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**THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN MEDIA ASSISTANCE
ORGANIZATIONS IN ADVANCING MEDIA FREEDOM IN
TURKEY:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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The Role of European Media Assistance Organizations in
Advancing Media Freedom in Turkey: A Qualitative Study

Türkiye'deki Media Özgürlüğünü İlerleyen Avrupa Sivil
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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to focus on the position of European media assistance organizations in the Turkish media landscape, paying particular attention to the promotion of media freedom. Eight participants working for eight different European media assistance organizations were interviewed in a timeframe of five months to gain a better understanding of the roles and impact of these organizations. In the first instance, the participants were asked to identify the issues that their organization is focusing on and which concrete measures are taken to improve the circumstances in Turkey. Subsequently, they were asked about different elements that might have an influence on their work, such as the cooperation with other organizations with similar goals and the Turkish government. Lastly, attention was given to measuring the impact of specific actions and the general position of European media assistance organizations in Turkey.

From the results of the in-depth interviews, it can be concluded that the organizations use a wide variety of working methods in Turkey, ranging from writing reports about the situation and raising awareness to providing trainings to journalists in the field. It has also become clear that the organizations are relying heavily on each other and are keen on maintaining a good relationship with their colleagues. This study also concludes that one of the main obstacles consists of measuring the impact of the media development work that is being implemented in Turkey and therefore poses a problem on fine-tuning actions according to the needs of the country, which is according to the literature in the field of media support a widely discussed issue. Another challenge faced by the media assistance organizations in this study is finding appropriate donors and funding money to achieve their projects and objectives.

This research study has the aim to provide valuable information regarding the work, roles and impact of European media assistance organizations in Turkey.

As media freedom is becoming a more pressing issue in Turkey, the findings may be useful in adjusting efforts with regards to the specific needs of the Turkish media market and conducting further research on the subject of media assistance in the country.

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Abbreviations

AEJ	Association of European Journalists
AKP	Justice and Development Party
DHKP-C	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party–Front
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EFJ	European Federation of Journalists
EJC	European Journalism Centre
FPU	Free Press Unlimited
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
KCK	Kurdistan Communities Union
MSI	Media Sustainability Index
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
RWB	Reporters Without Borders
SEEMO	South East Europe Media Organization
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
TPC	Turkish Penal Code

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement and Research Questions

This qualitative study will deal with European media assistance organizations and their role in advancing media freedom in Turkey.

Media freedom in Turkey is currently one of the core concerns of the country's civil society and international partners. For many years, media outlets in Turkey have been burdened with severe problems: media ownership is heavily concentrated, the self-censorship among journalists is mounting, the media are subject to political powers and the country has been holding the position of world's largest prison for journalists for many years. While these concerns about media freedom in Turkey aren't new, the situation has worsened in the past two to three years. With 70 per cent of media outlets in hands of a few conglomerates with major powers in multiple sectors, such as textile, tourism and construction, the media landscape has become even more biased and published news mainly serves the interests of the owners (Barış, n.d.).

Media outlets also consequently suffer from internal problems: The rights of Turkish journalists are not protected, which results in the fact that they are often obliged to apply self-censorship, if they want to keep their jobs. At least 59 journalists were fired for their coverage of the Gezi Park protests in May 2013 (Freedom House, 2014). Additionally, Turkey has a staggering number of journalists and media professionals detained. According to figures published by the OSCE in March 2014, a total of 54 journalists were behind bars. It's clear that the imprisonment of the journalists is largely based on the anti-terrorism legislation, which leaves the Turkish government with wide margins to prosecute journalists.

A first examination of existing literature on the subject of media freedom in

Turkey suggests that several European media assistance organizations have been increasingly focusing on the issue over the past few years. As part of an international community they are raising strong concerns about government pressure on Turkey's media outlets, each with their own methods and tools. In the first stage, it's important to know what kind of activities the organizations are focussing on in order to ameliorate media freedom in Turkey, which leads to the first research question of this study:

R1: Which measures do European media assistance organizations take in order to increase media freedom in Turkey?

The answer to the first research question will determine whether the selected organizations for this study use the same tactics and methods as described in the literature to influence media freedom in Turkey, or if their approach is more distinct. The answer to this question will also clarify whether the organizations make use of similar methods, or if their approach is inherent to the specific organization. Additionally, the intention is to know which tools or methods are used for several purposes. From a logical point of view, it's self-evident that one media assistance organization can't change the media freedom situation in Turkey by itself. This next research question is posed to explore which elements the organizations are subject to:

R2: Which elements have an influence on the functioning and efficiency of the media assistance organizations involved?

Available facts and figures on media freedom in the world suggest that Turkey is facing a deteriorating media freedom situation, which makes the lobbying work of media assistance organizations working on Turkey increasingly difficult. This is especially the case when taking into account that results of specific projects are often not immediately visible or tangible and that the organizations frequently have to rely on guesswork. This study attaches great importance to how the participants reflect on measuring the impact of their

work in Turkey, which is why the following research question was formulated:

R3: How do media assistance organizations measure the impact of their work in order to know that they have a positive influence on the media freedom situation in Turkey?

Related to the difficulty of assessing the impact of media assistance programs, the organizations have to determine their position as defenders of media freedom in Turkey. Why are they focusing on the situation in Turkey? Do they feel like they are necessary in the country as external factors? Which challenges does their work bring along? These questions all lead to the formulation of a fourth and last research question:

R4: How do the media assistance organizations reflect on their role as defenders of media freedom in Turkey?

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand how European media assistance organizations advocate to increase media freedom in Turkey and subsequently how they reflect on their impact and role as defenders of media freedom in Turkey. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews at locations convenient to the participants. Specifically this study aims to provide an answer to the research questions by:

- A. Exploring which actions European media assistance organizations undertake to increase media freedom in Turkey
- B. Explaining which external elements influence the efficiency of their actions
- C. Understanding how these selected media assistance organizations reflect on their actions, impact and position overall

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of the Turkish Media Landscape: Main Areas of Difficulty

2.1.1 Introduction

Freedom of the media is currently one of the main concerns of Turkey's civil society but also its international NGO partners. While the concerns about media freedom in Turkey aren't new or recent, the situation has worsened in the past few years, leaving the country with a deeply suffering image on the international scene (Pierini & Mayr, 2013). In the past two years, several reports on press freedom have been issued by various civil society organizations such as the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV), Freedom House, Carnegie Europe, English PEN and Reporters Without Borders. These reports provide an in-depth analysis of the situation in Turkey and cover the full range of media freedom issues such as the ownership structure, Internet censorship, legislative framework and extensive harassment of journalists. The numbers mentioned in these reports speak for themselves: In the Reporters Without Borders annual Press Freedom Index, Turkey ranks 154th out of 180 countries, below the Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq (Reporters Without Borders, 2014). Turkey dropped six places in comparison with 2012. Freedom House labels the country as "Not Free" in its 2014 report due to "the harsh government crackdown on protesters in Istanbul and increased political pressure on private companies to conform to the ruling party's agenda" (Freedom House, 2014). Turkey also remained the world's leading jailer of journalists in 2013, with 40 behind bars as of December 1, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

This section of the study will give an overview of the most pressing issues, which have contributed majorly to a deteriorating media freedom in Turkey. Firstly, the ownership structure on the Turkish media market and the way

powerful conglomerates are able to influence media content will be discussed. The second part of this chapter will be on the legal framework Turkish journalists have to operate under, which contains many restrictions on media freedom and freedom of expression. Lastly, the journalistic profession in Turkey will be discussed, including political pressure, self-censorship and eventually the imprisonment of journalists while exercising their profession.

2.1.2 Ownership Structure in the Media Market

A 2012 study from the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) presents an extensive overview of the transforming characteristics of the Turkish media market in recent decades. The report argues that multi-sector actors entered the media market after the economic liberalization policies in the '80s in Turkey, which was until then strictly owned by family companies. At that point, the profile of investors of the media changed and the market started to be dominated by a handful of powerful conglomerates with little experience in the media world and interests in a variety of sectors, which aren't directly related to the media field such as energy or telecommunications (Kurban & Sözeri, 2012). According to the TESEV report, a corporate mentality began to dominate the scene where the new owners were looking to increase their economic power through several competition strategies and fusions. Aslı Tunç argues in her research (2011) that the gradual transition to multi-party democracy in 1946 and the demise of the single party regime also had a huge impact on the Turkish press and its ownership structure. The highly concentrated market structure in the media is even being encouraged, due to the inadequacy of the Turkish legal framework to put barriers on cross-mergers or investments of media owners in other sectors (Kurban & Sözeri, 2012).

The commercialization trend has had several consequences on the current media landscape in Turkey: The dependence of media groups on positive relations with the current Turkish government undermines the journalists'

ability to provide independent, critical reporting and corporations' aspiration to maximize profits in other sectors is also bound to face major difficulties in letting the media fulfill its essential role of performing as the society's critical watchdog (Pierini & Mayr, 2013). Today, media ownership in Turkey is in hands of a selection of massive media groups including DMG, Çalık Group, Çukurova Holding, Doğu Group, İhlas Holding, and Feza Group. Since the current ruling party, AKP (Justice and Development Party), came to power in 2002, around half of Turkish media outlets are owned by pro-government partisans and caused media companies to split into "proponents" and "opponents" of the government (Tunç, 2011).

2.1.3 Legal Framework

Many observers of the media freedom situation in Turkey are in complete agreement that the application of several laws such as the Anti-Terror Law, the Turkish Criminal Code and the Media Law form a barrier to media freedom. According to Marc Pierini, a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe, these laws are at the core of the media freedom issue in Turkey and allow the Turkish government to prosecute several media outlets and journalists on broad and vague terms, often referring to national security and public decency. They are also for a great deal in line with the spirit of Turkish nationalism and conservatism, held up by the constitution. Though the EU accession process has had a positive impact on Turkish media laws so far, they still contain several restrictions, which are not in line with the high standards of investigative reporting (Pierini & Mayr, 2013).

The Turkish Penal Code (TPC) is one of the main obstacles to freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Turkey. The TESEV report on media freedom in Turkey mentions specifically article 301 of the TPC as controversial, as it is making it illegal to insult Turkey, the Turkish nation, or

Turkish government institutions. It took effect on June 1, 2005, and was introduced as part of a reform package in the process preceding the opening of negotiations for Turkish membership of the European Union, in order to bring Turkey up to the EU standards (Kurban & Sözeri, 2012). The report further argues that Article 301, which serves as the most widely debated provision of the penal code, lead inter alia to bringing charges against writer and Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk for mentioning in an interview with a Swiss magazine the Armenian genocide of 1915. In a similar case in 2006, the well-known deceased Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink was prosecuted under the Article 301 for insulting “Turkishness”, and received a six-month suspended sentence. Prosecutors also make use of the Turkish Penal Code to censor the media by penalizing them for reporting on issues such as criminal cases against high-ranking military officers. Article 218 of the code stipulates that when a media employee commits an offence, then the penalty shall be automatically increased (Hammarberg, 2011). This approach leads to a general measure against free speech and in particular the discrimination of media employees.

Law No. 3713 or the Anti-Terror Law is another issue that endangers the maintenance of freedom of speech and freedom of the press in Turkey. Turkey has made use of the legislation of the Anti-Terror Law in order to prosecute thousands of politicians, activists and journalists, mainly for things they have said or written (Reporters Without Borders, 2013). Article 6(2) of the Anti-Terror Law states that those who print or publish leaflets and declarations of terrorist organizations shall be punished with a fine of between 5 and 10 million Turkish liras. The Turkish authorities are left with large margins as to determine what is considered a “terrorist organization” or “terrorist propaganda”. In April 2013, the Turkish parliament passed a reform of its anti-terrorism laws, narrowing the definition of terrorist propaganda in line with EU demands to boost freedom of expression (Pierini & Mayr, 2013).

In civil cases regarding freedom of expression and media freedom, Turkish

high courts tend to go against ECHR laws by ruling in most cases in favour of prosecutors who sue intellectuals for defamation. High courts also tend to be brutal against individuals who articulate non-violent opinions that are deemed against the state. This is mainly caused by the loose interpretation of the Anti-Terror Law and the Penal Code, and the unwillingness of the state to draw a distinction between reporting on terrorism and terrorist propaganda (Kurban & Sözeri, 2012).

2.1.4 Journalistic Profession

According to several reports from media assistance organizations including Reporters Without Borders, Turkey currently carries the unfortunate label of world's biggest prison for media employees. Even though several NGOs and organizations working on media freedom are keeping constant track of Turkish journalists being locked up under broadly defined terrorism laws, it is difficult to firmly establish the number of reporters, editors, and broadcasters that are being targeted. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and its office of the OSCE representative on freedom of the media provide a detailed list of imprisoned journalists in Turkey, which is being updated regularly. The list showed 54 journalists in jail in March 2014 and entails extensive background information such as the journalists' name and profession, the length of their sentence, under which law they are sentenced, the prison they are located at and a description of their case.

As many reports have documented, the majority of imprisoned journalists in Turkey are Kurdish people working for media outlets that are associated with the Kurdish movement (Freedom House, 2014). Kurdish journalists are charged in relation to the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) case, a pan-Kurdish political umbrella group linked to the PKK. The cases of imprisonments indicate a clear connection to certain issues and the Kurdish minority in the

country isn't the only worry of the Turkish government. As counted by the Committee to Protect Journalists in December 2013, a quarter of the detained journalists works for media outlets associated with banned leftist movements such as the Revolutionary People's Liberation Front (DHKP-C). Others were linked to the Ergenekon case, a so-called ultra-nationalist conspiracy accused of attempting to destabilize the Turkish state (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2013).

When trying to find a motivation behind the high number of detained journalists in Turkey, the answer is often the aggressive and questionable application of antiterrorism laws, combined with a judicial system that is protecting the state and nationalist values instead of giving priority to the individual (Kurban & Sözeri, 2012). These antiterrorism laws make it possible to accuse journalists for spreading so-called propaganda and supporting terrorist or criminal organizations even in the case of reporting on their activities. When looking at the OSCE list, it becomes clear that 46 out of 54 journalists are charged under Article 314 or the Turkish Criminal Code, which deals with the crime of "membership of an organized criminal group". Additionally, 49 of the 54 journalists are charged under the Anti-Terror Law or Article 5 and 7 (OSCE, 2014).

According to a recent report published by English PEN, the Gezi Park protests in May 2013 marked the beginning of an intense period of pressure for media employees in the country as the government, media owners and media regulators huddled against those showing support or attempting to report on the millions of protesters on the streets (Yaman, 2014). Many Turkish journalists ended up losing their jobs as they distanced themselves from the accepted editorial line while covering the protests. Not only were journalists being sacked, they also had to face physical attacks from the police while trying to do their job. According to statistics offered by Bianet, by 30 September 2013 a total of 153 journalists had been attacked by security and police forces during

the Gezi Park protests (Önderoglu, 2014). The PEN report also shows that the intense pressure on the media during these protests, which started in May 2013, offer a revealing picture of the restrictions on media freedom in contemporary Turkey.

The imprisonment and the maltreatment of journalists in Turkey are widely condemned by many organizations on an international scale. Essentially, the disagreement between the Turkish government and its external critics evolves around the issue of what activities are considered as journalism and what activities fall under the range of aiding terrorist organizations by making propaganda. Marc Pierini concludes in his report on Turkey that the issue is often not whether Turkey has a right to fight domestic terrorism, but the degree to which the Turkish government has to accept critical, investigative reporting on terrorist activities (Pierini & Mayr, 2013).

2.2 Media Assistance

2.2.1 Introduction

“Media assistance” is a rather new phenomenon in international development, which covers a broad range of policies and projects in support of a free and independent media in developing nations (Johnson, 2012). According to the insights of Professor Monroe Price, it emerged as a significant aspect of development work in the 1980s and 1990s and has evolved from quite modest programs, such as providing equipment for journalists, to long-term projects with large budgets. While in the past, development efforts viewed the media as a tool for achieving specific goals in health, education or agriculture, media assistance projects now focus on the structure and journalistic practice of the media itself. Media assistance projects strive to lay the foundation for the emergence of a media sector which is free of financial control and state editorial and at the same time achieve the ideal of a “fourth estate” in which the

media serves as a complement to the existing three branches of power – judicial, executive and legislative (Kumar, 2006).

Media assistance can take many different forms but primarily includes training of journalists, supporting news organizations, making efforts to reform media laws, providing financial support for the sustainability of media outlets and taking initiatives to surpass several religious, national or ethnic barriers in the media field. Organizations providing media assistance can either specialize in one of these activities mentioned above or instead focus on particular regions where media-related problems are parallel (Price, 2002). The substantive focus of media assistance programs also varies depending on the targeted country, the timing and donor. Available data on media assistance indicates that since its emergence, most of the assistance has gone to the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Eurasia (Kumar, 2006).

2.2.2 The Importance and Roles of Media Assistance Organizations

Before proceeding to its challenges, this chapter of the study will discuss the importance and roles of media assistance organizations, as described by several researchers in the field of media development. Specifically, the relationship between media assistance and democratization has been widely discussed. Since the start of developing programs for democracy promotion, several donors have realized that independent media are a crucial element in building a functioning democratic system and that the success of democratization efforts heavily depend on a free flow of information and ideas (Kumar, 2006). On the macro-level, sponsors of media assistance believe that it is a tool for the continuation of democratic values, as well as for maintaining international relations and global civil society. On the micro-level on the other hand, media assistance is seen as the vital element of democratization in a country (Johnson, 2012). Donor governments and foundations also have in their official policy documents described media freedom as a critical element of democratic

societies (Price, 2002).

According to the insights of Craig L. LaMay, whose work centres on media development in democratizing societies, civil society and media development are frequently linked together, both conceptually and programmatically. He argues that the majority of media assistance programs of national governments often fall under their civil society portfolio and that many large NGOs that do media work will also justify media programs as actors of civil society (LaMay, 2004). He further argues that the link is understandable, as media can enhance public participation in elections and thus make them more meaningful.

