

THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF NEWSPAPERS : A PRINTING PLANT OF THEIR OWN

“Our work on this project began during the regime of Milosevic, when the independent press had to rely on a government monopoly on printing and distribution which was often abused in an attempt to crush free voices,” said Timothy Balding, Director General of the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers, which helped to create the printing plant in a joint venture with UNESCO.

“Although the printing facility now opens under a democratic regime, after long delays over funding, there are sufficient remaining challenges to a free press to make it vital for the future of independent newspapers,” he said.

The new printing plant, which has been operating for a month, is owned by the Association of Private Media, a consortium of three independent dailies and nine independent weeklies. The 3,000-square-metre plant is built around a MAN Colorman 30, which can print up to 100,000 copies an hour.

WAN and UNESCO, which began the project in 1999, received financial support from the European Agency for Reconstruction and Development and the governments of France, Denmark and Germany.

WAN and UNESCO had previously worked together to help create an independent distribution network for the press which is also operated by APM in Serbia and Montenegro.

“Independent newspapers cannot be viable unless adequate business conditions are created, including a printing and distribution infrastructure that are free of government controls,” said Mr Balding.