academic dissertation** based on the student's own research to show ability to work critically and reflectively and with autonomy.

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(v) Tutorial and Mentoring System

→ **We strongly recommend** that a tutorial and mentoring system be integrated into the overall strategy of individualised assessment at the Faculty.

The methods of continuous assessment and an individualised approach to students presuppose the introduction of **modern tutorship and mentoring processes**, whereby each student has an appointed **mentor** or **tutor**, who will look and assist in their academic development. CSI participants thought such a system should not be difficult to introduce throughout the Faculty:

“Tutorials are individual face-to-face consultations which allow lecturers to monitor the progress of individual students. In turn, students have a better chance to ask questions relating to their particular assignments. Such tutorials can be introduced easily and immediately.”

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6.15 Student Surveys

We note with a degree of regret that the process of Curriculum Modernisation at the Faculty has only minimally involved the **students** so far. The **consultation process** on modernising teaching also needs to originate from students themselves. The social and psychological distance between teachers at the Faculty and students is felt to be immense, augmented further by the institutionalised hierarchical structures of the University.

Needless to say, some of the Faculty students are already practising journalists or media workers, and the above mentioned artificial distance should be neutralised to bring out a more creative and dynamic relationship, based more on a peer approach.

→ **We recommend as a matter of urgency** that a **relevant student survey** be designed and conducted.

Such a survey should cover a fully representative sample of students and should be carried out as soon as possible, in order to identify areas of perceived weaknesses in the teaching provision and in curriculum and teaching methods, as well as the most acute areas of equipment shortages. It will also assist in identifying quickly those modules which should be culled or radically changed first.

Disregarding the students' input into the modernisation process would be a self-defeating strategy. Students' needs should be at the heart of the educational provision, while teaching itself is not an adjunct or subordinate part of academic research.

Students need to have a sense of ownership of their programmes. If that is the case they are more likely to attend, be enthusiastic, creative and take charge of their own learning.

6.16 On-line delivery and technical support

Recommendations concerning adequate provision for on-line delivery of some of the teaching, and on the urgent need to seek ways of addressing acute equipment shortages, have already been made in the Key Strategic Recommendations section.

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7.0 Immediate Practical Measures

CSI participants have already identified a number of modernising measures and initiatives which can be introduced at the Faculty immediately without formal approval or review process. Several of these are quoted below for illustrative purposes, to demonstrate that teaching improvements can be made at the grass roots level.

7.1 Student publications.

This is a hugely important area for the development of students. Journalism students need to publish their work in the same way as music students need to perform, or art students need to exhibit. It is not simply a way of emulating the world of work, but of being judged by an audience wider than teachers and fellow students, of gaining professional confidence, and of integrating theory and practice. Such publications, produced as part of a class, and assessed as part of the overall degree, also offer models of good journalism. It ensures students develop good practice and sound ethical judgement and decision making.. A number of journalism schools have developed publications or broadcasts for a general public, rather than a student body. The London College of Communications, part of the University of the Arts, London, has a weekly community newspaper, while the Dublin Institute of Technology, Department of Journalism, has a monthly community newspaper. Both serve a genuine community need and are judged by readers as professionally produced newspapers, without any allowance made for the student status of the journalists. There are similar projects in a number of US schools as well.

7.1.1 A Student Magazine

Setting up a student magazine or newspaper, even only in an electronic form, can be an effective way of testing and improving a whole range of skills and competencies, including reporting, editing, desktop publishing, graphic design, web design, and many others – a teaching opportunity identified by one of the CSI participants:

“I will use my experience to create a student magazine which gives students a chance to integrate theory with practice. This is a state that each student of journalism must reach before employment.”

7.1.2 Student-led Radio Station

The Faculty prides itself on its radio station, Alma Mater, which can be further used to improve the students’ journalistic skills. Speech-based broadcasts should be increased, and the news content upgraded to allow for proper news output, reporting and live broadcasting, an aspiration expressed by one of the CSI participants:

“I will do my best to enable my students to research, write and present stories for broadcast, to operate portable recording equipment, to edit sound packages using digital software, to achieve an acceptable level

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of competence in voice work and presentation, and to perform the functions of reporter, newsreader, presenter and editor.”

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7.1.3 Weekly TV Bulletins on CD ROM

Despite the fact that the shortage of television equipment and the technical weaknesses of the television facilities at the Faculty are considered serious problems, students can still produce weekly TV information bulletins for dissemination on the Internet, or on CD ROM.

7.1.4 Web-casting and other novel dissemination formats

Students should be encouraged to experiment with new formats of information dissemination and broadcasting, including pod-casting, blogs, and mobile phone text and visual delivery. These should be integrated into the teaching and used as bona fide ingredients of the education process. Such an approach may help to bypass some of the equipment and under-funding problems.