Ann Olson, who specializes in international non-profit management and democracy development, describes in a report the different roles of media-support organizations in strengthening the independence of media worldwide. She identifies “media-support organizations” as media monitors, journalism institutes, press councils, trade unions for journalists, research institutes, ombudsmen, freedom of information support groups, advocacy organizations, etc. This is aligned with the types of organizations that are included in this study. Olson’s main argument in her report is that building independent media is useless without the support of organizations such as trade unions and professional associations for journalists, as well as a public who is educated about the responsibilities of media and their function in a democratic society. She further argues that building associations and support organizations will help enable sustainable, independent and free media in developing countries. When such institutions don’t exist, media development falls behind (Olson, 2008).

On the subject of understanding how to support media in democracies and transitional societies, the former Centre for Democracy and Governance of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) undertook a study in 1999, based on experiences in Eastern Europe. The report builds on

emphasizing the importance of supporting the media sector institutions in order to increase the freedom and independence of the media. The reports lists several ways for organizations and associations to support the media sector, including a wide array of services to promote media as a crucial element of a country's civil society and engage with citizens who form the media's audience. The 2007 compendium *Media Matters*, which is a product of the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), also points to the growing need to insert media-support strategies into the wider goals of global development.

Literature on the subject of media assistance indicates that the organizations can take a variety of roles and responsibilities upon themselves. One of those widely discussed roles are the journalistic and commercial standards that media-support organizations set for the whole media industry (Olson, 2008). According to a great part of literature, "standard setting" is one of the main roles of media assistance organizations. Media assistance organizations provide a public platform for leading thinkers; raise societal questions that media should consider and help resolve ethical issues. The network of organizations also provides an infrastructure that promotes professionalism and develops solutions by establishing norms and values. It brings together like-minded media employees with similar interests, needs and experiences (Olson, 2008). On the subject of developing ethical codes, Monroe Price and Peter Krug claim in their working paper that "the establishment of voluntary ethical codes of professional conduct and systems for professional self- governance can be important steps in promoting journalists' public responsibility and thereby advancing the goal of journalistic independence." Without this kind of expertise, media isolation can emerge when pressure from the government escalates (Price & Krug, 2000). A 2007 report commissioned by the U.K. Department for International Development confirms that media institutions can help to build professionalism, standards concerning good journalism and strength of the media professions.

The practice of standard setting also raises the subject of partnerships between organizations. As the organizations agree on the need for common principles and practices that contribute to the strength of the media industry, they join to work on mutual goals together (Olson, 2008). Many media-sector NGOs work on building coalitions around specific issues, whether successfully or not. Previous research shows that groups are more likely to have an affect on narrow instead of broad issues but that it also depends on the country and its wealth (LaMay, 2004). Not only are media-support organizations finding each other while defining common standards concerning journalism, but also these organizations have traditionally helped connecting people with the same needs. This is in particular the case for organizations with a media specialty such as women in the media or digital media.

Another task that is commonly assigned to media-support organizations is the practice of “raising awareness”. Media-support organizations help draw attention to bad practices and elevate public awareness concerning the impact of media on public life (Olson, 2008). According to Price and Krug, it will always stay uncertain which elements have contributed most to an increase of media freedom or to the creation of a culture of democratic values. They are emphasizing though that the existence of a vibrant nongovernmental sector is crucial, as the organizations are at any moment sensitive to the infringement of journalistic rights and possible backsliding (Price & Krug, 2000).

2.2.3 Challenges in the Field

Throughout this study, it has become clear that despite increasing international investment in media assistance, very little academic work has been conducted about the field. There are few books or research articles analysing the subject and possible effect of media aid, which is a problem on different levels. The lack of literature on the subject is not really surprising though, as large-scale

assistance for building independent media has begun in the 1990s and is therefore relatively new (Kumar, 2006).

The lack of research on the subject can also be linked to the fact that evaluation of media assistance is very difficult, requiring objective measures of things that are by definition subjective (LaMay, 2004). There has been an increased focus on tools to measure media sustainability though, as is demonstrated by the international NGO IREX. The IREX's Media Sustainability Index (MSI) helps countries determine their appropriate needs regarding media systems and evaluates progress on five goals, including supporting institutions such as trade unions and NGOs. Turkey hasn't been included in their study field yet but the MSI can definitely be seen as a tool to measure the impact that the organizations are able to make in specific countries and help them make their activities more appropriate for each country's needs.

The results for the individual countries indicate that many existing media-support organizations remain powerless facing strong pressure from local governments, or are just too weak due to a lack of professional skills (IREX, 2005). Hawley Johnson, who has experience in designing media assistance programs for media organizations, confirms in a study that a lot of challenges are faced while trying to implement these programs as practitioners in the field admit that the impact of the programs often seems temporary or fleeting. Based on her own experiences, she further mentions that at best, the impact is difficult or impossible to truly assess in quantifiable terms (Johnson, 2012).

In a report on civil society actors that work on media policy change in Egypt, which has similar press freedom related issues with regards to Turkey, the researchers claim that there are very few NGOs working exclusively on media reform in the country. Instead, human rights advocacy groups are lobbying for these issues. Some larger international NGOs, such as the International Federation of Journalists are Committee to Protect Journalists produce detailed reports on the lack of media freedom in several countries, but according to the

researchers their function is purely “reactive” and doesn’t involve a great deal of fieldwork (Ibrahim et al, 2003). The report further argues that the role of these actors are quite limited and unlikely to go beyond a consultative one to local groups in Egypt and the rest of the Middle East. The report concludes that the role of NGOs can be reinforced, but they need to develop their capacities and move from a campaigning role to direct lobbying. Hawley Johnson adds to this though that foreign aid must not carelessly harm the societies that it aims to assist. According to her insights, flawed policy of media assistance organizations can create disillusionment in the democratic project and can even destabilize a country and its development (Johnson, 2012).

In the case of Egyptian NGOs, the problem of funding is being cited and the fact that they are seriously suffering from a lack of commitment from donors. This is identified as a problem in the aid industry more generally, but is in particular countries more severe where there is a high level of competition between a large number of NGOs for survival. Other authors in the field confirm that many media assistance organizations have become aid-dependent, by stating that the downside of project-oriented support of NGOs has been that NGOs tend to come up with projects according to the funds available, without a clear mission. Additionally, there is a chance that NGOs are affiliated with political ideologies of donors that they don’t necessarily want to be associated with (Ibrahim et al, 2003). Vice versa, many international donors engaged in media assistance have preferred to take a low profile because of the political sensitivities that are involved with media assistance (Kumar, 2006).

On creating a sustainable environment for the several media outlets, Craig LaMay comments that there is an additional challenge for media, because unlike most democratic institutions, they are rooted in economic society. Seeing media as part of civil society promotion is fine, until funds are exhausted. Even though other democratic institutions also have to pay their costs, many of them can appeal to taxation, unlike media related organizations (LaMay, 2006).

Hawley Johnson adds to LaMay's point of view that without economic strength, owners and editors turn to politics for support. Research has shown though that competition among media-support organizations and the rivalry for receiving international funds to implement their activities will eventually result in diminishing their effectiveness (Olson, 2008). In this regard, Manana Aslamazyan who wrote articles on media assistance, suggests that supporting institutions should be better informed about each other's activities in order to cooperate more effectively, which may also end the practice of double funding competing associations and organizations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A qualitative research was adopted for this study, with the aim of focusing on the perspectives of those involved. When attempting to define qualitative research, there is a rather wide consensus that “qualitative research is a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena within their social worlds” (Bryman, 1988). This qualitative study has an exploratory character, meaning that it’s designed to understand underlying values, concepts and norms, and involves a number of broad questions in order to encourage participants to take the lead and shape their own narrative. In an explorative study, the researcher has a sense of the key research issues but lets the interview be shaped by the interviewee (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The application of this type of study is ideal within an area about which little is so far known, as is the case with media assistance efforts in Turkey. The explorative approach also doesn’t entail an existing theory to depart from and leaves the researcher with the opportunity to demonstrate potentials links (Segers, 2002). This chapter of the study will provide an overview of how and which participants were sampled, which data collection method was opted for and eventually how the collected data was analyzed.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Sampling

For this qualitative study, purposive or criterion sampling was applied. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) state in their discussion of purposive sampling that the researcher selects people according to the aims of the research. According to Patton (1990), the “logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth”. He adds that information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of

central importance to the purpose of the research. Accordingly, the selection for this study was based on prominence and longevity of the work of the organizations.

The other selection criteria that defined which organizations and thus participants were contacted for this study are:

- The organization complies with what is defined as a media assistance organization
- The organization is up-to-date about the media freedom situation in Turkey
- The organization is currently involved in media assistance projects in Turkey or has done significant work in the past revolving Turkey
- The organization is located within the boundaries of Europe
- The organization is located within travelling distance of the researcher and can be reached for an interview
- If the organization isn't located within travelling distance, a telephone interview with the participant is a valid option.

The organizations that met the fixed set of criteria were contacted for an interview. Eventually, eight participants from the selected organizations agreed to cooperate with the study. Among the participants are six non- governmental organizations (75%), one umbrella organization of trade unions (15%) and one intergovernmental organization (15%). 50% of the participants are male and 50% are female. The job titles of the participants included: adviser, secretary general, director, head of Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk, senior project coordinator, head of campaigns and communications and program coordinator. In the next section, the participating organizations in this study are described. The organizations are in the order that they were interviewed.

3.2.2 Description of the selected organizations

3.2.2.1 Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is currently the world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organization. The OSCE focuses on issues including arms control, conflict prevention, crisis management, post-conflict rehabilitation and the promotion of human rights, media freedom and fair elections. The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media was created in December 1997 and acts as a watchdog to provide warnings on violations against freedom of the media in the 57 participating states spread across Europe, Asia and North America. The current representative on freedom of the media, Dunja Mijatovic, is charged with assisting participating states by promoting full compliance with the OSCE principles and commitments regarding freedom of expression and freedom of the media. She has the responsibility to respond to serious non-compliance with the OSCE principles by participating states. The representative seeks direct contact with parties involved in case of urgent problems, such as unfavourable working conditions for journalists, in order to contribute to the resolution of the problem.

3.2.2.2 South East Europe Media Organization

The South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO) is a regional NGO network of editors, media executives and journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations in the region of South East Europe. With headquarters in several countries, SEEMO has the aim to create a bridge between international media activities and media developments in the region that they operate in. A group of editors-in-chief, media executives and professors of journalism, in the presence of representatives of international institutions and with financial support of the International Press Institute, founded the organization in October 2000 in Croatia. The Secretary General of

SEEMO since 2000 is Oliver Vujovic, a former journalist and expert in public relations, politics and business. One of SEEMO's head tasks is to organize dialogue meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences between editors-in-chief, media executives and journalists from South East Europe, in order to promote European values and ideas. Their main areas of concern are protecting press freedom, the legal situation of media, relations between media and politicians, the public role of parliamentarians, access to information and the right to secrecy of information sources. SEEMO also regularly publishes media magazines and handbooks in English, targeting media employees in South East Europe.

3.2.2.3 European Federation of Journalists

The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) is a European umbrella organization of 35 trade unions, representing the interests of journalists in 38 European countries. With its headquarters in Brussels, the organisation represents over 320 000 journalists in total, which makes the EFJ Europe's largest organization of journalists. They fight in particular for social and professional rights of journalists working in all sectors of the media. The main goal of the EFJ is as they state themselves "to maintain or create environments in which quality, journalistic independence, pluralism, public service values, and decent work in the media exist".

3.2.2.4 Reporters Without Borders

Reporters Without Borders is an international NGO based in France. The organization was founded in 1995, and promotes and defends freedom of information and freedom of the press. It has consultant status at the United Nations and UNESCO. Under the direction of Christophe Deloire, Reporters Without Borders divided its team of researchers by geographical area. The organization's activities are carried out on five continents through its network

of correspondents, national sections, and its collaboration with local press freedom organizations. The organization also developed two essential spheres of activity: one focused on internet censorship and the new media, and the other devoted to providing moral, financial and material assistance to journalists working in dangerous zones. Their missions entail daily tasks such as monitoring attacks on freedom of information worldwide, denouncing attacks on journalists in the media and acting in cooperation with governments to fight censorship or laws aimed at restricting freedom of information.

3.2.2.5 European Journalism Centre

The European Journalism Centre, with its headquarters in Maastricht, is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to the highest standards in journalism. Their main activity is to train journalists and media professionals on specific subjects, but always in a European context. Through trainings and seminars, the EJC aims to provide a forum for discussion and exchanges of views between journalists from different backgrounds and countries. This enables the aim of the EJC to create and support networks among media professionals within Europe and the rest of the world. Another task of the centre includes monitoring and reflecting on the future challenges facing the media, by conducting research and surveys.

3.2.2.6 English PEN

English PEN is the founding centre of a worldwide writers' association with 145 centres in over 100 countries. PEN's aim is to defend the rights of writers and readers in the UK but also in other parts of the world. This entails giving dissident writers a voice by publishing their work in English and supporting them in different ways. They celebrate the work of courageous authors through introducing UK audiences to their work and awarding prizes for achievement. English PEN is governed by a board of trustees, which is elected from and by

members. The Acting President of English PEN is Raficq Abdulla and the Director is Jo Glanville.

3.2.2.7 Association of European Journalists

The AEJ brings together individual journalists across Europe through their membership of the 20 national sections. The association was founded in 1962 by 70 journalists, with the aim of promoting European integration and harmony and defending freedom of the press in Europe. Sections at the national level set up most of the activities of the AEJ. However, one of the aims of the association is to create partnerships between individual journalists by encouraging them to exchange contacts, information and ideas. Membership in each national section is open to all journalists, including freelance contributors and foreign media representatives based in the country. Media freedom in Europe is one of the focal points of the AEJ. William Horsley, AEJ Media Freedom Representative, is responsible for the subject. Every year, most sections of the association give special attention to the World Press Freedom day on May 3, by organizing special events, conferences and activities.

3.2.2.8 Free Press Unlimited

Free Press Unlimited (FPU) is a non-governmental organization based in the Netherlands. The organization was created on April 28, 2011, and works in more than 40 countries to ensure that news and information are made available to people. In those areas, Free Press Unlimited focuses on strengthening the capacity of local media professionals and media organisations. Together with local partners, such as journalists, media pioneers and media organizations, FPU aims to create room for people to speak freely, debate social issues and find out what is going on in their immediate environment.

3.3 Data Collection Method

Semi-structured, individual, in-depth interviews were selected as the means of

data collection for this study. They are generally regarded as suitable for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex issues, and enable the exploration for additional information and clarification of answers (Barriball & While, 1994). While the in-depth interviewing method certainly has its advantages, such as providing a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect detailed information, there are a few limitations and pitfalls. Interviews can be a time-intensive evaluation activity because of the time it takes to conduct interviews, transcribe them, and analyse the results. Another limitation is that when in-depth interviews are conducted, generalizations about the results can usually not be made until the same stories and issues are emerging from the interviewees (Boyce & Neal, 2006). Semi-structured interviews are also often the single data source for a qualitative research project, as is the case with this present study. They are usually scheduled in advance at a designated time and location outside of everyday events (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The semi-structured interviews conducted for this study were organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, allowing additional questions to emerge from the dialogue with the participants.

3.4 Procedure

The eight participants that took part in this study were separately interviewed in the timeframe between 5 November 2013 and 20 March 2014. The participants were all contacted by e-mail. While four participants responded directly to the sent request for an interview, the other four participants were reached through an assistant or co-worker. The e-mails contained a brief explanation of what the study is about and an estimated course of the interview, such as the approximate length of the interview and, if requested, an overview of the predetermined questions. Three participants explicitly indicated that they wanted to see the questions prior to the interview.

With six of the participants, the interviews were conducted face-to-face. With

the remaining two participants, based in London and Paris, a telephone interview was conducted. A preference was given to conduct the interview face-to-face with the participants, but if certain conditions didn't allow for this to happen, an interview over the telephone was opted for. From the interviews that were conducted face-to-face, five of them took place in the head office of the organization. Only one took place on a remote location, as the participant involved was on a business trip. The majority of the interviews (3) were conducted in Brussels; one interview took place in Vienna, one in Istanbul and one in Amsterdam.

The interviews lasted between forty minutes and one hour each. With the verbal consent of the participants, a voice recorder was used in order to record the conducted interviews and facilitate the job of the researcher. The first few minutes of the interview process were used to make conversation with the participants without directly mentioning the research topic. According to literature on qualitative research, the first few minutes after meeting can be crucial for establishing the relationship between researcher and participant which is a prerequisite for a successful in-depth interview (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Subsequently, the research topic was introduced and the participants were provided with a concise summary of the main goals of the study.

The majority of the interviews for this study were conducted in English, except for one, which was conducted in Dutch and translated afterwards in English. Even though only one of the interviewees was a native English speaker, there was no evidence of a language barrier during the other interviews. After each interview, a logbook containing the course of the interview, own feelings, thoughts and comments was kept. By doing this, the researcher is able to reflect on his or her own subjectivity (Glesne, 1992). A short while after each interview, the conversation was transcribed with the help of the voice recorder. When every interview was conducted and transcribed, the data analysis could take place.

3.5 Data Analysis

A well-known method of data analysis that is used within this study is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the analysis of the major themes that one finds in the in-depth interviews and other qualitative data (Howitt, 2010). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the first step of thematic analysis is the transcription of the verbal data into written form in order to conduct the analysis. It is argued that the process of transcription can be a very good way to start familiarizing yourself with the obtained data (Riessman, 1993). The second phase of thematic analysis begins when you have read and familiarized yourself with the data and involves the creation of initial codes from the data. The coding for this study was done manually, by using different highlighters to indicate potential patterns and segments of data. Literature on the subject of qualitative research has indicated that with semi-structured, in-depth interviews, the validity and reliability do not depend upon the repeated use of the same words in each question or answer, but upon conveying equivalence of meaning (Denzin, 1989). It is also this equivalence or similarity of meaning which helps to standardize the semi- structured interviews and further helps comparability.

According to the thematic analysis theory, the third phase begins when all data have been coded and sorted. This phase involves collating all relevant coded data extracts within identified themes. The fourth phase begins when a set of candidate themes have been designed. The themes need to be refined in order to make sure that they don't overlap and that the codes within every theme are sufficiently cohesive (see Table 1). In phase five, a detailed analysis is conducted for each individual theme, as well as considering how the theme fits within the overall story and in relation to the research questions. The last phase begins when a set of fully worked-out themes have been established and involves the final write-up of the report.

