

ECREA's CEE Network Report

Activities of 2015

1. Annual CEECOM conference, June 12-14, 2014

The 8th Central and Eastern European Media and Communication Conference (www.ceecom.org) was organized by the Centre for media and communication research of the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb, in cooperation with the communication and journalism departments of the University of Zagreb, based respectively at the Faculty of Political Science, Faculty of the Humanities, Social Sciences and Croatian studies. Titled "The Digital Media Challenge", the conference highlighted the contemporary challenges to media and journalists, particularly changes in the production of news or other media content, in education of new professionals for the digital media industry, as well as in the approaches to media literacy and encouraging critical media consumption and production by citizens. Research presented at the conference addressed these broader concerns as well, including the changes in the political arena and the public sphere, in growing up, creating identities or establishing communities in the mediatized digital network society, the challenges of policy making in the situation of seeming abundance of content and imagined freedom, the challenge of conceptualizing anew the "people formerly known as the audience" in the digital mediascapes. In one of the highlights of the 2015 conference, the crucial issue of media freedom and its decline in many parts of (not only the post-socialist Eastern and Central) Europe was discussed in a special plenary session with Dunja Mijatović, the OSCE representative on the freedom of expression, and Gvozden Flego, the vice-president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

CEECOM2015 featured 33 parallel sessions and panels with 128 papers from authors coming from 29 countries, and 8 keynote addresses in four plenary sessions. The keynote speakers included internationally renowned media scholars like Paolo Mancini of the University of Perugia, Amy Jordan of the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Pennsylvania (President of the International Communication Association), Slavko Splichal of the University of Ljubljana, or Dominique Cardon of the University Marne la Vallée (LATTTS). The last plenary session focused on the shape of the discipline in the region and its visibility in the international academe, elaborated on in papers by the vice-chair and chair of the ECREA CEE Network Zrinjka Peruško and Václav Štětka, respectively.

The conference proceedings were published online and are available at <http://infoz.ffzg.hr/ceecom.org/>. The main conference organizer, Zrinjka Peruško, is preparing two special journal issues featuring selected papers from the conference.

The next CEECOM conference will be held in June 2016 at the University of Tartu, Estonia.

2. Publication and dissemination activities

- Edited by Boguslaw Dobek-Ostrowska and Michal Glowacki, the volume “*Democracy and Media in CEE 25 Years On*” was published in December 2015 by Peter Lang. The book includes chapters based on selected papers presented during the 7th CEECOM conference which took place in Wroclaw in June 2014.
- Several CEE-based journals published special issues devoted to media and communication in CEE countries, including *Medijske Studije / Media Studies* (Vol. 6, No.11 – “Media Democratization: Media Systems Twenty Five Years After the Revolutions of 1989”), *Media and Communication* (Vol. 3, No.4 – “Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media”), or *Mediální Studia / Media Studies* (Vol. 2/2015 – “Popular Culture and Post-Socialist Societies in East-Central and South Eastern Europe”).
- The Facebook page of the CEE Network grew in prominence during 2015, accounting for over 350 “likes” by the end of 2015. The FB page has been used for promotion of events, dissemination of important pan-regional research and publication outcomes, as well as for distribution of information and announcements about study or job opportunities, fellowships and international exchanges organized by or within the CEE region.

3. Membership

As of 20.1.2015, there have been 80 active members of the CEE Network. In February 2016, the CEE Network had 137 members.

Report prepared by the CEE Network team (2015-2016):

Chair: Vaclav Stetka (Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic)

Vice Chair: Irena Reifova (Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic)

Vice Chair: Zrinjka Peruško (Centre for Media and Communication Research, Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia)

20 January, 2015