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7.2 Practical Aspects of Module Construction

The Faculty now has a core of lecturers who are familiar with curriculum developments in Western Europe in the context of Bologna. They are also aware of how syllabus documents should be laid out and what must be contained in them, in order for students to see what they will be taught, what they will know at the end of a module and what skills they will have acquired. Most CSI participants have acquired substantial knowledge in this area, but some admit to deficiencies in their approach:

“Comparing the Bulgarian curricula and the British way of designing them, I could see that some of my Bulgarian colleagues are drawing up their modules for their own sake, rather than for the students’ sake. It’s almost like they want to show off how good and extensive their knowledge is without proving any practical application for it. I am afraid I am no exception here.”

To address these concerns, the Project has already started work on self-educating procedures in constructing modules within the Faculty. Local experts together with leading Faculty members have undertaken work to create unified templates for module design, along the **model on the following two pages**:

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[Sample: Unified Template for Module Design]

- **Module Author**

Person(s) responsible for writing the module

- **Module Description**

In this section a brief description of the general subject of the module. Statements about how the module is structured into Knowledge (breadth, kind, range), Know-how and skill (range and selectivity) and Competence (context, role, learning to learn, insight). Structure should map onto the learning outcomes.

- **Module Aim**

The aim of this module is to ...

- **Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this module, the learner will be able to ...

- **Learning and Teaching Methods**

When designing the module, tutors should consider the variety of learning methods, which may be used to achieve the module learning outcomes. This section should state these processes for the module. For example: lectures, discussion, role-play, case study, problem-solving exercises, video, film, work-based learning, readings, project work, self-directed learning, dissertation, computer-based learning, ODL, correspondence, or a combination of methods.

- **Module Content:**

Description of syllabus content covered in module.

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- **Module Assessment**

Statement on the methods of assessment to be used to measure the stated learning outcomes of the module.

*Statements on proportion of marks allocated to each element of assessment in the Module (Practical, Theory, Continuous Assessment etc).
Statements on performance requirements in individual elements of Module, if any: e.g.- minimum performance threshold.*

- **Essential Reading:** (author, date, title, publisher)
- **Supplemental Reading:** (author, date, title, publisher)
- **Web references, journals and other:**

- **Further Details:** e.g. class size, contact hours. To be delivered in one semester, or year- long.

These unified templates with explanatory notes will be available on an identified website for use throughout the Faculty, as well as in a programme document available in the library. The modules created in this way will form the basis for **a future unified course curriculum database at the Faculty.**

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7.3 Curriculum Building

It is felt that a lot more work still needs to be done in the area of the construction, examination and testing of the **overall curriculum**. We are confident that the Faculty is now in a position to produce a series of well-written individual syllabus documents, but more care and support needs to be given to make sure that they cohere into a well designed and properly thought-out curriculum. The overall curriculum should reflect **the Faculty's statement on what its overall objectives are**, as well as its philosophy.

On the following page, there is an example of what the Faculty should be aiming to produce, both as a statement of intent, but also one that can stand up to scrutiny. This should only be treated as a guide, on the basis of which the Faculty needs to formulate its own statement.

The purpose of such a document is to give guidelines against which the overall curriculum is constructed, and to concentrate and focus on what the faculty is about and what it is producing: good professional journalists who can not only do their job well, but bring improvements to the media in Bulgaria.

Consequently it can ensure that the curriculum has a guide against which to judge individual modules: do they add to the aims of the programme, or are they too esoteric, or of no consequence to the training and educating of future journalists?

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[Sample: Course Aims and Objectives]

Course aims:

To provide a high quality education in the practical, theoretical, and critical issues of both journalism and language studies.

To provide a high standard of professional training and education to enable students to achieve their full potential and acquire a range of transferable skills, which are relevant to employment in journalism and related fields or to post graduate study.

To produce journalists who are multi-skilled, critically aware, and have a sophisticated understanding of the place, effect, cultural context and importance of journalism in society.

To instill an understanding of the ethical issues facing journalists, and to encourage and foster professional standards in preparation for the demands of the labor market.

To promote understanding of how newer technologies are shaping and redefining journalistic practice, and to equip students with strategies to adapt to a rapidly changing workplace.

Objectives:

Further to the aims outlined in the individual course modules, students should:

1. be professionally competent to take up employment in a newspaper, radio, television or on-line news environments.
2. be able to work as reporters and sub-editors, have acquired the required skills, and write fluently in a number of genres.
3. be able to evaluate complex material, understand and use different research tools and methods.
4. know how to use the basic technologies for newspaper, radio, television and on-line production.
5. have the ability to transfer skills to different tasks and technologies.
6. be able to read, research, interview and broadcast fluently in a second language.