Table 1

Codes for elements that were appointed by participants as important

Definition of problem	Concrete measures	Cooperation organizations	Relations with the government	Position organizations in general	Measuring impact
Pressure Absurd laws Terrorism law Concentration Problematic laws Authorities Government Afraid Jail Abuse of power Denigration Owners	Advocacy Reports Campaigns Awareness Support Seminars Missions Trainings Monitor Improve Issues	Solidarity Cooperation Trying Same approach Partners Recommendations Together Same Ameliorate Joint efforts Resources	Communicate Difficult Express concerns Trying Address problems Close relations Depends Eager Attention Dialogue	Developing Don't understand complexity Funding Financial issues Identify Engaged Capacity	Difficult Awareness Measuring success Raising awareness Question Small improvements Human rights Contributing to success Personal

4. Results

4.1 Problem Definition According to the Participants

When the participants were asked to define on which problems the organization they work for is focusing on, many of the answers were closely related to the description of problem areas in this study. It has become clear that a lot of attention is going to the legal regulation that is applied to journalists, and in particular the Anti Terror Law and certain articles of the Penal Code. Half of the participants in this study refer explicitly to these laws and emphasize their commitment to focusing on them.

“One of the main problems in our eyes is the fact that the legislation still bears many problematic dispositions coming from a darker Iran, such as the Anti Terror Law and about 20 articles of the Penal Code, which limit the ability of Turkish journalists to perform their jobs as they would like.” (JB)

One of the participants explains that terrorist laws are being used by people with patriotic views, to shut down discussion of minority groups and target anyone who writes about the Kurdish issue. A natural consequence of the laws that are unfavourable towards journalists is that more journalists end up being imprisoned, which turned out to be an important problem for the media assistance organizations to focus on as well. Four participants mention that as a result of fearing detainment, the Turkish journalists are applying self-censorship.

“The self-censorship in Turkey is very high and is mainly caused by media bosses and government authorities that are using financial, economic and social threat.” (RS)

Another focal point for the organizations to mention is the ownership structure within the Turkish media landscape. Four participants explicitly denounce the

fact that there is a media concentration, which is controlled by a few actors on the market who have close ties with the Turkish authorities. The fact that the owners have interests in several sectors, such as textile, oil and textile, is also considered as an abnormality. According to the participants, this makes the maintaining of pluralism of the media very hard. One participant mentions that not only there is an unethical relationship between media owners and the Turkish government, but that editors of Turkish newspapers also have questionable relationships with their bosses.

“Unfortunately, in most of the cases that we have witnessed in Turkey is that editors are the closest friends of the media owners and they don’t necessarily protect the rights of their staff.” (RB)

According to the same participant, there is too much attention going to opinion making instead of facts and hard journalism. This is also reflected in the work of Aslı Tunç, who argues that the recruitment of star columnists rather than reporters and the fact that newspapers serve opinions rather than news items can be identified as turning points in the Turkish media landscape (Tunç, 2011). Thomas Hammarberg emphasizes in his reports on Turkey that “many media analysts criticize the imbalance between the space allocated to commentators, their influence and high salaries, as opposed to the very marginal room allocated to and low remuneration for investigative journalism and first-hand reporting” (Hammarberg, 2011).

“In Turkey, it’s a better etiquette to be a columnist because they are able to shape politics in the country. This imbalance where columnists are paid extremely high and reporters are suffering is unacceptable.” (RB)

Other issues that are mentioned by the participants include the fact that it’s getting more difficult to maintain pluralism of the media, that independent media outlets are harshly repressed and that there is little mechanism for Turkish journalists to think about their responsibilities.

4.2 Concrete Measures for Better Media Freedom

When it comes to taking concrete measures in order to influence the media freedom situation in Turkey, the organizations have a wide variety of ways to work and communicate. The first step in this process according to all participants is the day-to-day monitoring of the situation through several media channels and reacting to the violations they notice. The gathering of information is what they consider an important part of their role, in order to be aware of all developments related to media freedom in Turkey. One participant mentions the monitoring of horizontal issues including public service broadcasting, the switch to digital media, how it affects media freedom and pluralism of the media. Another participant shared that monitoring the situation in Turkey is easy because the country is relatively open and accessible.

The second step consists of reacting. A side note made by researchers who have focused on international aid in Egypt is that often the function of large international NGOs is purely reactive, which seriously limits the impact that they are able to make (Ibrahim et al, 2003). More about the possible impact of the organizations will follow in the next sections of this chapter. Two participants in this study emphasize that the seriousness of a case is an important factor to consider when reacting to specific cases, for example when a journalist is in danger.

“If the life of a journalist is in danger, then we prefer to react very fast because at that moment it’s important to give a clear message to the Turkish government that threatening journalists is not acceptable.” (OV)

According to the responses from the participants, reacting to violations of media freedom can take many forms. It has become clear that the most obvious way of reacting is by making use of press releases, open letters, petitions, writing reports and carrying out public communication campaigns in order to raise awareness on the subject and to put media freedom in Turkey higher on

the agenda or to gain leverage. Another way to anticipate the situation in Turkey according to the participants comes in the form of field missions and press visits. Almost every organization, except one, included in this study mentions visiting Turkey regularly as an important part of their strategy. These field missions can be organized for several purposes: to talk directly to authorities and politicians who are involved with media freedom, to get a better understanding of what's going on in the country, to meet Turkish journalists or even to attend court hearings of these Turkish journalists. Research has shown that legal defence of journalists and news organizations facing harassments is considered to be an important task of media assistance organizations (Price, 2002).

“We are sending observers to every single trial: we are listening, we are translating, we're following every step of the process etc. So we're not completely baseless when defending the journalists.” (RS)

Another recurring method applied by all of the participants is to work in the field with Turkish journalists themselves. This method, again, can take many forms according to the in-depth interviews. Trainings, seminars and crash courses provided to Turkish journalists are by far the most popular practices in this study and they are also often mentioned in literature on media assistance in general. Previous research has shown that training for journalists includes technical training, training for investigative journalism and on specialist subjects such as economics, the environment and human rights. There is also an increased demand for longer-term training taking place in the newsroom (Price, 2002). Three interviewees in this study report that trainings for Turkish journalists are necessary in order to change the situation in Turkey. The trainings or seminars can have different purposes but the main objective is to provide expertise to journalists on specific issues to improve their journalistic skills.

“On the one side we try to improve the skills of the journalist but on the other side we try to help them to define what journalism is and how to implement ethical codes, which will improve the quality of journalism in general in Turkey.” (RB)

An important remark made by one of the participants on the subject of training is that it's easier to influence young Turkish journalists, as they are more open towards different ways of reporting. Other methods which are based on working directly with journalists include enhancing discussions between Turkish journalists and other journalists, giving Turkish journalists a voice by providing them a platform and offering material support by operating an assistance desk.

4.3 Goal-Oriented Cooperation Between the Organizations

As mentioned by all of the participants, it's impossible to change the media freedom situation in Turkey as a sole operator. The results of this study strongly suggest that cooperation between media assistance organizations exists and that the relationship between these organizations can take various forms. A lot of researchers in the field of media assistance have also come to the same conclusion that questions of coordination and efficiency have emerged because certain groups have specialized in one or more of the same regional areas, in this case Turkey. Monroe Price (2002) has mentioned in his writings on media assistance that “in a newly competitive environment, efforts at coordination, efforts to create a reasonable division of responsibility, and efforts to ensure the existence of local allies so that demand is guaranteed, all help shape the media assistance sector”. It has also been argued that supporting institutions should be better informed about each other's activities in order to cooperate more effectively, which may also end the practice of double funding competing associations and organizations (Aslamazyan, 2006).

Before proceeding to what kind of activities the organizations are involved in together, it's important to also know why they decide to work together. One participant mentions the advantage of not losing time and resources when partnering up and finds working alone to be less efficient and less relevant. Even when there isn't such a strong partnership, participants indicate that they want to reach out to ameliorate the cooperation with others.

“We are continuously informed about the work of other international organizations in this area. You need to know what others are doing in order to make sure that efforts go in the same direction.” (NI)

It has become clear that joint efforts between the organizations advocating for media freedom in Turkey are mostly centred on a day-to-day coordination such as exchanging information or in other words, facts and figures. The table of imprisoned journalists published regularly by the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) is a good example. Another common activity shared between organizations is working on reports together, which are about media freedom issues in Turkey. The participants indicate that they either work on reports together or they follow each other's reports up. This is also reflected in other studies which claim that despite the large number of media assistance organizations identified, it is quite clear that they share a great deal of their basic information on the media. The sharing of information results in commonalities of perspectives on media freedom issues and on the data that underlies them (Becker, Vlad & Nusser, 2004).

According to the participants in this study, other collective activities include joint advocacy missions to Turkey, attending trials of Turkish journalists together, joint demonstrations, meeting with representatives of the Turkish parliaments and organizing congresses where joint resolutions and recommendations are adopted. The congress organized by the GÖP Platform (Gazetecilere Özgürlük Platformu) and the International Federation of

Journalists on 24 July 2013, gathering most Turkish and international media rights organizations, is an example of this.

When asked about their relationship with respect to Turkish media assistance organizations that are located in Turkey and lobby for the same causes, the participants have very differing opinions. The majority of the participants agree that there is currently a civil society in Turkey and that they have several Turkish partners, but that the civil society is polarized, clashing and lacking solidarity in solving problems.

“There is a very strong civil society in Turkey but the problem is that they are very divided and heavily polarized, much like the Turkish media landscape itself.” (JB)

One participant brought up the fact that media assistance organization in Turkey work with only one segment of the society and that their efforts in becoming a national power are lacking, which makes working together difficult. Another issue addressed are the differing views of the external and Turkish media rights organizations regarding the media landscape in Turkey, such as the number of imprisoned journalists. This dilemma can also be retraced in existing literature on the subject of media assistance. While local actors are more cost-effective and have valuable expertise, they might be facing political pressure, which hinders their impartiality and requires extensive monitoring (USAID, 1999). Other authors claim that the current AKP government in Turkey has been favoring civil society organizations that support their policy and positions, as was also the case with past governments (Göksel & Günes, 2009).

“When working with particular Turkish organizations, we are asking ourselves if we are really addressing the needs of the journalists in Turkey. Now, we have become extra critical when choosing our partners.” (RB)

The participants aren't entirely negative about the civil society in Turkey though. Many of them mention a positive change and the fact that the organizations in Turkey are tending to unite more and that concerns for press freedom have become mainstreamed over the past few years. It has been argued in literature that the EU Harmonization process has had positive effects on NGOs in Turkey in terms of the legal environment that they operate in. Not only has the EU contributed to the strengthening of civil society in Turkey through legislative changes but also through direct financial support (Göksel & Günes, 2009).

Only two participants are fully pleased with their partnership within Turkey and call the Turkish organizations very active, vocal and well informed. The activities that they are involved in together include inviting each other for events, exchanging ideas and information and supporting each other's activities. Previous research has shown that connecting with the local media community is extremely important for the effectiveness of international organizations and that local partners are a crucial component of any media development project, as it will add necessary insights to the recipient community (Price, 2002).

4.4 Relationship With the Turkish Government

A great deal of the participants confirms that their organization is in communication with the Turkish authorities in the context of their work in Turkey, as they believe that it increases the chances of finding good solutions together. Meeting face to face with Turkish politicians is reported as a strategy that the participants find useful in order to raise problems and enter a dialogue. One participant testifies that sometimes it's better to engage directly with the government instead of using back channels.

"I believe that you should always try to communicate with your biggest enemy.

If you meet a politician several times, and you explain the problems each time, than maybe after the fifth time he will understand that something needs to be changed.” (OV)

Another participant stresses that Turkey is not a dictatorship country, which makes it easier to express topics of concern to for instance representatives of the political parties in the Turkish parliament. Even though these meetings are often described as “part of their mission”, the participants in this study also mention other ways of sharing their concerns with the Turkish government. Four participants state that they regularly send letters to different levels of state institutions, asking either for information, to raise attention, express concerns or welcome some positive developments. The format changes with regards to certain circumstances. The participants also share that they regularly send copies of reports, which deal with the media freedom problems in Turkey, to the Turkish prime minister and Turkish embassies.

Even though communicating with Turkish authorities is valued by a large part of the participants, three of them agree that engaging these authorities is now more difficult than it used to be. They argue that they find it more difficult nowadays to get answers to their questions and that the will for dialogue is less than what it used to be. One person stresses that it’s difficult to enter a dialogue with the Turkish government because of differing premises and the inability of both parties to find a common step. The participants complaining about the deteriorating relationship add a side note though that they are eager to enhance the dialogue again, because most of the changes that they lobby for in Turkey related to media freedom depend on decisions of the political authorities.

“It seems that the Turkish authorities have taken a more critical stance towards the international community. The trend of the current government is to isolate itself a bit more.” (JB)

One participant is entirely satisfied with the relationship with the Turkish

government and claims that the organization couldn't function well without this close relationship. On the other end, only two participants state that they don't any connections at all with the Turkish authorities when it comes to the work of their organization. This is either because they have local partners in Turkey to rely on such as professors or media institutions, or because they are keen on keeping their independence and don't want to be linked to any governmental institution.

4.5 Reflections On Making an Impact

All of the participants in this study agree on the fact that it's very difficult, or even impossible, to measure the impact that their organization is able to make in advancing media freedom in Turkey. A great part of the participants point to the difficulty of measuring human rights developments in particular and the fact that "media freedom" is a vague field, which can't be approached easily. Some also refer to not having the capacities to measure contributions, as they work in small offices with few people. Literature on the subject confirms that historically there has been little evaluation of media assistance efforts. Feasibility assessments, legal and political analysis, focus group research, audience surveys are all ways to help ensure that media assistance is useful, but evaluative efforts have been lacking in the sector. Researchers point to the fact that the media development sector needs to expand and mature more before these assessments become financially realistic. Determining criteria for media assistance is often much easier than evaluating the effects of a particular project, as tracking the results of direct support is a subjective exercise that challenges quantitative measurement techniques (Price, 2002).

This being taken into account, every interviewee is convinced though that there is an impact even if the results aren't always tangible when focussing on Turkey. One participant attributes this invisibility of results to the fact that

media assistance organizations work towards becoming a symbol of solidarity by giving Turkish journalists the strength to continue doing their important work. The participants in this study often refer to settling for small changes linked to specific campaigns and cases.

“The small changes are showing that change is possible. Progress for example also means when you have fewer journalists in jail or if governments promise to think about changing a law.” (OV)

It has become clear that fewer imprisoned journalists and policy changes are an important indicator of success for the media assistance organizations, but the participants also give other examples. One participant mentions the increasing use of a press freedom index, a tool to underline the press freedom problem. Another participant mentions the amount of times that a report on media freedom in Turkey is being read and shared on social media channels. This participant adds a side note though: the people sharing these reports are already people who agree that Turkey has problems, which makes it more difficult to label it as real progress or success. Again, even though the work of these media assistance organizations is imprecise at times, the participants agree that the work is still valuable and that it needs to be done nevertheless. As one participant puts it: the work of media assistance organizations is sometimes a drop in the ocean, but that they have to keep doing it for the sake of their own mission.

“As a small NGO we’re hoping that our specific actions will at least shift the debate. You can’t stand still; you have to keep running in order to not let the authorities off the hook. We’re contributing to that continuous human rights project.” (AB)

This study also reveals that with an increasing amount of media freedom organizations working in the same field, it has become more difficult for each organization to claim certain changes or successes as an outcome of their own

work. Four participants in total claim that they are aware of being part of a coalition, which is adding to a wider pressure. They admit that they take part in a common success, as they are not the only ones who are complaining about media freedom in Turkey.

“You can’t pinpoint an exact moment where the consensus shifted or at what point the straw broke the camels’ back. Especially not when there are so many of us working in the same field.” (AB)

Another important remark that the participants make when talking about measuring the impact of their work in relation to media freedom in Turkey, is the fact that they receive feedback from Turkish journalists themselves and that it can be considered as an indication of success. Five participants testify that qualitative feedback from the Turkish journalists themselves, who need international support, is important to them. One participant mentions a big response from the journalists, which makes the organization feel useful.

4.6 Reflections On Media Assistance Organizations Working On Turkey

According to the participants in this study, an increasing amount of media assistance organizations have been focusing on Turkey over the past few years. The general consensus is that more and more organizations, which realize that the media freedom situation in Turkey is deteriorating, are engaging themselves to concentrate on the country. Literature on the subject confirms that several European media organizations have gained a reputation for experience and excellence in media assistance (Kumar, 2006). One participant in this study expresses concerns though, by stating that very often European NGOs outside of Turkey don’t really understand the problems of the country because they are trying to implement a model that works in other countries, without considering the history and local problems of Turkey. This concern is also reflected in

existing literature: Hawley Johnson describes in her study (2012) a Serbian case where many policies in the region, which were simply exported from Western media models, were ultimately inappropriate and ineffective when copied to Southeastern Europe. She argues that this practice undermines the credibility of the lobbying work that is being done. Other authors in the field conclude that international NGOs are sometimes too divorced from the real economic aspects of the media business, with the consequence that projects are sometimes idealistic rather than practical in nature (Aslamazyan, 2006).

Three participants express other concerns about European media assistance organizations working on Turkey. One person mentions that it's easy for external organizations to raise concerns about the situation in Turkey, but that it's also important to keep in mind that the journalists are normal people trying to make a living and they may not always agree with changes.

“It's important to keep in mind that journalists are normal people, who have a family that they need to support. It's nice to know that I'm fighting for human rights and democracy but I can also understand the other side, the reality. You can't destroy the life of a person by starting your own revolution.” (OV)

Another participant mentions that, being an international NGO, they always ask themselves if the work that they're doing is useful, as international intervention isn't always considered as a priority in our society. This view is also repeated in Johnson's study, who claims that as long as people are in survival mode, individual interest will surpass common good (Johnson, 2012). When asked about why they chose to focus on the media freedom situation in Turkey, the participants had different explanations. One participant explained that she feels that a lot is going on in Turkey and that she wishes that her organization would get even more involved with the country. Another reason given was that Turkey is quite an easy country to work on for European organizations, because of the proximity.

