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THE ACTIVITY OF UKRIFORM IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF INFORMATIONAL SECURITY OF UKRAINE

The article analyzes the role and place of Ukrinform on the world information map and its role in providing effective mechanisms of protection of the Ukrainian information space.

Key words: information space, national interest, mass media, BSANNA, Ukrinform.

The era of the information society, which became especially active with the beginning of the third millennium, is characterized by establishing the concept of “information” as a basic component of any human activity. Information field at the same time is a holistic concept, as well as an integral part of education and other sectors of life of the state – economic, political, social, humanitarian and others. This is due to the versatility of information and its property to transfer the accumulated experience and knowledge in space and time.

The timeliness of the topic is that the ability of information streams to grasp simultaneously a wide range of audience and influence the political thoughts of citizens caused the increase in the number of actual and potential challenges and threats to the national security of Ukraine in the information field.

A number of domestic and foreign researchers, such as N. Hendyna, R. Dahrendorf, O. Lytvynenko, G. Manhoff, A. Panteleimonov, G. Pocheptsov and others devoted their works to the study and analysis of information activity, as well as problems and prospects of Ukraine’s information security.

As major players on the state information scene are communications media, which help a modern consumer to find out, what, when and where happened, as well as to search for the quick interpretation of certain events, it means that the informational resources of the media should strive for protecting the national interests. Man should understand under **national interests** the vital material, intellectual and spiritual values of the Ukrainian people as the bearer of sovereignty and the only source of power in Ukraine, the key needs of society and the state, the implementation of which guarantees state sovereignty of Ukraine and its progressive development [4]. The media in all its substance, in transcontinental, national and regional dimension reflect the information picture of the world.

Today we can observe the powerful attacks on the integrity of Ukraine, associated primarily with the desire of information subjects, including foreign ones, which deliberately aim to distort the content of events involving Ukraine. They also try to submit forged information about political, social, economic and other events, in order to discredit the state in the eyes of the international community, to undermine its credibility as a reliable partner and an important subject of the international law.

A tendency to further commercialization of communications media holds a threat to national information space; in the pursuit of easy profits owners of private media fill the columns, broadcast and online resources with the information materials of a low quality, borrowed from abroad, which often promote alien to ours moral and political values, and split the society. The unfavorable economic conditions aggravate the problem, in terms of creating our own information product. In our opinion, we can address this issue in two ways.

Firstly, the public influence to media owners can help. In this regard, it has a point at the legislative level to provide the public with full information about the founders and co-founders, owners and co-owners of an information resource and publishers when they aim to obtain a broadcasting license

or register a printed or electronic communications media. In this context, they need to create a special register of owners and publishers of communications media under the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine.

Secondly, they need to stipulate legislatively the possibility of direct or indirect financial support to information resources that produce the state’s own national information product.

Today we can observe discussions going on in Ukrainian politics on the need for deregulation of the media, which, in fact, should have been the main source of objective and reliable official reports. However, taking into account the involvement of journalists and their dependence on the authorities, public communications media give the subjective information, thus deepening the problem of information security.

In most countries, the concept of “state media” is no longer actual, instead national news agencies gained new importance in formation and protection of information space. Moreover, some states, including Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, created positive conditions for such agencies, due to which they are growing rapidly, and have become an important guarantor of national information security. First, they are the source of the publication of the official position of higher authorities. The management of the above countries seeks to active use of the agencies for its external initiatives, not only in the information sector, but also in economic, cultural, tourism field. In Ukraine, the only national news agency is the National news agency of Ukraine – Ukrinform.

Ukrinform today takes a leading position in the domestic media market, serving an influential factor in the functioning of the national information space.