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7. be able to act as facilitators between their own and other cultures.

Graduates will also:

- be able to critically evaluate the media and the cultural context in which it operates
- understand contemporary issues and be skilled in decision making and in how to apply high standards of professional practice
- be aware of the many functions of the media in society and have an ability to articulate their views on the media

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7.4 Student Coursebooks

The Faculty has already undertaken preparatory work to produce **Student Coursebooks** – an important document reflecting the quality of the educational offer, and a basic showcase meant to attract prospective students.

7.5 Additional Measures

To complement the recommendations aimed at modernising the curriculum at the Faculty, additional measures are suggested to cement and underpin the necessary changes. Although not essential, these **recommendations** serve to augment and facilitate achieving the objectives of the modernisation process.

7.5.1 Team bonding and building

The Faculty needs training in the area of modern and creative **group dynamics, management change, innovative and creative thinking, basic business acumen, business and institutional synergies**. This is not a recommendation of primary importance in the short or medium term, but essential for the success of the faculty in the long term.

One of the elements of such training should be away-days for staff, where the main ingredient of such gatherings would be reinforcing synergies among individual staff members rather than discussing specific academic or institutional issues.

7.5.2 Increasing Visibility

The Faculty should explore all available channels **to increase its visibility** on the educational market and in the media industry, as part of its business and strategy plan.

It is not enough for the Faculty to rely on its existing position as a traditional academic giant in Bulgaria as far as media and journalism is concerned. The Faculty is facing a very real threat from leaner and meaner competitors on the private market, which will skilfully attempt to bite off chunks of the educational territory controlled by the Faculty and gradually erode its position on the market. This has happened in other transitional countries. The faculty has a fund of expertise in the media area. All **staff should be encouraged to write and appear in the media**, commentating on the media, its performance, its ownership and other issues.

Staff who do such work should identify themselves as being members of the faculty and so enhance the visibility of the **Faculty as a place of experts** willing to act as public intellectuals.

The Faculty should in addition **establish open days** to allow future students to visit the faculty and be told what it means to be a journalist and how to become one. The purpose of this is again to increase the visibility of the faculty and allow it to set the agenda for journalism education in Bulgaria.

Terms of reference

8.0 Other Observations: Student Placements and Internships

It appears clear that many students of Journalism begin working in the media industry relatively early during their course of study. Faculty members tend to see this as potentially harmful to the academic process.

From the information available, the fears of Faculty staff would appear to be not unfounded. The BBC / Phare Project was based on the premise that large parts of the Bulgarian media have low professional skills; so the worry must be that students working such long periods in the media rather than attending lectures are learning bad work practices (and are losing out on their academic education in the process).

Work placement or internship schemes should be put in place on a controlled basis. Students should be **assessed** on the placement, and should be required to produce a journal based on their experience, as well as **evidence of the journalism produced**, whether written or broadcast. Students should be encouraged to **critically evaluate** the work practices of the workplace as well as produce journalistic work.

Media organisations should be encouraged to appoint a member of staff to be in charge of placements. This person should be briefed by the Faculty as to what the university wants from the placement, and also how a media organisation might benefit from such placements, getting to test students prior to recruitment, for instance. This would have the dual effect of forging an alliance with media organisations as well as improving the learning experience of students on a placement.

Finally, students who have been working in the relevant field should be rewarded for their initiative and enterprising spirit. A **new placement system** can be built on present practice. Students should be encouraged to **register their work interests** with the Faculty so that after an appropriate assessment by their Tutor, this can be counted as part of their credit and go into building their portfolios, if seen as relevant. It is in the interest of the Faculty to bring out into the open such activities and utilise them in the teaching process. Contact can be made with such media organisations that are currently employing students as the **basis for a more formal arrangement**.

All media should be approached and be included in the placement scheme, including tabloid and other more popular forms of journalism.

9.0 ACTION PLAN

9.1 Initial remarks

The **Action Plan** on the following pages is a direct transposition of the Strategy recommended in the present document, with timelines attached to particular **action points**. To avoid unnecessary repetition, it uses simplified references to concepts and ideas discussed and presented at length in the Strategy part of the document, and as such should be read in conjunction with the Strategy recommendations.