“It’s obvious for European NGOs to work on Turkey because it’s on our doorstep. The fact that it has a European and Islamic identity as well is also interesting in that respect.” (AB)

The biggest issue that European media freedom organizations encounter according to this study, besides measuring impact, are financial resources to implement projects or campaigns in Turkey. One participant states that with more resources, much more could be done for Turkish journalists and that there is a wish to work more on the Turkish problems. Another person reports that they don’t have a program for Turkey this year because it’s difficult to get funding from their local government, especially for Turkey as it is considered as a fairly developed country that doesn’t urgently need help. As mentioned before in the literature review of this study, finding suitable donors is indeed one of the major concerns of media assistance organizations. Due to the fact that funders of media assistance have an immense effect on the quality and capacity of media assistance efforts, the current donor structure presents several challenges to the whole media assistance sector. Firstly, there is generally no long-term planning within media development programs, which is why these programs tend to collapse once donor money is gone. Secondly, media assistance is often overtrumped by other funding priorities (Price, 2002).

“Until now the general perception in my country is that the work we do as an organization is good and that it should be done. But that perception is changing a bit now and that’s mainly due to the financial crisis.” (RB)

Another problem that a participant mentions and that is linked to financial resources is that even when there is funding available, funders still have their own agenda and might not always agree with you on which problems in Turkey demand international attention. The same problem was detected in Egypt according to another study, as it states that international NGOs risk that they are affiliated with political ideologies of donors that they don’t necessarily want to

be associated with (Ibrahim et al, 2003).

5. Discussion

5.1 Restatement of the Research Questions

Four research questions were formulated for this qualitative study. In the following section of this chapter, the main findings and matching literature are reviewed for each research question. The questions are in the order that they are stated in the Introduction part.

R1: Which measures do European media assistance organizations take in order to increase media freedom in Turkey?

The data gained from this study have revealed that European media assistance organizations are using a set of different measures in order to influence the state of media freedom in Turkey. The organizations included in this study essentially all monitor the media freedom situation in Turkey before reacting to any violations. “Reacting” in such cases can take several forms according to the participants, such as releasing press releases, sending open letters to politicians, starting petitions, writing reports and carrying out public campaigns. From this study, it can be concluded that these methods all have the objective to raise awareness and put media freedom in Turkey higher on the public agenda. As opposed to the methods linked to raising public awareness on the subject, the organizations also largely opt for working in the field with Turkish journalists. This can be retrieved in the trainings, crash courses and seminars offered by the organizations for Turkish journalists.

According to literature on the work of media assistance organizations, working directly with journalists, such as providing them with trainings, is much more effective than trying to raise public awareness on the subject. It has become clear that the organizations in this study try to maintain a balance between both practices.

R2: Which elements have an influence on the functioning and efficiency of the media assistance organizations involved?

Two contributing factors that were strongly raised during the interviews with the participants are the cooperation with other organizations and the relationship with the Turkish government. As to why media assistance organizations cooperate together, many references were made to increasing the level of efficiency and relevance of their work. Forming a united front against infringements on media freedom seems to be an important motivation. Another frequently mentioned motivation behind the cooperation is the exchange of information. This study also concludes that there is a high level of controversy surrounding working with Turkish partners. Some refer to the Turkish civil society as clashing and polarized, while others mention an entirely satisfying partnership. The same conflict on opinions exists with regards to the relationship with the Turkish government. While a great deal of the organizations in this study engage with the Turkish authorities because it will increase the chances of obtaining media policy changes, there is a partially agreement on the fact that entering a dialogue has become more difficult nowadays. Only a minority is entirely satisfied with the relationship with the Turkish government.

Literature on the collaboration between media assistance organizations has shown that at a time of economic stress and political demands for efficiency, cooperation and coordination is being adopted as an indicator of accountability, though collaboration is imprecisely defined and rarely assessed (Dean, 2012). This study has tried to give concrete examples of which forms the collaboration between organizations can take, and has in this respect provided an answer to the second research question. Literature on collaboration between media assistance organizations and national governments suggests that governments have in recent years begun placing a higher priority on media freedom and pluralism, but others maintain that it still receives too little attention and

support from policy makers (Price, 2002). In the case of Turkey, Göksel and Günes (2009) claim in their writings that the current AKP government in Turkey has been favoring NGOs that support their policy and positions.

R3: How do media assistance organizations measure the impact of their work in order to know that they have a positive influence on the media freedom situation in Turkey?

This study confirms that one of the greatest struggles for media assistance organizations is measuring and evaluating the impact of their work. Not only do the participants refer to “media freedom” as a vague, abstract and new field, but they also often don’t have the financial and organizational capacities to measure their own contributions to the field. It has become clear that the organizations have to settle for the small, noticeable changes that they witness and the feedback that they receive from journalists working for Turkish media. As many media assistance organizations are working on the same issues in Turkey, it’s also becoming increasingly difficult to claim changes as a result of their proper work.

The findings in this study correspond to the difficulties that are generally described in literature concerning media assistance. Evaluative efforts on the subject have been lacking, as it is a financially unrealistic and subjective exercise (Price, 2002). Other authors also confirm that defining the parameters of success for media assistance is tricky business due to significant variation across different actors’ goals and definitions of success (Susman-Peña, 2012). This view is largely reflected in the findings as well, as the participants provide examples of how they personally measure success, such as feedback from the Turkish journalists and the number of times that a report is downloaded.

R4: How do media assistance organizations reflect on their role as defenders of media freedom in Turkey?

The findings in this study have given an answer to this research question by suggesting that there are several issues concerning the role of media assistance organizations in Turkey, besides the difficulty of measuring real impact. An important remark made by the participants is that European organizations often don't have a deep understanding of the situation in Turkey and that they are trying to implement a model that works in other European countries. Additionally, the participants in this study are aware of the fact that in a financial crisis, international intervention often isn't considered a priority, which results in a decrease of available funds to implement activities in Turkey. This study suggests that financial resources are the main issue for European media assistance organization, as they heavily depend on funds to achieve their predefined goals in Turkey. Linked to their financial struggles, the organizations mention that funders often have their own agenda and political ideologies.

Many authors in the field of media assistance confirm that the organizations struggle most with finding funds and consequently, appropriate funders (Ibrahim et al, 2003; Kumar, 2006; LaMay, 2006). The issue of funding is also aggravated by the fact that international intervention is due to the financial crisis not considered anymore as a priority in our society (Johnson 2012). This study concludes that not only is the financial aspect an issue, but the approach of the organizations towards a specific country should also be taken into account. It has become clear that this contributes greatly to the perceivment of the discussed roles of the organizations.

5.2 Limitations

There are several limitations of this study that merit attention, which will be discussed in this section. Firstly, this study only considered the way in which European media assistance organizations reflect on their roles and impact in

Turkey, instead of evaluating their work. In other words, the study relied entirely on self-report of the participants. This is mainly due to the fact that, as discussed in the literature review and discussion, evaluation of media assistance is very difficult, requiring objective measures of things that are by definition subjective (LaMay, 2004).

Throughout this study, it has also become clear that despite increasing international investment in media assistance, very little academic work has been conducted about the field, especially concerning the Turkish media landscape. There are few books or research articles analysing the subject and possible effect of media aid, which is caused by the fact that large-scale assistance for building independent media has begun in the 1990s and is therefore relatively new (Kumar, 2006). From a logical perspective, the lack of literature on the subject is related to the fact that the impact of media assistance is difficult or impossible to truly assess in quantifiable terms. It has also led to the fact that there was no theoretical framework for this study to depart from, especially not one that focussed entirely on the case of Turkey.

Other limitations are of a practical nature. As media assistance organizations in Europe are working from dispersed locations, the sampling of the participants for this study heavily depended on the reachability of the organizations for the researcher. Many others from outside of Europe are working intensely on the situation in Turkey. The time consuming aspect of the in-depth interviews also contributed to the fact that this study made use of a rather small sample size. This is why care must be taken in generalizing the findings of this study beyond the media assistance organizations in Europe that were covered.

6. Conclusion

This qualitative study set out to understand the roles of European media assistance organizations in advancing media freedom in Turkey. Due to some limitations that were mentioned in the previous chapter, such as the small sample size and the fact that evaluating media assistance is complex, the findings of this study are not generalizable with regards to the entire media assistance industry. Several important conclusions can nevertheless be drawn from this study, notably because it focuses directly on media assistance in Turkey, in contrast to other studies that concentrate on wider regions or specific aspects of media development.

Firstly this study offers some insight into how European media assistance organizations work in order to influence media freedom in Turkey, which turned out to be not so different from what is generally described as the activities that fall under the scope of media assistance. It has become clear which methods are preferred with regards to specific situations, but above all, this study also presents outcomes that are inherent to working on Turkey. This is not so surprising, especially when considering that Turkey has its own specific problems regarding media freedom, which makes it incomparable to other countries. Secondly, this study has tried to discuss elements that have an influence on the functioning and efficiency of the organizations involved, such as the goal-oriented cooperation between organizations working on Turkey and the relationship with the Turkish government. The relationship with the Turkish government cannot be underestimated as it has become clear that good communication can improve the position of the European organizations. Thirdly, as this study relies completely on self-report of the participants, a lot of attention has been given to reflections of the participants on making a lasting impact and on the general position of media assistance organizations in Turkey. The purpose of these two sections was also to address existing challenges regarding media assistance in Turkey. This study has attempted to place these

challenges in the light of other works that describe them, and concludes that many concerns regarding media assistance are recurring in many different contexts.

These three conclusions briefly sum up the relevance and importance of the study. Additionally, it should also be noted that this study could serve as a guideline or starting point for researchers that wish to engage in the field of media assistance in Turkey. There is no doubt about the fact that future research in the field is necessary to optimize efforts concerning media aid in Turkey but also to emphasize the severity of media freedom issues in the country. Future researchers should try to involve not only more media assistance organizations in their study, but also look beyond the borders of Europe. Secondly, it could also be interesting to explore the side of the Turkish media outlets and journalists that receive support from these organizations, with the aim of getting a more complete and detailed view of the situation.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Questionnaire for the semi-structured interview

General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Can you give me a description of what the organization that you work for does?- What are its tasks, goals, visions and values?- What is your job at the organization?- How would you describe the Turkish media landscape?
Approaches regarding the Turkish media landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is the strategy of the organization regarding the Turkish situation?- Is there cooperation with the Turkish authorities that are in charge of media policy?- How is the relationship between the organization and the Turkish authorities?- Do you work with other media assistance organizations?- Are these European or Turkish organizations?- How would you describe the civil society field in Turkey?
Impact and general position of the organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What do you think of the general position of European media assistance organizations regarding the Turkish media landscape?- Can these types of organizations have an impact?- How do you measure success that can be attributed to the organization?- What are some of the biggest challenges that European media assistance organizations encounter?

8.2 Transcribed interviews

Organization: South East Europe Media Organization

Function: Secretary General of SEEMO

Date and time: 5 Dec 2013 – 9PM

Place: Istanbul

Can you give me a short description of what SEEMO is and what your job entails at the organization?

SEEMO is a regional organization of media, of journalists. It is based in South-East Europe; we're covering about 20 countries. Starting from Belorussia in the north, to Turkey, Greece, Cyprus in the south, the Balkan region such as Bulgaria, Albania, and finally central Europe with countries like Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic. Our main activities are based on press freedom, and more concretely: when a journalist has a problem, with the state for example, but very often it's also with business people or with groups who are putting pressure on journalists, we try to solve the journalists' problem. For example if a journalist is arrested, and put to jail, then we're also trying to help. We're also sending from time to time missions to some countries where there are bigger problems. With these missions we're trying to talk directly to politicians and parliamentarians, those who are in charge of making the law. As a media organization we are also active in networking, bringing together editors and directors of media. The difference between SEEMO and other organizations is that we are an organization of top media people, owners of media. Our members are those who are decision makers. It helps our work because these people often have easier influence on governments and states, also to change laws, regulations and so on. That is a short presentation of what SEEMO is. I'm the secretary general of the organisation. We also have a board and in each country our members, coordinators, committees. I'm the boss of SEEMO since it was founded in the year 2000.

So you were present during the foundation of the organization?

SEEMO was an initiative of media people; about 45 journalists from different countries came with this idea. So it's a product of journalists and of the media who at that time wanted an organization that will help the communication and solving problems in the daily work of journalists.

How would you describe the Turkish media landscape?

On one side, if you compare it to other SEEMO countries, there are a lot of similarities and things that are not specifically a Turkish problem. So very often, especially if it's monitored from outside, people forget that problems that occur in Turkey are also present in other countries. The public television for example in Turkey is state controlled for example and it's far from TV as it should be. But in other European countries you'll see that there are politicians who are trying to influence television content as well. So it isn't an innovation of Turkey I would say. Some areas like legal regulations and the fact that there are journalists in jail are things that should not happen in a country. It's something that I would say that makes the life of people in general harder. Critical journalists should be part of every system, the critical voices are very important. It's a way to correct what you're not doing well. There is no politician that doesn't make mistakes, every politician makes them. The journalists are very often the first signal showing that something is wrong and that maybe a decision was bad. But if you're using a system for years, you cannot change it overnight. On the long term I hope that

officials in Turkey will understand the fact that it's necessary to have free media and maybe in two or three years we will not have journalists in jail anymore. This would benefit the relations between Turkey and the EU, which could possibly lead to a membership one day. But also the important role that Turkey plays in Asia for its neighbourhood countries is important. I think Turkey should present itself as a very strong country, economically but also in the field of democracy. It's not possible to have journalists in jail at the same time. Sending them to jail is not the solution of the problem.

So you're saying that Turkey has different kinds of problems if you compare it to typical SEEMO countries?

Having so many journalists in jail I would say is a typical Turkish problem. In Belorussia we also have this problem. I don't feel well about the fact that we have two countries in our region where journalists are sent to jail because of their work. Politicians in Turkey should understand that this should be changed. This is the main problem. The fact that you as a journalist could end in jail because of your work is a problem. There are in Turkey different descriptions of what is a journalist, who is a journalist. Very often, those who are sent to jail are not described as journalists. We should speak about whether we have good quality journalists or bad quality journalists. If somebody is not doing their job professionally, if he's doing some activities that are against the law like terrorist, then the person should be responsible for those activities. But with some proof, like every citizen in the country. To declare that a person is a terrorist and having them involved in long investigations etc. is not good. You're creating just a bad feeling for the system. So I think it's very important to give the feeling to the people that they're responsible for what they're doing. It must not be with a criminal law to punish a journalist if there are good civil laws. The journalist can be responsible and pay an amount of money over civil regulations. There are possibilities to regulate something. But of course you must also understand the big political position of Turkey and the fact that Turkey is close to countries that are very far from democracy of course, which makes it not always easy to manage everything and to copy some standards from other countries like Germany. Some basic rules like the fact that journalists should be free and that they will not be sent to jail because of their reporting, that journalists don't have to be afraid of self censorship, is also very important. If you consider the different media companies in Turkey, we are not speaking of media companies that are just doing media business. We are speaking of companies who are in oil business, textile industry etc. And then there is the question: are the owners of the media really in the media business because they believe in the importance of good journalism or are they in this business because they need the newspapers, radio and television as one voice that will support them in the other businesses? That is also a specific problem for Turkey. If you go outside of Turkey, we have more media companies that are just doing media business, like for example Germany. I think it would be more positive if we have more companies in Turkey who are just media companies concentrating on the media business and not on the influence of business people and politics.

You said that you organize meetings with media owners. Are you also speaking with media owners in Turkey? How is this communication then because as you said, they are not only in the media business?

The thing is that in most cases there is a bigger family and some members are doing one business and the others are doing something else. Very often the people who are dealing with media really just do the media business. For example, if a reader, listener or viewer has the feeling that a certain media company from Izmir

has also a textile production then there's a question about industry and media. There's especially a problem when you go to small towns because this connection between media, business and politicians is very strong. People are forced to use self-censorship because they're afraid of losing their jobs.

You mentioned civil laws in Turkey, what do you think of the civil society in Turkey? Is it possible for SEEMO to work with Turkish NGOs? Is that happening right now?

When we're speaking in general about civil society I think, the question is: Is this civil society in a country strong enough to have influence on changes in the system? I would say that the civil society in Turkey has not that power like civil societies in other countries. For example if you're in some West-European countries and the price of milk would increase with 10 cents, the civil society overnight will come together to boycott milk products. No one will buy milk for some days and the industry will have to react to that. I don't think this will happen in Turkey because there is no solidarity in solving problems. Maybe also because especially older people have been living for years in a system where there was always one decision maker. Everything evolves around the state. Civil society is very important though, especially for the support of diversity. Diversity should come in any form, also in the media. One aspect of diversity is the freedom of reporting about any diversity in a system, starting from religious diversity to sexual diversity. If something is going in one way and if you push just one way of thinking it's not good but again it's not a problem for Turkey. If no one really cares about the freedom of diversity it's negative for the civil society in a country. This is also a field where media can play a very important role, to build the influence of diversity and minority groups in the system. Many things that happen in Turkey are not specifically a Turkish thing, we have it in other forms in other countries.

So is there still not a good collaboration between Turkish NGOs and SEEMO?

No, we have a good cooperation with professional journalists associations. With other associations we're open for cooperation but they should contact us if they want to work together. We're not in Turkey to find organizations to work with. We haven't been contacted by any Turkish NGOs either to do something together. But with journalists associations and professional organizations we have a very good cooperation in Turkey and they are playing an important role as well. Inside these associations there are different views when we speak about journalists in jail. Some groups state that there are 100 journalists in jail, others speak about 20 or 30 in jail. We're trying to speak with both sides and to understand their views. It's not our job to change someone's views, that's also part of freedom of speech and freedom of thinking. It's important to hear both sides and to understand why they believe in something. The population and the people in a country should make the final decision.

Would you say that SEEMO works on long-term solutions rather than small changes?