During its more than 95-year history, the agency has gained authority not only among the members of the Ukrainian information space, but also in the international arena. In accordance to the statutory powers conferred on the agency by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 749 of 15 July 1997 “On approval of the Statutes and other issues of the National news agency of Ukraine – Ukrinform”, the agency within its competence implements the state politics in the information field through information collection, processing, creation, storage; as well as preparation and dissemination of news, providing photos and other information products to the media, public authorities, enterprises, institutions, organizations, public associations and private individuals in Ukraine and abroad [3]. Ukrinform releases official information relating to various areas of society and the state, and the format of its work as a news agency reduces risks of subjective approach to information, because the main objective of any news coverage is, specifying only the facts, not their analytics or rating.

Systematic and comprehensive approach to information support of foreign policy, forming the image of Ukraine abroad based on positive phenomena and processes occurring in the Ukrainian society, is among the top directions of Ukrinform’s activities. This activity is particularly relevant in the context of the protection of national interests of Ukraine, because

delivery to the international community of comprehensive information about the situation in the country and unbiased coverage of international events (especially those concerning Ukraine) from the primary sources, and not in the interpretation of foreign media, contributes to international image and increasing the investment attractiveness of Ukraine.

On a parity basis, Ukrinform cooperates with many foreign news agencies, including, in particular, ITAR-TASS and Reuters, MTI (Hungary), Belta (Belarus), TASR (Slovakia), Tanjug (Serbia), BTA (Bulgaria), Xinhua (China), Rompres (Romania), Hina (Croatia), etc, as well as with many foreign embassies in Ukraine, subscribers in the US, Canada, Germany, Belgium, the Republic of Bulgaria, Poland, Australia. Ukrinform's correspondents work in Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, USA, Germany, Russia, France, China, and Belgium. Every day Ukrinform releases over a thousand news items in five languages: Ukrainian, Russian, English, German and Spanish [2]. This allows sending information abroad without foreign intermediaries, which usually are mass media

We consider it appropriate to pay attention to the participation of Ukrinform as the only national news agency of Ukraine in international organizations since its integration into European and global information space increases objectivity and reliability of the information presented about Ukraine and for it.

Ukrinform has become the only member from Ukraine in the European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA) in 1995.

The Alliance was founded on August 21, 1957 in Strasbourg at the European Technical Conference of the news agencies [1]. EANA is a non-profit membership organization that brings together 31 news agencies of the European countries (one from each country). As stated in the Statutes, EANA may include only one – the leading agency of the state. Given the numerous appeals from foreign news agencies to provide guidance in the introduction to Alliance (according to the rules, the agency that is seeking membership must enlist the support of existing members), as evidenced by documentary flows of the Ukrinform, there is a growing number of agencies wishing to join the EANA. Media business continues to change rapidly and it is clear that European news agencies see the benefits of membership in the Alliance for cooperation in times of information boom.

The goal of EANA is to save and maintain common interests of its members in all areas, which are relevant to their work and activities. Alliance operates as a pan-European professional forum for networking and collaboration, including the exchange of information, experience and knowledge among its members. EANA acts as a lobbyist of the interests of its members in the European Union and in other international organizations.

Each year, the Alliance conducts an annual General Assembly, which is the highest body of EANA. Usually, the meetings take place in Geneva (Switzerland), they discuss the current issues of information field, paying the particular attention to the legislative framework regarding the subjects of the information space, the copyright and media freedom, as well as the issues of pricing of information products in the member countries. In addition, EANA annually holds specialized international conferences for the member agencies.

Ukrinform is a founding member of another international organization – The Black Sea Association of National News Agencies (BSANNA). According to the Ordinance of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 242-p of 27 April 2006 “On the constituent conference of the Black Sea Association of National News Agencies”, on May 29-31, 2006 in the

city of Kyiv at the initiative of the former Director General of Ukrinform, honored journalist of Ukraine Viktor Chamara, an international non-profit organization was created. It unites national news agencies of the Black Sea region for the effective use of information resources and sharing the news from political, economic, cultural, scientific and other fields of lives of member states.