Terms of reference

9.2 Short-Term Action Plan (between now and over the next 12 months)

- Curriculum Review Committee set up
- Leadership structure of the Committee in place
- Roles and functions within the Committee assigned
- Module construction template and procedure agreed and explained
- Student Course book written up for the present year and posted on-line or printed and distributed.
- Student Course books published for academic year 2006-2007
- Faculty staff surveyed for their immediate training needs to assist them in introducing modernised teaching into the curriculum
- Pilot courses for newly proposed modules identified
- In-house teacher training coordinator appointed
- Faculty Strategy and Business Plan drawn up
- Outdated and irrelevant Subjects and modules identified for culling
- Core elements of the new curriculum identified
- Student radio revamped
- Student magazine launched
- Faculty website operative
- Faculty Internet Café option explored
- Association of Journalism Educators well established and operating

➔ **It is strongly recommended** that an expert trainer / journalist / expert be employed on an ad-hoc or short-term basis to help coordinate and implement the above as part of the post-Project follow-up implementation strategy.

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9.3 Medium Term Action Plan (1 to 3 years)

- **Technical and equipment shortages fully addressed**
- **Student Newsroom set up and operative**
- **Television studios modernised and in full active student use**
- **Undergraduate programme overhauled**
- **Outdated modules dropped**
- **Range of new modules in place**
- **New undergraduate curriculum tested, reviewed and in place**
- **Full modularity based on the Bologna process in place**
- **Continuous assessment system fully implemented**
- **Curriculum documents published annually in compliance with Bologna**
- **In-house teacher retraining programme introduced**
- **Modern teaching techniques and formats introduced**
- **Student portfolio development system in place**
- **Modern tutorial and mentoring system in place**
- **Foreign language provision augmented**
- **Project and business management introduced**
- **Student surveys introduced**
- **On-line and distance learning developed**
- **Faculty Strategy and Business Plan developed**

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9.4 Long-term Action Plan (3 to 5 years and beyond)

- **Benchmarks list in place**
- **Cumulative degree award system established**
- **Faculty training centre established**
- **Adult, continuous learning and post-graduate provision established**
- **Ad-hoc and specialist courses offered**
- **Links with industry forged**
- **Foreign students opportunities explored**
- **New internship system developed**
- **Visiting professorships formally adopted**
- **Third strand strategy considered and possibly adopted**
- **Student exchange links with foreign universities forged**
- **Long-term foreign student-placements developed**

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 The Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University has the potential to build on its traditional leading position in Bulgaria and continue to be an important and influential body in Bulgarian higher education and on the Bulgaria media market in the years to come.

In order to maintain this position and to make further gains, the Faculty needs to apply all its human and institutional resources with drive and commitment to implement fully a comprehensive modernisation programme within, and an expansionist policy, inspired by a long-term vision, outside.

10.2 The Faculty has to forge a relationship with the media industry and be recognised as the major educator of entry level journalists. It must include as part of its mission the necessity to improve media standards in Bulgaria, and in order to do this must modernise its own teaching and learning systems.

10.3 The Faculty has to apply a modernisation processes in a coherent and concerted fashion; it should be produced on the basis of the Strategy and Action Plan recommended in the document.

10.4 Once the Faculty starts seeing itself as the leader and as a pioneer, both on the academic level and on the media industry level, in terms of educational vision, it can become more aggressive and outward looking.

Such a mindset change will make the Faculty actively seek links with other universities and pursue active cooperation and information exchanges. This will impact on the attitudes of other universities.

10.5 A more expansionist and active Faculty will ensure that it is in a strong position to protect itself and the standards of journalism education within a changing environment, and especially in the face of increasing competition from private teaching institutions.

The Faculty's strong position will enable it to shape and dictate the conditions of cooperation and exchanges with the private sector.

This in turn entails the potential for the Faculty to achieve a dominant position on the market in many areas of academic and training provision.

This is an important factor in Bulgaria's democratic process, in as much as access to working in the media for people of different social classes, gender and ethnics groups is important to a healthy media - private colleges tend to attract the wealthy with little concern for issues such as diversity in the newsroom.

10.6 Achieving a position of influence and respect will open the doors to institutional channels in the form of funding, new projects and co-operation with affluent business enterprises, including large media organisations.

10.7 This Project aimed to improve standards in Bulgarian journalism by separately targeting mid-career journalists with training

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courses in some of the most important areas, and in another strand of activity aimed to modernise university teaching.

This apparent asymmetry or imbalance on the media market could be summarised as follows: undergraduate students need more practice to be recognised on the job market, while practising journalists need more theory-based knowledge to do their jobs better.

Both these perceived inadequacies can be addressed simultaneously through the strategy and action plan proposed here.

10.8 The new Association for Bulgarian journalism educators is one of the optimistic developments to result from this Project.

It has the potential to encourage debate and discussion, and to give a voice to lecturers at every level of the academic pecking order.

It will also allow the exchange of concepts, ideas, knowledge and expertise through regular conferences and seminars, both on a national and an international level.