Yes, and that's maybe the main difference with other organizations. We understand that changes can't happen overnight. Also, I believe that you should always try to communicate with your biggest enemy. That is very important for whoever thinks differently and is not in the same line as you. We try at least to start a communication and as such try to solve the problem. When we speak about politicians, I don't think that they make decisions overnight. A politician is building his or her power with politics and no one is willing to lose power. But if you meet a politician, and if you meet him for several times and if you explain the

problem every time, maybe after the fifth time he will understand that something needs to be changed because he can get profit out of that. I believe in this slowly, long-term solving of the problems. Of course, if the life of the journalist is in danger, then we prefer to react very fast. If there is a threat against the journalist, if someone tries to kill the journalist, then all international organizations are trying to react very fast because at that moment it's very important to give a clear message that it's not acceptable to kill a journalist. It's not acceptable that a journalist is physically attacked. There are of course cases where it's necessary to react immediately but to make legal changes it's better to take time and to try to understand the politician why they make these laws and what the ideas behind them are. Of course most of the time it's to stay in power. Then in this case you could speak with the politician about how they can keep the power and make the laws more acceptable at the same time according to international standards.

Would you say that Turkish politicians are open to your criticism?

It depends on the politician, I cannot say in general if they are open or not open. I've had the experience in my life that in Turkey some politicians are very conservative and not open. And others were very open-minded. It's more individual for persons. You could belong to a conservative party and have conservative views but be open-minded towards communication.

I'm asking you this question because the OSCE for example receives official statements of the Turkish governments saying that they accept the criticism but they give a whole list of why they are not changing the laws. Their main criticism towards Europe is that they should first concentrate on their selves before criticising others.

There is also where I have a problem with communicating with Western European countries that are saying that we are the bad example and that we have to change something. For example one country in the EU, Hungary, made a lot of changes some 3 of 4 years ago that were very far from promoting democracy. Their system became one of the most negative and dangerous systems to press freedom and democracy in Europe. And it's a slow process; many organizations try to influence Hungary. More or less there were some small changes but the main things were not changed. What to say if a Turkish politician points out the problems with democracy within the EU? Yes, it's true. But I think this way of thinking is not the best way to solve a problem. You can always find something bad on the other side. Turkey should try to be the best as they are such a big country. To think that Turkey is since years a very important economic player, taking the fact that Turkish companies have gained so much power internationally with Turkish Airlines for example, it shows that it's a strong country with strong potential. I think that when a country is so strong like Turkey, making some small changes that will also make the journalists happy will not endanger the position of the government. It could also be an additional positive point for Turkey. Turkey could really be a positive example for many countries. This is also connected to the EU potential/membership. Turkey should not wait for the instructions from the EU. Better way would be to do it and to show the EU that they are ready. If you don't want us, we could also live without the EU. It's better to speak of internationally accepted standards. You can't speak about European standards because if you speak about Europe, the question is what is Europe? Is EU Europe? And also, does the EU give standards for every single country? No, because it's an intergovernmental organization, it could not regulate everything. So I prefer international standards, international recommendations and Turkey should try to work towards these international standards.

How can you evaluate the results of SEEMO's actions? Are you publishing reports on what has been accomplished? How do you know that there is progress?

It depends also from country to country, if you have some progress or not. Progress is also if you have for example fewer journalists in jail or if the government makes a promise that they will think about changing the law. Of course the moment you choose to ask for something is also important. If you take the Turkish state control, for example the TRT station, some 20 years ago to speak about something for Kurdish groups would be impossible. Today we have something for Kurds on TRT. The small changes are showing that change is possible. For that reason I'm saying that it takes time and you should not think that things can happen overnight.

What do you think of the general position of European NGOs regarding the Turkish situation?

First of all, there are so many NGOs. Is the NGO familiar with the situation in Turkey or not? Very often NGOs are founded overnight and then close overnight. People don't have enough time to understand the problem of a country. Very often, I would say a problem of European NGOs outside Turkey is that they try to copy a model that works in another country to Turkey without considering elements such as the historical background, local inhabitants, etc. There are so many things that you have to try to understand. If a country is a strong patriarchal country you can't change it overnight. I will be happy if things are different, I will be happy if you go to some small villages in Turkey and girls are less afraid of how to dress and so on. But I understand that you can't change things suddenly. If you try as an NGO just to try to copy something, the question is if the change will really happen. Those NGOs from Europe, from outside Turkey should try to understand the local problems, the history and so on and this will lead to success. Communication with Turkey is in this way so important. People here in the country should be more involved. If you speak about journalism, first of all the decisions must be accepted by the Turkish journalists. If we as an NGO, based in Vienna, are saying what should happen, the journalists in Ankara for example may not accept this. They should decide which way of working is better for them. We have to speak with them. We should see first if they're ready to accept something. Just to bring something on the market and say that something should be like this is wrong. Local support is important. It's also important to keep in mind that journalists are normal people, who have a family and need money to support this family. It's nice to know that I'm fighting for human rights and democracy, that's my main job. But I can also understand the other side, the reality. I cannot go somewhere and preach the standards of human rights and expect that the journalist is waiting for me, because the journalists have to survive at the end of the day. This is why I can understand the concept of self-censorship, of not wanting to lose your job. I have to keep the long-term solutions in mind. You can't destroy the life of a person by starting your own revolution. That's why our aim is to solve things on a long-term, in order to let Turkish people live in a society where the standards are acceptable. Idealism is never the solution; it's better to be realistic.

Organization: Reporters Without Borders

Function: Head of Eastern Europe & Central Asia Desk at RWB

Date and time: 30 Jan 2014 – 2.30 PM

Place: Telephone/Paris

Could you tell me what your job is at Reporters Without Borders?

I'm the head of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk so I oversee the freedom developments in the former Soviet Union countries and Turkey. This entails day to day monitoring of the press freedom situation and reacting to the violations that we notice like different means. In some instances when we deem it most appropriate we go publicly and release press releases etc. or open letters for example. Sometimes we prefer to keep a low profile and we can work directly with the authorities for instance or the people directly involved. We also have an assistance desk which is in charge of the material support to journalists and bloggers and media in need. So this entails for instance covering medical expenses when a journalist has been injured or hit or attacked. It can also be covering judiciary bills in case of trials. It can also be supporting journalists who really don't have another choice to find a safe place in a third country. Or in some instances support them in an asylum process. So as you see there are many different possible activities. We also of course sometimes carry out public campaigns, so communication campaigns. We have representations in some capitals such as Washington, Brussels and Geneva where we use these representative offices to advocate and engage directly with the EU institutions, the US institutions and UN human rights council. So depending on the situation and our assessments of the impact of what we can do and what we can achieve, we choose on of these mode of actions to try and achieve our aim. Our aim is always to try and change the situation with press freedom or the imprisonment of journalists for example. Our aim is not to publish information like media outlets for instance. When we publish information it's always a mean of action to gain some leverage. That's basically it.

How would you describe the Turkish media landscape as you are working directly on it? What do you think that are the main issues in Turkey?

Well, around Turkey there are many issues especially when it comes to press freedom. We have been advocating for years and years to enhance the respect for press freedom in the legislation and judiciary practice. So one of the main problems in our eyes is the fact that the legislation still bears many problematic dispositions coming from darker Iran such as the anti terror law and about 20 articles of the Penal Code which prevent freedom of information and which limits the ability of Turkish journalists to perform their job as they would like. So penal reform and legislative reform is important but the judiciary practice as well must change because even with good laws we have noticed that many prosecutors and judges have such an interpretation of the media work that they tend to confuse journalism with terrorism, activism. So it's also necessary that the judiciary changes its perceptions of the work of the media. And then of course there are very concrete problems resulting from that. It's the number of trials against journalists, the number of journalists in jail which is still one of the biggest in the world which is absolutely a shame for such a democratic country such as Turkey. Other problems include the growing self censorship and the trend to media concentration in the hands of media tycoons who are close to the authorities. It's a growing trend which was perfectly exemplified during the Gezi protests. Another trend which was already there but which was underlined during the protests was the lack of democratic culture in the law enforcement bodies. The police applied absolutely disproportioned force against not only demonstrators but also journalists. Many journalists were hit, attacked or injured while just covering the events. Such behaviours also need to change. To sum up again, we are concerned about the state of press freedom in Turkey. Basically if you're a Turkish journalist, you can basically tell almost whatever you want but you will face consequences from being fired to being put in jail for your writings.

Ok, so you think that Turkey has specific problems regarding to other countries or when you compare them?

It's not just a total reign of censorship, there are some countries where no media independence exists and where nothing independent or critical can be published. This is not the case in Turkey obviously. Independent media outlets do exist, critical statements appear in the media but it's just that they are really harshly repressed. And the trend is negative, it's going towards more and more media concentration and less and less diversity and independent journalism. But still, it exists.

Could you tell me what the strategies are from the organisation regarding the Turkish situation? You already mentioned for example press releases but are there other strategies or things that you do regarding Turkey?

Sure. In Turkey there is a very strong civil society, there are very strong journalist organizations. One of the problems is that they are, or they used to be, divided and this is also a problem in the media landscape which is heavy polarized and politicized obviously. But these organizations have tended to unite more and more and now thanks to the efforts of the GOP platform efforts have been made towards more unification and it has helped mainstreaming the concerns for press freedom in Turkey. We are trying to support the initiatives and the activities of civil society organizations. Then, in Turkey as I mentioned as it is not a dictatorship country, we still are eager to engage to deepen a dialogue with the authorities. We have met with for instance the representative of all the political parties represented in the parliament. We have been able to express our topics of concern. We have sent many various letters to levels of the state institutions, whether the judiciary or the executive etc. Obviously engaging the authorities unfortunately for us is a bit more difficult now than what it used to be. It seems to us that Turkish authorities have taken a more critical stance towards the international community. The trend of the current government has been to isolate itself a bit more. The paranoid speeches of PM Erdogan regarding any criticism in the country depicted as foreign plots. Definitely when trying to obtain meetings with the authorities we have found it more difficult to get answers. It seems that the will for dialogue is less now than what it used to be. This is just a part of a general trend regarding political reform in Turkey obviously. Another part of the strategy I would say is field missions. We have a correspondent in Turkey as we have in all the countries. And we rely heavily on these correspondents also to convey information and to help us understand the situation etc. We conduct regularly field missions. The last one I carried out was in April last year. I conducted a field mission in Eastern Turkey, especially in Diyarbakir. This was in the framework of starting negotiations between the PKK and the government. We wanted to get a better understanding of the situation of the local journalists and obviously the Kurdish issue plays a big role in the more general issue of press freedom in Turkey. We wanted to get a better understanding of the local perceptions of this process. This is also a way of action, which then helps us to make our understanding and enhance our recommendations more specific and relevant.

You mentioned in the beginning of your answer but I assume that you find contact and communication with the authorities very important?

Sure, of course. As Reporters Without Borders, our general strategy is to engage the authorities as soon as we can and as often as we can. In many countries unfortunately this is absolutely impossible because these countries are absolute dictatorships where journalism is not existing at all. The authorities in these

countries don't want to hear about us at all. In such contexts there is no dialogue to seek of course and in such contexts we are more eager to apply letters of communication. I would say such as communication campaigns and trying to lobby the international institutions. In Turkey of course the situation is a little bit different. There are opportunities for dialogue with authorities although again there are narrowing these days. But still, there are opportunities for dialogue. So we are eager to enhance this dialogue because since we aim to reach impact and obviously in Turkey most of the changes that we lobby for, depend on the political authorities. It's up to the authorities to carry out the legislative reforms that we lobby for, it's up to the authorities as well to foster a change of spirit and of perceptions in the judiciary, it's up to the judiciary to release the journalists who are jailed for just performing their jobs.

You mentioned that there is a strong civil society in Turkey so you obviously work a lot with Turkish NGOs. How is this cooperation? How do you work together?

We can conduct joint advocacy missions as it was the case with the GOP platform and the European Federation of Journalists and many others in various occasions. For instance in November 2011 when the trial on the Oda TV journalists started we all went together to Istanbul to monitor the beginning of the trial, to make a press conference there. Then we all went together to Ankara to meet with representatives in the parliament so we try to join efforts as much as we can. This was again done in July last year. We conveyed a congress of all journalist organizations in Turkey where we adopted joint resolutions, recommendations and day to day the coordination concerning for example establishing facts and figures, ensuring that our recommendations are the same and our efforts go in the same direction. So conjunction of efforts is of course very important to us not to lose time, resources and not to be used as well. Because the authorities are now more and more keen on using different organizations one against the others, as it has been the case for the CPJ. Sometimes as a defence mechanism the authorities we monitor that the authorities have been keen on creating artificial differences of positions between the different NGOs in order to gain momentum and to downgrade our general concern about press freedom in Turkey. joint efforts are crucial. On a totally different note, we also took part in an initiative led by the GOP platform to send postcards to all the journalists in jail. We take part in joint demonstrations, for instance just a few weeks ago the demonstration to protest against the law project of cyber censorship, we joined the cause to demonstrate in several cities in Turkey. Our representative was there, it was on the 18th of January. Of course we don't aim to act alone because it would be less efficient and less relevant.

So when we talk about efficiency of NGOs, how do you think that we can measure success that can be attributed to the NGO itself? How do you know that a campaign is successful?

It's of course a very tricky question because it's easy to measure the impact of NGOs such as humanitarian NGOs which act in a very concrete field and where it's quite easy to measure for instance if that many people have been saved, that percentage of the population was gained access to water, etc. For us, when you speak of something as vague and which can't be approached easily such as press freedom, of course it's more difficult to measure impact. Our aims regarding politics, decision making and the freedoms enjoyed by populations are very hard to measure. So what we can measure is our success in specific campaigns and cases. For instance if a law project which was about to be adopted is eventually repelled, then we can assume that maybe our efforts have contributed to this but again it's

almost never the case that we can say only our efforts led to that. It's virtually impossible. What can also be measured is the awareness about the problem, for instance our concern about press freedom in Turkey has been shared more and more over the past two, three years across the world and especially the various institutions discussing with Turkey at an international level such as the EU and the UN institutions. Of course again, this was not our success only obviously because many different organizations fought in the same direction. But I guess this is a common success of a fighting in which we take part. So indeed, the question of measuring the impact is difficult for NGOs like ours but still you can easily realize when everyone is losing time, when everyone is wasting resources without any success. One maybe indicator of our activities and its achievements is the way our press freedom index is quoted. Not only in the society but by political actors as well. For instance last week CHP deputy addressed PM Erdogan about the state of press freedom in Turkey and the RWB index was quoted several times as demonstrating that the situation of press freedom in Turkey is concerning. So this is a success as well. Because in such instance something that we created is used as a leverage or as a tool to underline that the level of press freedom is not satisfying.

So do you think that also the concept of presence itself is very important? The fact that journalists know that they are being supported instead of measurable results?

I would not say that it's enough. It's good of course that journalists know that when there's a problem that they can address us but it's a very little relieve. This is not how we would measure our success. Indeed it's something, that local organizations know that they're not alone, that we can all together coordinate our efforts and that all together we can make an impact but to me it's not really a measure of success. Real success can only be found in real policy changes and in increasing press freedom. Of course it's hard to measure that but all the rest... maybe measuring a contribution towards that global aim. But indeed human rights NGOs maybe work in a different way than humanitarian NGOs in the way that they have to keep fighting, even if the results are not there. In the case of Turkey obviously the press freedom situation is deteriorating year after year. Still, it doesn't mean that we are not doing our job properly. Obviously there are so many other factors, the press freedom situation doesn't only depend on us. It's important that we keep on fighting and supporting civil society organizations in this way. In some instances unfortunately our efforts can also be distorted by different actors, for instance one of our goals is that press freedom is high on the agenda in the negotiations between Turkey and the EU. This is one of our goals because for a long time the negotiations with the EU have played an engine role in reforms in Turkey. So we assume that if the questions would be high on this agenda then it could maybe help the authorities to move in that direction. But unfortunately more and more over the last few years we have seen that because of the lack of will of the EU to pursue negotiations with Turkey the EU would tend to take any pretext to just stop negotiating with Turkey or playing them down. So in that sense unfortunately having press freedom higher on the agenda of the negotiations between the EU and Turkey as it has been the case, has not really helped fostering political reform in Turkey because it has been used by the EU as a pretext. Anyway the EU didn't really as it seems envision to welcome anyway. So in that sense, the EU efforts may have played a contra productive role.

Speaking of Turkey's desire of accessing the EU, do you think there are European standards formed for media policy and media freedom?

Indeed there are some European standards which are set in various conventions, especially the European convention of human rights, which sets quite high standards for press freedom. Especially taken into consideration the case law of the ECHR. This is definitely an engine for change. Another aspect of European standards are the standards set by the EU principles and conventions on human rights etc. There are European standards and obviously one of our aims for Turkey is to progress towards them. On the other hand of course, we regularly point at the fact that the lack of respect for these standards inside the EU hamper the role of the EU to progress towards that standard for the neighbouring countries. When countries such as Hungary adopt absolutely repressive laws for their regulation institutions, when countries such as Greece are cracking down hard on journalists over demonstrations and not ensuring the safety of journalists, then of course it's hampers the very meaning of European standards. That's why we keep invoking them but it's also very important that the EU member countries pay themselves more respect to them. Unfortunately this trend is growing year after year. On the other side, there is still the ECHR and here things are much more simple. Since Turkey is part of the ECHR there is no discussion about joining the EU etc. Here it should be applied immediately, so here to my eyes the ECHR standards nowadays play a more important role, since there is a condition for the application. Turkey is part of the ECHR so it should apply its case law. Unfortunately Turkey is one of the very first countries to be condemned by the ECHR year after year. It has triggered some reforms and this is good but still not enough at all. This is probably one very important engine for change.

Organization: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Function: Advisor to the Representative on Freedom of the Media

Date and time: 5 Nov 2013 – 10AM

Place: Vienna

Can you give me a description of what your job entails at the OSCE? What are some of the things that you do here?

I'm advisor on the Representative of the Media. I advise her on a number of countries including Turkey and I also have the role to monitor and keep an eye on some horizontal issues including public service broadcasting, switch to digital media, how it effects media freedom and free expression, how it effects pluralism of the media. I also deal with certain elements of discrimination, hate speech, etc. Besides Turkey I cover Greece, Cyprus, Malta and some countries in Central Europe. The job consists mostly of making sure that we are aware of all developments related to media freedom in a given country. It means very detailed monitoring of all available information in this issue. Media monitoring, being in touch with NGOs working on media freedom or other human rights, exchanging information with journalists themselves. What is also a very important element of the work is that we work with the governments themselves. So not only civil society but also with the authorities. The goal is to make sure that the countries live up to all the commitments that they have agreed to follow. In our case in the field of freedom of expression and media freedom. This is in a nutshell what I do.