BSANNA works in the following fields:

- Active cooperation in the information area of the Black Sea region and the world at large;

- Establishing equal and free exchange of information between national news agencies and help in the development of cooperation in the area of information;

- Joint efforts of national news agencies in prompt dissemination of various objective information about the life of their countries abroad;

- Developing optimal models for the creation and operation of information and telecommunication systems;

- Developing relations with international organizations and participation in their activities [5].

BSANNA is a kind of an advisory information body of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), therefore, the entry of our country in the Association is appropriate in view of the fact that Ukraine has always been one of the most active members of the BSEC. The Black Sea region with a population of 330 million people is a large-scale potential market, one of the most attractive regions of the new millennium. Generous natural resources, strong industrial base, skilled workforce make it possible to the BSEC region to offer willingly a wide range of opportunities for world economic community.

Information support of Ukraine's foreign policy in the frames of the BSEC promotes political and socio-economic cooperation in the Black Sea region, investment in the Ukrainian economy, the introduction of new technologies and technical means to strengthen the authority of our country in the world.

In addition, the draft statute of the Association takes into account the national interests of the member countries, provides for the free exchange of information and, at the same time, excludes the possibility of foreign information expansion into the information space of partner countries.

Up to now, BSANNA consists of 14 countries, each represented by one news agency. These are the following agencies: AzerTaj (Azerbaijan), ANA (Greece), ANADOLU AGENCY (Turkey), ATA (Albania), ARMENPRESS (Armenia), BTA (Bulgaria), ITAR-TASS (Russia), GNH (Georgia), MOLDPRES (Moldova) Agerpres (Romania), Tanjug (Serbia), Ukrinform (Ukraine), MIA (Macedonia), HINA (Croatia) [5]. Joining the Association on equal basis provides the agencies for the unbiased information sharing on basis of friendship and neighborliness.

Member agencies of BSANNA exchange news, photos, audio, video and other information materials on a free basis. According to the statutory documents, presidency of BSANNA has to be annually transferred to a new country, but in practice in order to save means and increase time to implement ideas of the heading party, association members pass the presidency to another member country every two years. In addition, in 2013, BSANNA members introduced the new position of the Secretary General, which is constant and is not transferred annually from one person to another. This is the positive step in strengthening the position of the association in the international arena.

In order to exchange news items between BSANNA members and publication of information, Ukrinform developed

a special audio and video information online resource for free exchange of materials called "BSANNA News" on Ukrinform's site. Messages that are sent from members of the association, are not edited on the information tape, they are identical to those found on sites of primary sources. This approach eliminates the possibility of distortion of information by foreign entities.

Today the resource that is represented in Ukrainian, Russian and English is regularly filled with different reports and comments of all member countries of the association. This web resource is designed to provide information support to foreign media consolidation processes and strengthening Ukraine's position in the international arena. We should note that the concept of this online resource for today is outdated; the resource lacks complexity and external attraction, which is an essential element of current online publications rating. As a result, this situation reduces the number of consumers and, if not taken appropriate action, the main purpose of BSANNA – distribution of objective information about the situation in different countries – will be negated.

Therefore, the news agencies are powerful tools for promoting foreign and domestic policy of any state. Implementation of information policy is possible only on condition of effective inclusion of Ukraine into the global information sphere and overcoming significant imbalance between the Ukrainian and international information space. Ukrinform membership in EANA and BSANNA allows to directly convey to foreign consumers the objective information about real situation in our country and contributes to favorable

international image of Ukraine in order to effectively protect its national interests.

Active international cooperation of Ukrinform allows the national information structure to integrate into the global one and thus guarantee the right of access to it for every citizen, as well as publication and dissemination of accurate information about our country for foreign consumers. Expanding of Ukrinform's presence in frames of global information sphere requires additional funding which for today is not foreseen in the state Budget of Ukraine. However, this policy should be reviewed, because under current conditions of national information society, a production of the high-quality product, which is put by the Ukrainian government under Ukrinform's responsibility, is an important factor in economic, political and cultural development of the Ukrainian state on the international arena.

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