So you also receive information from the Turkish government?

Yes, we are in constant touch. Actually with Turkey this relation is very close. There is so much information available, we couldn't do our job well if we were not in constant touch with the authorities. We couldn't receive all the information we need to have a full picture of a certain case, if we couldn't cooperate with them.

And by the Turkish authorities I mean most of all the permanent delegation of Turkey to the OSCE. They are based in Vienna and there is a long established cooperation with them.

I saw that this permanent delegation issue statements. Do you use them to communicate with each other? How does this actually work?

There are sometimes statements related to other issues on-going in the OSCE which can also partially effect our field. Sometimes they are direct reactions to let's say a report that our office issues or a press release that we issue on a certain case, or sometimes we receive a written reply from the authorities in response to a letter that the Representative has sent to the authorities. Her counterpart is always the foreign minister of a specific country, so when she sends an intervention letter as we call it, most of the time she addresses the foreign minister of the country asking either for information or raising attention, expressing concern, welcoming some developments, it depends on the specific topic. And apart from that she's also as I said in very close cooperation with the current ambassador, the head of the permanent delegation of Turkey to the OSCE.

Which other ways do you use to communicate with the Turkish government?

The mandate of the Representative allows for a wide variety of ways to work and communicate with the authorities. She has the freedom to choose which format she uses in certain circumstances. This can range from the so called silent diplomacy in formal meetings, phone calls, meetings in person in Vienna, meetings during other events internationally. It can also take shape in the form of an intervention letter which we send via the permanent delegation in Vienna to the authorities in Ankara. It can also be a public statement which can be in the form of a press release. She can give press conferences, she can meet with journalists, she can give interviews to media outlets. But there are also other ways of working, in the form of trainings, awareness raising campaigns, it really depends on the specific issue. She has full freedom in deciding which tool she uses for which case.

You've also mentioned that the office works with NGOs. How does this cooperation proceed?

Well, this varies on the specific country. Many countries in the many participating states in the OSCE have so called OSCE field offices. My countries don't have that. So to make sure that we receive all the important information, you have to find your contacts in the country. And you have to make sure that you have enough sources to give you the full picture. In the case of Turkey this is quite easy because there are so many NGOs working in our field. They are very active, very vocal, well informed. There is a wide source of information for all the details that we need to know. They are extremely important and we are in constant touch with them. Not with all of them all the time. With some of them almost on a daily basis, with some of them when it's needed based on a specific case. We meet often in various events. We also sometimes invite them to participate in events organized by our office. There is a very active and personal cooperation with them. This is true not only to Turkish NGOs but also international NGOs who also focus on Turkish issues.

When we say that the Representative and her staff have the job to observe media developments in Turkey, what does this translate to in practice? You mean by observing this contact with NGOs and this information flow or in another way?

Well, first of all we monitor daily everything that is to be found in the media. If there is any sign that a case requires our attention, then we directly contact media experts, lawyers, NGOs, journalists, the authorities, sometimes we ask for information from the permanent delegation to make sure details we have correspond to information that they have. This was especially the case with regards to a table that we have published on imprisoned journalists in Turkey. The feedback that we received from the permanent delegation and also the ministry of justice in Ankara was extremely important in deciding whether we really have correct information because this detail really goes into the details about each journalist currently in prison in Turkey. We can only do this work well if the details of our work are up to date and very precise. Daily monitoring, in case anything is of interest then we really actively have to gather all the missing points. Of course we are continuously informed about the work of other international organizations in this area. So that also means you have to be aware of what's happening in Strasbourg, Brussels, different institutions of the OSCE. You also need to know what other organizations are doing. You need to have a political awareness of what's happening. Media freedom is just one aspect of the whole spectrum. You also need to be aware of the political environment around it. All these elements together give you the full picture. Based on all these details it's the Representative who makes the decision whether she intervenes and if so, in which format.

Deniz: Human rights developments are difficult to measure, especially with the capacity that we have, being a small office. We choose to directly focus on issues and try to follow up but of course it's difficult to say. There are of course endless freedom of expression problems, these are not isolated in Turkey but they exist across the OSCE region. There is no country that doesn't have a possible problem with freedom of expression. For us it's positive step when a journalist is released from prison, that's something that you can measure. It's not a final ideal, but it's at least something that you can measure.

Deniz: NGOs in a specific country are very good sources of information. They help us find fast information, so that we can respond quickly to problematic issues. In terms of research they're very helpful. We also co-organize different events, whether it's trainings, master classes or conferences. We try to help them in terms of their work, whether it's financially or with our resources. So if there's a good project we will try to support that. One of the best examples of working with NGOs in Turkey is our table of imprisoned journalists that we released mid 2011. This is information that we have internally been updating, researching, being in touch directly with journalists, lawyers and so on. Our main source is media expert Erol Onderoglu, who works for Bianet.

How can the actions of the OSCE be evaluated? How do you know that you're doing a good job?

That's a wonderful question. It depends on how visible you want those results to be. We can never tell for sure what the exact outcome is and what success we can contribute to the work of this office. What I see is that a lot depends on individual personalities and the personality of Dunja M. plays a very crucial role of what the results are. This is my personal view. I have been in the office for 8 years and I have been working with here since she came here, 3,5 years ago. My personal opinion is that we can not underestimate the personal working style and the level of knowledge and the experience of the Representative who makes the public statements, who is in touch with the authorities, who has meetings with the

ministers of foreign affairs, justice, with a number of high authorities. The way I measure success could be very optimistic but I really believe that her personal negotiating style and the fact that her statements are always factual and correct they have played a role in the release of some Turkish journalists. We had a chance to visit some of them in prison while they were there and she had a long range of meetings with the authorities where one of her main issues raised was that journalists cannot be in prison for their journalistic work. If you follow international standards then what you write or broadcast cannot lead to prison. One of the issues that she constantly raises with the authorities is that you cannot be put in prison for something that you write or broadcast. Because this is the work of the journalist. They are here to inform the public, they are here to provide us with information, without their work we would not be informed about issues that directly affect our lives. What she constantly raises attention to is that you really need to move ahead and decriminalize journalistic work. If we talk about defamation or certain types of insults, every participating state has already national legislation in place to deal with these offences. We don't mean that journalists are above other groups in the society. What we mean is that it is through their work our right to pluralistic information, free flow of information is ensured. It's not because journalists are more important than doctors or teachers, it's because without their work we would not be able to receive the information that we need. Returning to your question about measuring success, I do believe that you must be extremely factual, up-to-date, politically very sensitive, you must be able to listen to the national specifics of a country and you have to keep pushing for changes. Every government resists changes, they are not easy to implement. If you sign up to protect human rights like Turkey signed up to protect certain rights as members of the OSCE than you must be accountable as a government to really follow these values. You need to constantly remind countries if they fall short regarding these goals. More tangible results are hard to spot. We receive very important feedback from journalists themselves that they are in prison and they need that international attention, that helps them. To not lose hope and trust that they will receive a fair, transparent and speedy trial so their feedback is very important. For me that's also a measure of success. They know that we're trying. And of course in some cases there is a very tangible sign of success for example when a country decides to decriminalize speech offences and move it from the criminal court to civil court domain. That's a major break through, something that we very much welcome. There is success but small and sometimes it's hard to identify that success come because of our work.

Do you think this is in general the case for European organizations trying to monitor the situation in Turkey? What do you think of their general position?

I don't know how they view this. Organizations are different for example the European Commission has very different tools with regards to potential candidate countries. If you would ask them the same questions they might give you extremely different answers. They have different tools and in many ways much more tools than we do. So I can't answer this question. We agree on the main picture with European institutions, sometimes we focus on an issue more than other organizations. Basically we always measure what's happening in a country to the commitments made in the OSCE, they are similar but not identical to responsibilities of governments in other organizations.

Do you think that there is a Europeanization of media policy in Turkey?

There have been improvements but honestly and this is really my personal view, nothing has changed in the real important issues. The anti terror law has not been

reformed, the law on the internet has not been touched, they allow for massive imprisonment of journalists for their work. Internet law allows for wide scale blocking of websites. Although there have been some steps forward in the fourth reform package with regards to propaganda on terrorism, the main pieces of legislation that allow for such a terrible record on media freedom in Turkey they have not been reformed. Without these laws being changed I don't think you can really advance towards a more human rights oriented legislation. I don't like the word Europeanization because it immediately places Europe above others and I also work with European countries, EU members and some have shameful media freedom records. So just because they belong to the EU it doesn't mean that they live up to the commitments of the OSCE. It doesn't mean that they can be regarded as a role model and in our view EU member states should lead by example. There are 57 countries in this organization but countries with longer democratic traditions are really expected to show example to those countries that are now going through these changes and are struggling with certain elements. Europe should definitely watch their own record when it comes to media freedom. There are many participating states where their record has fallen very short of commitments. I don't think this means that Europe should stop paying attention to what is happening in Turkey until they become perfect. I think the two should be parallel to each other but it is true that when you criticize a country you also have to have the ability to criticize yourself and to see where you further need to improve. In some cases this has not been the case in the EU. I don't think other countries should use this as an excuse not to advance their legislation. It's just that there is no perfect country, none of the 57 countries have a perfect media freedom record. Some Scandinavian countries may come closest to this. Self criticism by EU members is important but at the same time you have to keep the focus on what is happening in other countries including Turkey. On paper, the countries agreed to uphold commitments but when you look at what's happening in reality you see that there is no political will behind all these commitments that they make. This is not specific to Turkey, we see this happening in many countries. The political will to really advance, within the area of freedom of expression and media freedom in our case, has been missing.

Organization: European Federation of Journalists

Function: Director at EFJ

Date and time: 17 Jan 2014 – 10AM

Place: Brussels

Could you give me a description of what the organization does? Tasks, goals, visions?

First of all I think that it's important to separate that the EFJ, which is a member of the International Federation of Journalists, is not in the classical sense an NGO. It's a federation of trade unions and associations. We have a little bit different standings since we represent the professional journalists in the given countries. We started working intensively in Turkey since 2010. We had our annual meeting in Istanbul, there we started our Turkey Set Journalists Free Campaign. At the time there were even more journalists in prison. Being in Istanbul and hearing all of these stories, our members were very shocked that there is a European country with many journalists, not only Kurdish journalists, for different reasons in prison for criticizing whomever. We started a campaign and one angle was sort of an adoption scheme that unions would adopt a journalist who is in prison and raise a bit more awareness on national level, go to court hearings, write reports, bring

them back, get pictures and by that really push our campaign. I think by now we have about 16 journalists adopted, some of them have been released but most of them have still pending trials. Since we are working for the EU, we also have had a project from the Swedish LOTCO, it's a trade union development project. We helped the union TJS to recruit more members. The Union has been under much pressure and lost a lot of members for different reasons but they have played an important role together with the freedom platform.

What is your job at the organization?

I'm the director at the EFJ and I'm supervising all of our work on Turkey. We have these LOTCO works which is Union based and we will be starting now a new project which is supported by the European Commission. It's helping the Union but it's also doing the work that we have been doing on press freedom. We will start this probably in March because of the contract that we will get now. Together with Mehmet Koksall who is also coordinating us and helping us with press work we will be having our first meeting, I think begin April to get the activities planned.

Is the EFJ an organization from the Council of Europe?

No, we are independent. We are representing trade unions and associations. It's just on Turkey. The EFJ has an observers status at the Council of Europe. We are invited to meetings but we can only observe. We don't have an opinion but we can help influence member states when it comes to media issues. We are also a member of the Union Trade Confederation and by that we are a social partner. And so we are also consulted when it comes to media issues.

How would you describe the Turkish media landscape?

Well, there are several problems when it comes to the Turkish media landscape. One of them is that there is an incredible concentration. The media is in hands of a few big business people and they are depending on government funds. That makes it very difficult to have independent journalists. I think at the same time there is still some pluralism, because when you go to a kiosk it's really impressive. You have everything, from the far right to the far left. We cannot say that there is no pluralism at all. But to maintain this pluralism is extremely hard. We also have the consequences of many journalists in prison. You risk a lot when you write and when you criticize.

...

I would like to add that it's not only people who are put in jail. It's a bigger problem. The self censorship is so high in Turkey, I have never seen this elsewhere. Financial, economic and social threat from the media bosses and the government authorities. Some courageous journalists write what they want, most of them fear that they will be fired, censored, this is only a very high level in Turkey compared to other countries.

...

An additional point, as I said before the Union is so weak and has been weak due to government pressure, there is no counterbalance because normally our unions in Europe are there to protect their members. It's limited but it's there.

So you're not only focussing on imprisonment of journalists but on the bigger picture?

Exactly. Over the last years we have been focussing a bit more on the imprisonment for sure because it has been so drastic. I think it's fair to say since the subject is really on the role of NGOs, we have worked part of the freedom platform but also with other organizations including RSF, even though we had a problem at some point because we didn't have the same official number of journalists in prisons but I think there has been an approach. The same goes with the Committee to Protect Journalists, they once talked about a journalist and they have completely revised that. I think we all know that we can't do it on our own, we need each other, we need to help each other. And I think part of this EC project is also that we want to reach out to ameliorate the cooperation with others. Both national, European and international.

Would you also include the OSCE?

We are working closely with them and there is a complete mutual respect. I think that work is very well. Dunja has been to many of our meetings and their database is being updated. Their database is the most exhaustive database available on the subject. When you compare their database to other databases, they have done the biggest work before but we need to improve this database and we need to use it. It's also a very important task.

...

On our website we have the list of journalists in prison which we update as well. I think at the very moment it's 60 journalists.

...

We share the same commitments with the OSCE, the difference is that they are a governmental organization and we are nongovernmental.

What would you say that your strategy is to reach the Turkish authorities on this subject?

That's a good point. I think we even need more discussions with them. Today we have a meeting because Erdogan is coming to Brussels on Monday, we should also see if there's any way to talk. We have written quite a few letters to him. We are doing of course campaigning now, we're trying to get signatures to talk to him. Part of our mission I think is to talk to MP's in Turkey. I'm not sure with whom we talked in the past, I'm sure we tried to have a dialogue.

...

We made some collaborations with European journalists making reports about the situation for Turkish journalists and press freedom in Turkey. We were in contact with the office of the deputy prime minister, Bulent Arinc who is responsible for press and information but I would say press and propaganda. But they don't want to comment, because they know that the situation is very bad for them but they prefer to keep silent.

...

It's very difficult to have a dialogue because they keep saying these journalists are terrorists. That's their premise. We have a completely different premise. It's very difficult to find a sort of common step to get somewhere.

...

We're not saying that they're not terrorists per se. We are sending observers to every single trial, we are listening, we have our members there, we are translating, we're following the process, the prosecutors, what the lawyers are saying so we're not completely baseless by saying: No those are our colleagues, they are journalists because we have read the accusation and the accusation is completely based on interviews, articles published, telephone conversations. Everything is shown as propaganda for a terrorist organization and therefore you are a terrorist.

Because this dialogue is so hard, would you say that your job is more to influence public opinion?

There are of course many ways to do this but one is public opinion. We also know that it's incredibly difficult. There is something like a civil society in Turkey, specifically in Istanbul. But it's very separated and clashing, it's very difficult to convince. I was very surprised to convince civil society organizations that journalists work in the public interest. There's a lot of mistrust towards journalists. It's very difficult to get civil society in Turkey on our side. Our former president saw that as a main goal to get, whatever you mean by civil society, to get the broader public on our side. The demonstrations during Gezi last year were a step towards that. I felt there was a change. More people were realizing what's at stake actually.

Would you say that civil society is not evolved enough for a cooperation?

I wouldn't use the word evolved actually to say that. I mean it's very clashing. Of course religion is involved, there are many sensitive issues. I have been to two meetings with civil society so I don't know enough about it. It's not for me to judge that but I think there is a lot of work to do.

...

We want to work with many partners of course but we are not a civil society organization. We are defending our profession, journalism so we can't share the same goals at some point. For example about freedom of expression, of course we want to collaborate with IFEX, and all the other initiatives related to press freedom and freedom of expression but we are limited. Because we have to stay in our role as defender of rights of journalists and we can't go and do politics. This is the limit. The NGOs connected to civil society are much more involved in politics.

...

We have to stay a trade union movement to defend its members and values at a European level. We are the voice of journalists, which is the difference with other NGOs. We represent the profession, the journalists as workers. We defend their freedom of speech and things like that but not their political view. We defend the journalists in the Ergenekon case for example and also journalists in the KCK case, which is completely the opposite. Some people are supporting the PPK leader, the others are supporting the Kemalist regime but we don't care.

How do you measure success? Or how can you attribute positive results to the organization?

That's our daily work which sometimes makes it frustrating. Our members are continuously asking us for added value from our lobbying work. One thing we felt is that the EFJ observers coming to Istanbul during court cases, there has been a lot of interest in terms of media coverage. When they come they are being interviewed by many media and people from the freedom platform told them that we make a difference. Part of this difference is a symbol of solidarity that we are there, that we care for our colleagues who are in prison, for the families it's of incredible value that we are there, that we support them. So this added value, lots of it is really solidarity based but that's a lot. That's something that we maybe can't measure but it gives them strength to continue their fight because they know they're not alone. That's also one element that makes us motivated and keeps us going on.

...

On some actions we have got specific goals for example increasing the membership in some unions, helping them in building capacity and things like that. As you said, in Turkey you can't measure our contributions. We just know that we are helpful when we are there, observing the trials, meeting the journalists, there is a big response from them so we feel that we are useful but as Renate told you it's not possible to measure the impact.

What do you think about the general position of European NGOs, federations, associations etc. regarding the Turkish situation?

There have been more and more NGOs. We only talk about the press freedom part but there are others that we don't talk about and that we don't know. But more and more have been engaged, also foundations like the Carnegie foundation and different groups who realize that the problem is huge in Turkey. Of course Turkey being an applicant country, even if it's not being taken seriously by some, it is and that puts much more pressure on Turkey. I feel that there have been more NGOs working on press freedom over the last few years.

Do you believe in European standards for media policy and media freedom? Is there a Europeanization?

There are accepted standards specifically in the Council of Europe countries which Turkey was a founding member of. Within the EU there are standards but it's much more difficult in a way. We have a charter of fundamental rights, we have standards regarding protection of sources or division of policy but there is still a lot at subsidiary level. Press and media freedom should remain something of national concern and national regulations for different reasons. The Nordics want to keep their very high standards, they're afraid that it might become worse if it's harmonized at European level, Southern countries have much more legalistic attitudes so we have very differing cultures. Even though I think we can all agree on essential statements on press freedom. But there probably is an approach towards some kind of harmonization. We have been pushing in recent years quite a lot to get media freedom very much as a cornerstone of press freedom in European policy. There has been a different approach to that but it's still very difficult. Hungary for example shows how difficult it is to get the EU to say: no, that's too far.

So maybe it's better to speak of national or international standards?

Yes, I mean the Council of Europe standards are there. There is the case law specifically when it comes to protection of sources and when it comes to the important balance between the freedom of expression and privacy. I think it's important to state that.

...

Maybe it's also important to take into account the court cases from the European court of human rights. There are several cases related to journalists and media organizations. This is creating a European way of dealing with media issues.

...

We demand much more from the EU than from any other continent. But I don't think we should say that the standard is the European one. We're not defending a European standard. We are defending fundamental rights which are universal. But we do refer to laws from the Council for example. The EFJ specifically works towards what there is in Europe.

Organization: European Journalism Centre

Function: Project manager at EJC

Date and time: 11 March 2014 – 11AM

Place: Brussels

So, this is the European Journalism Centre. We are an independent foundation, based in Maastricht and in Brussels. It was founded in '92. Our main task is to organize seminars for journalists. Not only journalists from Europe, but also from other countries. We do this seminar for different institutions, like the European Commission, the Parliament but also some independent associations. And we also work with ministries. For example the ministry of foreign affairs in Luxembourg. We also do researches about media. We have for example now an activity with the Bill Gates Foundation about development so we give funds journalists who want to cover development and write a big report in two or three months. We give them a special fund for that. We are not a school, so we don't have journalistic courses but we want to train professional journalists. So they come here and we give them a training on EU issues like economics, finances, environment, different topics.

And also for example media ethics?

Yes, we also have sometimes seminars on press freedom. We include sessions about ethics.

Also for example how journalists have to act in dangerous situations?

We don't really do that because another association, just one floor down, who's doing that, the International Press Federation. They are more focussing on journalistic work, really on the field and on location.

You are a project manager?

I'm now a project manager, yes. My job is to work on the seminars. On each seminar we have on project manager and one project coordinator. The project manager is dealing with the program. So we invite the speakers, we try to find topics that will interest the journalists, we also try to make the seminars more news worthy or so for them to have something to write about. For some journalists it's

very important, they don't just come here to learn, they want to write something. The manager is dealing with also the contractors. If we do a seminar for example for the European Commission, the manager is directly in contact with the Commission. He's also the one who tries to find the best angle for the seminar. The coordinator is more dealing with the logistics and the contact with the journalists. We have to find the journalists, we have to organize their trip here, we have to book a hotel, flying tickets, everything.

Mr Karstens told me that you organized some press trips to Turkey for example, but what does it mean?

This is for the ministry of foreign affairs of Luxembourg. We have a special series of projects with them and we organize press visits. We call them press visits because it's really coming journalists to a country. In this country we visit some projects, we meet some people. It's really to understand what's going on in the country. A seminar is more like when we do it here and we invite journalists from the EU to come here and to talk about one topic. We do these kinds of press visits with the minister of foreign affairs in Luxembourg and we invite journalists from the candidate and potential candidate countries. So Turkey, Albania, Serbia, all the Balkan countries and Iceland. We also do it with Tunisia since the Arab Spring. We do it for Turkey so the event is divided in two parts. The first part is taking place in Ankara. We invite between 10 and 15 journalists from Turkey, national or regional, but always young journalists. Professional journalists, they shouldn't be students. They need to work for a media, and they need to speak English which is sometimes a bit difficult and be interested in EU topics of course. We gather them in Ankara, there they have a two day session about... They meet the delegation in Ankara and they meet the Luxembourg ambassador, and the ministry of EU affairs in Turkey. They discuss how the EU institutions work, they speak about the accession procedure of Turkey, what Turkey still has to do. Then on Saturday they go to Luxembourg and there they visit the EU institutions based there. We also have one day which is more like a cultural day, we go to Schengen, we have lunch together so to have a more informal meeting. We also meet the Turkish ambassador there in Luxembourg, local press and we also close the seminar with a debate between Luxembourgish and Turkish journalists. I always have to put one topic on the program but then every time we discuss the press freedom situation in Turkey. Two weeks ago, we went with a group of regional journalists, the discussion was always press freedom in Turkey. The Luxembourgish journalists were very interested to know what is going on in Turkey. It's difficult for us here to know what the situation is.

So press freedom is a small aspect of the whole press trip?

Yes, we don't directly focus on press freedom but it's also very important for us to mention it. I wouldn't like to invite Turkish journalists and not let them discuss about the situation in their country. I remember last year, we had a seminar with the European Commission. It was with the same countries, so candidate countries such as Turkey. It was a seminar about freedom of expression and media. When you invite Turkish journalists, this topic always comes up.

Your activities are more focused on journalists who are interested in the EU?

Yes, it's always related to the EU. In the program we have different sessions. Usually one or two sessions are about press freedom.

Do you work with Turkish authorities?

No. It's not only for Turkey but when we organize a seminar which is not in the EU or that we don't know very well, it's very difficult for us to know all the media landscapes in every country, so we rely on local partners in each country. Usually they are journalists, media institutions, national, regional institutions. NGOs also, but always related to journalism. We never work directly with governmental bodies. In Ankara we work with a professor in journalism, he's a professor at a university. And he's helping us to select journalists for the program in Ankara.

Is there a reason why you don't work with government bodies?

It's in general like this because we work as an independent organization. That's the main reason why we don't want to be linked to any governmental institution.

How do you work with NGOs in Turkey?

We only work with this professor in Turkey, in Ankara. We are in direct contact so we exchange ideas, he suggests me some journalists. For me it's difficult to know, even more so with the current situation, who the person is that is responsible for EU affairs. He's the one contacting them, suggesting me topic of sessions because this is the news in Turkey, we should speak about that. It's really an exchange.

The media landscape in Turkey is getting worse and worse, do you think that there will be more projects in the future?

Yes, of course. This is difficult to answer. For me personally, I would love to do more projects with Turkey. But of course we need money for that, we need people with whom we can work on this and who also have the money. It's crisis everywhere unfortunately. Without money I can't do anything. But I would love to because we really feel that there is a lot to do in Turkey. People are very interested in knowing more about what's going on in the other countries. It's only about EU topics, it's really an exchange I would say with EU countries.

So funding is the biggest problem?

Yes. I don't know if the other NGOs you met are in the same situation. If we had the money I'm sure we could do much more for Turkish journalists. And maybe more about press freedom, you know. With this project in Luxembourg, the purpose is not to speak about press freedom in Turkey. For the ministry, it's to show the journalists that Luxembourg is also an EU capital. But as I said, it always comes up. That's why for us it's very important to have this panel discussion at the end of the visit. Also to let them talk about their countries. It's not only about Turkey but also the Balkan countries, because we gather Serbs, Albanian, Kosovar journalists together in Luxembourg. We discovered that it's very important for them to talk when they're not in their countries. When they for example meet Luxembourgish journalists, they really want to say what's going on. We had this discussion like two weeks ago and one of the Luxembourgish journalists was asking: Do you feel pressure from the government? And most of them said yes. One of them talked about the demonstrations in Gezi Park.

Do you get funds for EU institutions?

Yes, but also from independent. We have a big contract with all the EU institutions. We also work with the ministry of foreign affairs in Luxembourg. And also independent organizations such as the Bill Gates Foundation.

Do you think that the participation of these Turkish journalists will increase the chances of Turkey to access the EU?

I cannot say but usually the feedback that we get from journalists is that it helped them to better understand the EU. Because it's difficult to understand, even for us. I can imagine that people who are not in the EU, it's even worse.

So there are short-term results?

Well, it's not short-term. It's more about the work of a journalist. So if they can understand better what the EU is doing, how it works, then they can inform better the citizens. The journalists are between the institutions and the citizens. So if they know better, the citizens will know better too.

Is this the only type of activity that the Turkish journalists are involved in? Or have you done other projects?

No, usually it's press visits and seminars. Sometimes we publish books, of course they can have access to the books. To focus on the press in Turkey, that's the kind of activities that we do.

Mr Karstens also mentioned that the EJC is applying to provide journalism training for Turkey? Do you know more about this?

I don't know exactly the details of this. I think it's with the EU ministry in Turkey and the Open Society Organization. But I don't know more. It will be more like a practical training for Turkish journalists. This would be the first time that we do this for Turkish journalists.

Organization: Association of European Journalists

Function: National contact AEJ for Brussels

Date and time: 11 Feb 2014 – 11AM

Place: Brussels

Apparently our Turkish section is very active. I will give you the contact details of the man who's in charge there. And I will also ask his colleagues for his number. The last couple of years there has been a lot of demand for support for our Turkish colleagues. We had a congress, I think 3 years ago, in a Turkish coastal city near the Black Sea.

...

We are very actively working on Media Freedom Day on the 3rd of May. We have an international coordinator for that, William Horsley. He has been working on this for some years now.

...

As an organisation we exist over 50 years now. To be honest, it's the oldest European platform for journalists. It's not comparable to the European Federation of Journalists because we're not a trade union. We're just a network. On a European level we have around 1400 indicated members, in reality there are more. The AEJ is basically a large network which journalists can appeal to. We only work with volunteers. There are strong and weaker sections, sometimes a couple of them disappear for a while and then they pop up again. This was also the case with the Belgian section. The Spanish and Turkish sections are very active. We were established in 1962 in San Remo. We are officially recognized by the observer of

the Council of Europe, which was more concerned with media than the young European institutions are now.

With which purpose was the AEJ founded?

It was something new involved with European institutions. The aim was to obtain better European coverage. For a long time, Europe wasn't really present in the media. It was something far away, in Brussels. Even for Belgian journalists. The crisis has brought more attention to Europe. Media coverage used to stem for European institutions themselves, today we can see a broader picture. We think that even journalists for local media should report about Europe. We seek a lot of cooperation. For example the fact that journalists can work together on a piece with local colleagues. As long as there's an exchange between them. There should be a lot less agoraphobia regarding European institutions. This explains the symbolic transfer. We call for more cooperation and organize activities in that direction. We're not a typical think tank but we do think about quality journalism and what it entails.

...

To return to the subject of media freedom: AEJ started with the goal to improve European coverage, but did media freedom become a part of it later on?

I think that media freedom was already a goal for us from the beginning, as quality journalism and freedom should be mentioned together. Even in Belgium there isn't as much freedom as we like to think. For example, I have my doubts with some of the recent legal statements here. Europe is not only a free market, it's also a rule of Law.

...

We take part in a research program called Mediadem. We're also in constant touch with people in Dortmund, working on media freedom.

...

Does the AEJ also cooperate with other NGOs?

Yes, we have very good relationships with other NGOs. However, the ever-recurring problem is resources, not only the financial resources. As is the problem with every NGO I suppose.

...

The most important moment every year for the AEJ is our congress. Every year it's about a certain subject, prepared by journalists. These congresses have their advantages but there's also a downside to it. The journalists themselves are the speakers and also the ones that prepare everything. There are no academic sources present. I think this is because the journalists are not enough in touch with universities etc. There should be an exchange from both sides. We are big individualists and this is also the problem of the profession. This is also what the trade unions are struggling with. So indeed, the congress is very important for the AEJ. I think they are good but there should be different angles. The national

sections all have their own activities as well but there are a lot of nuances and differences.

...

Do you believe in European standards for journalism? Or in other words: Are the actions of the AEJ based on European standards?

Well, the European standards for journalism can be found in several declarations. This is a starting point for us of course which provide sufficient grounds. In fact, everything that we need is already there. Certain charters were signed. We follow certain rules which are supposed to be sufficiently transparent but as always the present bureaucracy doesn't allow this. Sometimes you really have to go look for it. We need more discussion revolving these standards and we need more reminders. We need to be able to refer to something when there's a situation going on. The standards exist but when we look at the application in daily life, there's a large gap. Look at Hungary for example.

Is the AEJ working closely with national government bodies or not?

This again depends from section to section. In Belgium we're not working with the government at all, because we're very independent and we would like to keep it that way. I don't know if we can maintain this because it's difficult to avoid. Our resources are limited so we're under a lot of pressure currently.

Are there other options for resources? Does the AEJ for example get subsidies from European institutions?

Not really subsidies but we receive a budget for certain activities, projects or cooperation with other organizations. Or certain manifestations and congresses. In that sense we're independent.

How could we measure the success of the AEJ? How do you know that progress is being made when it comes to quality journalism?

I can only observe and notice that we had become "the great unknown" among journalists. Even though we are the oldest organizations. So it really depends on the commitment of our members and I can see now that it being picked up again after some time. With a young crew we were able to recruit many new members and supporters and I hope that this number will keep growing. Basically, there's an interest so there's also a terrain and potential to make it work. But again, success for the AEJ depends on the national sections and the extent to which they are active. Our structure is weak I guess due to the fact that we're entirely dependent on our volunteers. I won't deny that fact. There should be more efforts but it's a vicious circle at the moment. If you want to become stronger, you need resources of course.

Organization: English PEN

Function: Campaigns manager English PEN

Date and time: 20 March 2014 – 2.30PM

Place: Telephone/London

The reasons that we sort of started working on Turkey. First is that it's quite an easy country to work on. It's obvious for European NGOs to work on it because it's on our doorstep. Until recently there was this strong candidacy for being a part of the EU. I know that's gone of the boil recently. But nevertheless that was always there. The fact that it has a European identity and Islamic identity as well, modern

concerns etc, it's also interesting in that respect. So for that reason we and also our colleagues at PEN international have done a lot of focus on Turkey. In fact, someone who has just left and was with our organization for a decade, she had a particular interest in Turkey and also ran the Writers In Prison Committee. She went to see a lot trials, was sort of active in tracking what was going on. And again because Turkey is relatively open and it's easy to sort of monitor trials and things like that which isn't in more draconian countries. So there was that sort of history. There was also a mission in Turkey in 1980's by Harold Pinter from English Centre and Arthur Miller from the American Centre. Two really high calibre international playwrights, who both ended up winning the Noble Prize for Literature. They went on a mission in Turkey in 1985 and raised awareness, that mission is emblematic of the kind of work that PEN does. In fact we've got a very good photo. Their guide on the trip was Orhan Pamuk, who also ended up being a winner. A much more clear reason for choosing to focus on Turkey was that Turkey was the market focus on the London Book Fair. So it was the real reason for us to focus on Turkey. We've always known that there are problematic laws in Turkey like Article 301 in particular which Orhan Pamuk was prosecuted under, Elif Safak being attacked under. We knew that there were these structural legal laws going after two of the most prominent Turkish authors. This was also a boost for doing something. Then we had to decide on what would we do and what would it be used for, for an English NGO to do in Turkey.

What are the main issues that English PEN focuses on in Turkey?

From our point of view the problem of Article 301 and this idea of denigrating Turkishness, which I think is what the law says, is a particular focal point for us. There are also other laws. That raises all of PEN's flags because we're a literary organization. Because the law exists, it can be abused. It can be used by people with an agenda, anyone with patriotic views can go after dissident writers, pick on them to make a show of being patriotic. There's that issue. There's also the use of other terrorism laws to shut down discussion of minority groups, in particular Kurdistan and this problem that anyone, not just those on the fringe of politics, academics and journalists who are writing about Kurdish issues are being prosecuted. PEN is a fan of international culture, what we do is promote literature from overseas. The worry is that these laws are causing a stagnation of Turkish culture. That's our motivation. As we were doing the campaign there was this example of suppression of freedom of expression with the Gezi Park protests. So those are the things that we've been focusing on.

Is media freedom also part of that? Are you also focusing on journalism?

Of course. We have our origins as a literary organization but our membership includes journalists and bloggers. We've also campaigned on behalf of people who tweeted. Anyone who writes. So yes media freedom is also important for us.

Could you tell me what the current Turkey campaign entails?

It's just one of many strands to our work. It's not like we've been focusing exclusively on Turkey. We always develop casework on individual writers. We also have a strand on UK campaigns, trying to get the free speech laws here in good shape. It's just one of several focuses. We're always asking ourselves: is it useful for an international NGO to do? It's very easy for someone who's a nationalist to label international intervention as not being a priority. Which I think is wrong. The people who are suffering and who are being prosecuted are Turks themselves. Are these people getting in trouble are Turks. I think their demands for freedom of expression are as Turkish as they are British. Campaigning for human

rights, freedom of expression is as Turkish as it is British. Our purpose has been to speak to Turkish writers and ask them what they need. That's the first goal of the campaign: to support Turkish writers. We met a lot of them when they came to the London Book Fair, we gave them a voice, we gave them a platform, we've published online essays and an e-book with a collection of Turkish writers writing about the situation, the current literary situation. The first goal is to simply give Turkish dissident writers an international voice. Which is modest but it's something we can achieve here in London. Whereas something more ambitious such as the appeal to Article 301, that has to be an international effort. We contributed to that. We campaigned to international for a, to the EU, Council of Europe. When we do that we're very aware we are part of a coalition, adding to a wider pressure. So a lot of our campaigning is towards our own politicians. There's something called the All-Party *Parliamentary Group for Turkey*, which is a group of MPs and lords. They focus on foreign policy on Turkey. We're just keeping them aware of the free speech issues. In the hope that when there's a high level diplomacy with Turkish officials, that those issues are brought up. I think Turkey is persuadable. We've actually met a couple of Turkish MP's who welcome what we do, who encourage it. Recently there's been this advocacy document, focusing on the free speech issue and really adding something new. What's new about this report are the examples and specific cases of injustice. As a small NGO we're hoping that our specific actions will at least shift the debate. You can't stand still, you have to keep running not to let the authorities off the hook. We're contributing to that continuous human rights project.

Obviously you're also working with other NGOs?

Yes. The main one on our Turkey project were our colleagues at PEN International. We're based in London so Amnesty is also here, a lot of human rights groups are here. We follow up their reports and latest news, showing information when we have it. There is a PEN Turkey Centre as well. That's another thing we're doing: campaigning for them and raising awareness. They were actually harassed by the ministry of information and brought to the police station for bringing Turkey in disrepute. The writers that we know and we met are now being harassed as well. Part of our job is to show solidarity and support them. We've also had informal collaborations with other NGOs, working on reports. It's something we also do in other campaigns on other countries. We have worked with Index on Censorship, Article 19.

What about civil society in Turkey, other than PEN Turkey? Were you able to work with other Turkish NGOs?

I think we have. I didn't write the report. Alev Yaman was the researcher for this. I don't know how much she spoke to other civil society NGOs in Turkey. I may have to get back to you on that to let you know what she says. Obviously working with PEN Turkey I think is the main one.

You mentioned something about meeting Turkish MP's. Is PEN communicating directly with Turkish government bodies? Are they open to your criticism and recommendations?

Our director went on a mission with the president of PEN International to meet president Gul. This was a couple of years ago now. To the delegation of free speech people he was obviously declaring how important free speech was in Turkey and how he was going to personally insure that free speech was protected. We certainly have that. I should also mention the Hrant Dink issue which is on our minds as well and a journalist could be murdered in that way shouldn't happen in a

democratic country. A couple of our members here knew Hrant Dink personally and made films with him. We're a membership organization and our members have asked us to act on certain cases so we have been campaigning on his case and making sure that everyone responsible for his murder was held to account. We've sent copies our report to PM Erdogan and the ministry of culture and things like that but we've not have kind of a high level meeting with them. We also sent a copy to the Turkish embassy as well and maybe we'll meet with them too to express our concerns. There comes a point if these human rights abuses have happened and at the time the government didn't show any contrition, you have to go to the international bodies and pressure them into taking action rather than just asking nicely and petitioning directly. Sometimes you have to go public and then engage with the government rather than using back channels.

Can you see direct results from the Turkey campaign? Is it more about raising awareness?

This is one of my bug beds actually. Raising awareness is not the same as establishing a consensus. It's not the same as changing minds. It's great that we get lots of people retweeting our report but those are already people who think Turkey has problems and Turkey needs reform. It's nice to see that but the question is whether it will translate into actions by politicians, will it translate into votes against those politicians that are doing this which is very difficult to measure. It's especially difficult to measure when there are other NGOs working in this field. We're not the only one writing reports and complaining about free expression in Turkey. Unless there's an investigative exposé you can't pinpoint an exact moment where the consensus shifted and the reformers prevail. Even in the lobbying campaigns we do here, we have a very successful libel reform campaign changing the defamation laws. We were running the campaign and meeting with ministers regularly but it's never quite clear at what point what was the straw that broke the camels back, what was the point where a different decision was made. When we evaluate what we do, you know the amount of times a report has been downloaded for example, the amount of discussions that gets on social media channels, the qualitative feedback that we get from it from people in Turkey about useful it is, is also important.

So to some degree you can measure results?

Yes, you can see how many people have read an article. But again you don't know if that's someone who already agrees with you. There's a secular phase to all of this. You can trace what people think of you but it's very difficult to say this was the moment when it changed and we're taking credit for it. We're also doing a lot of ground work. A good example of this is just to go across the border to Azerbaijan. They had the Eurovision song contest last year and there was a big human rights outrage and everyone used the opportunity to campaign on Azerbaijan. And it's frustrating if you have wait for a big event like that to come along. In the meantime, all the work that we have been doing made us ready for that moment. We done our campaigns, we had our contacts, we had our reports ready, we had been on a mission, we knew the country, we knew what the problems were, we knew who the prisoners were. So as soon as it was announced, we had done all of the ground work. That's what we are doing with Turkey as well. We've got our reports, these really good articles with good analysis by Turkish people on what's going on and why and of course we've published it now and we're promoting it to the media and everything but there will come a point where Turkey is in the news and on that point we can go to the journalists with our report, with what we've learned. Suddenly everyone becomes receptive and the work that

we have done gains attraction. It can be quite imprecise at times but we trust that our work is valuable now and later. I think a lot of NGOs have to work like that.

Is it after the Gezi protest that PEN decided to focus more on Turkey?

No, this is the thing, we had already been working on Turkey. We started right after the London book fair.

Organization: Free Press Unlimited

Function: Programme coordinator

Date and time: 31 March 2014 – 11AM

Place: Amsterdam

What is your position at this organization?

I'm program coordinator, in charge of Turkey and South Caucasus program. So Azerbaijan, Armenia and partly Georgia.

Could you tell me more about the organization itself? What it does, aims, goals, values?

Our organization supports independent media and independent journalism in general. We do very much focus on capacity building of media outlets, which are committed to fair and balanced and accurate news making. We do organize trainings for these media outlets and also individual journalists to improve their journalistic skills and to improve their media management skills. We are a network of organizations so we don't really do advocacy like Article 19 does or Amnesty organization. We're not an advocacy organization. We really work in the field with journalists, with media outlets to balanced, fair, accurate reporting. We very much believe also in independence of the media outlets. In order to help them achieve this independence we provide them with technical trainings to improve their financial management skills for instance or if they are donor dependent, we help them to diversify their donors, their funding. We think it's extremely important if they can become self sustainable, financially, and manage their own business without actually being dependent on the donors. Sometimes this is difficult and especially in countries where media advertising markets are very small and limited. This is a difficult goal to achieve. We also try to follow the trends in journalism. This is one of our main tasks. We do provide expertise in that regard such as multimedia journalism, online reporting. We see that in the countries that I work, especially Turkey, these fields are a little bit underdeveloped. But there are also no ethical codes for these new trends in journalism such as online reporting or multimedia journalism. On the one side we try to improve the skills of the journalist but on the other side try to help them to define what journalism is and try to support them to develop those codes which will improve the journalism in general.

Which problems are you focusing on in Turkey in the media field?

Turkey is a very difficult country and the situation is very complex. In Turkey we very much focus on the media ownership structure and the relations between media and power groups. We have been trying to focus on this. I have to say that at this moment, we don't really have a program for Turkey because it's one of those countries that you hardly get funding for to implement activities. But we have done quite good work I believe in Turkey for the last 4, 5 years. What we have focused on until now as I said is the how to map how media functions in Turkey. We've done some analysis and research to see what the media ownership structure is

about and the quality of journalism, the nationalistic rhetoric in the media and the solidarity among the journalists. These were the main topics which were interesting for us. At this moment we don't do much in Turkey. One of the reasons is that it's very difficult to address the problems in Turkey with regards to the media. The situation is more complex than other advocacy groups are explaining to the outside world. We try to look from the perspective of journalists which means the responsibilities of journalists and their commitment to good journalism are key issues for us. There are always power groups seeking to put pressure on journalists and also other groups as well. But what is important is: What do journalists do about it? Are they doing their job well? Or do they have these vague and secretive and maybe unethical relations with those power groups? So we believe this is missing in general in the NGO sector and in the sector of media NGOs, which are in this case focusing on Turkey and its wider region. We don't think Turkey is only one country to be focused on. We very much like to support regional activities. What we think is that there is little mechanism for journalists in Turkey to think about their responsibilities and to think about codes of journalism and how to apply those codes in their practice. We know it's a fact that the government tries to put pressure on one side and the other power groups like the army has been doing that for such a long time in Turkey. Or maybe there are other conglomerates and business owners who are trying to put pressure on media.

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We think what is lacking, the role of journalists themselves, the way they apply self censorship and their relations with the media owners. Not only the fact that these bureaucratic powers can apply pressure on them. We know that journalists work under difficult conditions but we think that they don't really question enough their role as a journalist and their responsibilities to journalism and readers. We think that journalists sometimes are having unethical relations with their owners and editors. That's why we try to include editors in our trainings as much as possible because editors have a big responsibility in making good quality journalism content. Editors should protect their journalists against owners and their agenda. But unfortunately in most of the cases that we have witnessed in Turkey is that editors are like the closest friends of the media owners and they don't necessarily protect the rights of their staff. That's one thing, the responsibility of editors but also these very individual journalists have a role. I think they should think twice why they choose the job. Not everyone maybe can be a journalist. They should just simply not be manipulated. We know the situation of the journalists, we know that they are really underpaid. They don't even have proper contracts. They can't really be member of trade unions. But it has to start from somewhere. Because journalism, we think, is an idealistic profession. We also think that they should come together, there should be a solidarity among the journalists. But that's not our work.

So the difference between you and other NGOs is maybe that you try to work from the bottom up? Instead of trying to influence Turkish politicians and media policy?

Yes, our mission is different. This organization is established by a group of journalists. We think of it as a transfer of expertise and knowledge and solidarity from one to the other. Other NGOs should keep doing that kind of work but we really work in the field with journalists. We try to provide examples of other kinds of journalism from Europe. But the fact that we work in more than 100 countries makes us able to provide them with examples of other countries to Turkey. So

journalists or certain media outlets come up with certain ideas and they ask for our support. After a careful examination we try to establish partnerships with those organizations and individuals. Sometimes they don't come at all so we try to identify our sells, what good partners could be in that regard. Maybe I should add why we don't have a real program on Turkey this year. This is mainly because of lack of funding. Funding is also a real issue in our work.

Is funding specifically more difficult for Turkish projects?

No, in general it's not easy. We're depending on the funding of the ministry of foreign affairs in the Netherlands. But it doesn't mean that we're a body working for the ministry of foreign affairs. There are calls, you apply for these calls and you build alliances to get funding. This is tax money from the people. Until now the general perception in the Netherlands is that this work is good and that it should be done. Be it in the field of media or other fields. But that perception is changing a bit now and that's mainly due to the financial crisis I would say. This also has impact on the decision of the government in the Netherlands. They have a certain structure to support the NGOs in the Netherlands and that structure will not be there anymore after 2015 so many organizations are looking for other ways to survive. This is not our only source of income. We also have funding from the EU. We have also many individual donators. We also get support from the media outlets in the Netherlands, regional as well as national. This is a little bit of a concern for us. When it comes to Turkey it's more difficult and the reason is that because of the complexity of the situation. When it comes to our core funding from the ministry of foreign affairs, Turkey is not in because they consider Turkey as a fairly developed country. Turkey is not seen as a country to be helped. We try to work with other media organizations who have a program in Turkey and I get support from other actors for this. It's difficult because I believe, even within the EU, funders have their own agenda. Someone can think that media freedom is a priority and someone thinks something else. Or they think certain issues should be addressed but not the issues that I have prioritized. We are not following the agenda of others, but we're trying to set up our own agenda in cooperation with the Turkish organizations and journalists.

I was going to ask you whether you work with other Turkish NGOs but you just mentioned that you have Turkish partners.

Yes, many Turkish partners. We don't have a program currently but it doesn't mean that we don't have here and there projects in Turkey. We do work with other organizations in Europe and the US sometimes.

What do you think about civil society in Turkey?

One of the difficulties of working in Turkey is the polarization in Turkey I would say. This is also the polarization between media outlets, and between the people in the society. Maybe people are so polarized because of the media, it makes us think about the role of the media, what is media doing in Turkey, what kind of content they're producing, what is their language, the discourse. We think there is a lot to think about. There is hardly independent media in Turkey. If you don't count these small alternatives, there is none actually. There is either pro government or anti government. We perfectly understand the situation because media has been such a big role in shaping up the politics in Turkey. It has always been like that. It's a very big tool in the hands of governments now because if you don't have your own media, you can't make your case. In the past most of the media outlets were closer to the army. They were applying self censorship because they were simply afraid. Polarization is bringing a lot of tension in the country. This is also the case for the

media. If you look at the civil society field, I would say there is also polarization there. The picture is like this: civil society organizations are in hands of leftist groups in Turkey. This has always been the case. But for the last maybe 10 years we are also seeing that some moderate Islamic groups are establishing their own civil society organizations. There is a kind of diversification but it's still polarized. Certain groups have worked with only one segment of the society, others are working with the other segment. They are not becoming really national. They can't function on a national level. These features of civil society makes our work very difficult as well. We have worked with them but sometimes our priorities don't match. When it comes to supporting a certain media outlet and defining the most relevant partners, they mostly brought us to media outlets within their own circle. We were asking ourselves the question if we were really addressing the needs of journalists in general in Turkey by working with this particular organization? Maybe they are too marginal? But the fact is that they have access to the international world. Some others don't. it was typically like this in Turkey. We ended up supporting these really marginal media outlets, mostly online. Which doesn't represent anything if you take the whole readership. When I started with this, there was already a program in this organization and they asked me to run that program. I saw that our partners were the most known civil society organizations in Turkey and I saw that other organizations work with them as well. All based in Istanbul, not even in Ankara. Everybody ends up working with the same people. But at least they speak English and they know about project management. Which means that they can have contact with the international media NGO sector. Everybody ends up with focusing on the same type of projects. This is a very small world. If you're not really aware of the realities of that country, that's the only thing that you can do. So all these CSO's were transferring their views to the international media people and this was how it was happening for a long time. But what is the impact? You transfer knowledge and money, but in the end nothing happens. You end up working with these small cliques. We were extremely critical afterwards when choosing partners in Turkey. We started organizing trainings for journalists in several regions in Turkey. Together with an organization based in Istanbul. At least we were able to reach those journalists. The impact of those trainings is another issue. First of all to reach those journalists. There is also more attention going to opinion making instead of facts. This is one of the biggest problems in Turkey and what we define as a priority. No facts, but opinions. There are a lot of comments, but there is hardly journalism. People think it's an insulting thing to be a reporter. It's a better etiquette to be a columnist. This is promoted by the power groups as well. These columnist are even able to shape politics in Turkey. If you know what the role as a journalist means, this is absurd. Columnist get offered absurd payments for their writings. It's beyond imagination and unacceptable. This imbalance where columnist are paid extremely high and reporters are suffering is unacceptable. These reporters are doing the actual work. None of these journalists is addressing the problems.

So that's why you provide them with trainings etc?

Yes. But what can you do with trainings? You can raise awareness about these issues. You can definitely show the journalists that there is another kind of journalism. Real journalism is about facts and how you can reach, write about the facts. We show what the international journalism standards are and how it's being done. We try to provide the best practices. But then it's up to the journalists, to take it or to leave it. The journalists are not alone, they have their editors. If editors don't support it, what can they do. We try in many cases to include those editors but the editors in Turkey have really big egos. The reporters also need some

technical skills to do good journalism. Regardless of the content. We need good editors in Turkey to stand against the owners. Maybe it sounds a little bit too ambitious but I think this should be the case. I think this is not likely to change in the near future, I doubt so.

How can you measure the impact of your work?

Of course this is a very big issue. But sometimes you do work and it's a drop in the ocean but you still have to do it because of your own mission. As I said, I have my own agenda doing this work and I'm doing the Turkey program. I really believe that journalism should be improved in Turkey, that's the reason I'm here. There are various ways to see signs of impact. I think there is impact but I mean whether it is measurable or not is a question. When it comes to impact, I try to focus on young journalists because that way we're contributing to future journalism and a generation of good journalists in Turkey. The impact is less when it comes to working with veteran journalists because in general those people have big egos. They would never accept that they have to be trained. By the way, we're not imposing anything. We try to provide good examples, best practices. If they want it, we work with them. This is a partnership. We never impose our agenda, we don't throw money at it, it's not like that. We really do everything in cooperation. When it comes to working with those established journalists, it's very difficult because they feel threatened. This is not only for Turkey, this is in general like that. They feel like they know everything. The impact there is less. We stopped doing that. We have tried in the past. We tried to invite those people to discussions on problems in Turkey, in the media. Together with the young journalists. Because the established, older journalists hardly have connections with the younger journalists. They don't really care about problems of young journalists or their work. So we tried organizing round table discussions for the older and younger generation, talking about the media related problems in Turkey. But now we mostly focus on young journalists in Turkey. When I say that we don't have a program in Turkey currently it doesn't mean that we don't do any work there. We believe very much in the investment in young journalists, to build up a network of good journalists in Turkey. They are more open because they're in the beginning of their careers so they don't have these vague contacts. They are more idealistic and energetic. We have been supporting exchange of journalism students between the Netherlands and Turkey for the last 2 years. There are 2 things that we try to promote. One of our priorities as an organization is investigative journalism. We believe that the quality of journalism is declining in general in the world. There's hardly investigative journalism. We decided to start the project with the journalism students so they could see how journalism is being done in these two countries, contexts. We give them the possibility to their own investigative work in a foreign country. We also organize crash courses for those journalists on international journalism, global reporting, news writing in English etc. We believe that it gives those young journalists the chance to see what their colleagues in other parts of the world are doing. The only thing they see is journalism in Turkey. We think that there are things that they can learn from their colleagues here. We match one Turkish with one Dutch journalism student. They work alone but also in pairs. They choose topics and produce joint content. They also make individual stories. The Turkish students focus more on the theory of journalism whereas Dutch students focus on the technicalities of journalism. We also greatly benefited from their work and discussions for the last 2 years. I hope that they're finding a good combination. We think that Turkish journalism students are lacking technical skills. They're kind of slow in writing news and we also think that sometimes they don't ask the right questions. Dutch students on the other hand take it for granted

that this is a democratic country so everything works perfectly. They don't question their own contexts enough. They don't really think about media ownership structure in the Netherlands. They don't think about the roles of big media companies here. You can definitely not claim that there is 100% free media in Europe. In the Netherlands as well newspapers are being sold to big power groups. Sometimes they tend to think that they're better and the ones who should teach the Turkish students. I very much believe in this kind of work. I was kind of suspicious when I started with this program. I follow the students during their reporting trips in Turkey and the Netherlands and I really think this works. This is breaking the stereotypes and getting rid of their prejudices.

So the EU isn't the standard anymore when it comes to journalism?

No, exactly. Romania, Greece, Hungary are all examples of why EU isn't the norm anymore.

The most difficult thing about working as an NGO is building capacity. First to make journalists aware and then you have to build up capacity. Then your results are visible in the long term, not immediately. We think that impact will be evident. You just have to be patient. We see a positive change with the Journalism students in their news reporting, the language they use etc.