

Press publishing market levels off while paid circulation drops

The regular market investigation into the Croatian press publishing market in 2019 shows a negative trend in the dailies and weeklies paid circulation market and the dailies advertising market. The falling trend that continues for years now includes both the fall in the paid circulation and the financial indicators. Only the weeklies advertising market remains unchanged compared with 2018.

The Croatian Competition Agency (CCA) carried out its regular market investigation into the Croatian press publishing market in 2019 with the view to defining the market shares of the relevant market participants.

The market study included a total of 37 newspaper publishers and distributors. The market study included the following markets: press circulation (general information dailies and weeklies), print advertising in general information dailies and weeklies and press distribution in the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

The market shares in the relevant markets were defined on the basis of paid circulation – the number of copies sold and revenues realized by the undertakings concerned in the press advertising market, press wholesale and press retail.

Daily newspapers paid circulation market

There were 53.3 million copies of general information dailies sold in Croatia in 2019. In comparison with the preceding year this was a fall by 12 %. Almost all dailies recorded the circulation fall compared with 2018.

Like in the preceding years, the daily “24sata” had the highest circulation in 2019. Its market share was between 30 % and 40 %, yet, with the falling circulation trend. Its market share slightly increased linked with the stronger fall of the paid circulation market in general.

The market leader was followed by the “Večernji list” holding a slightly rising market share of 20 % to 30 %. The third place on the circulation list was taken by the “Jutarnji list” (Hanza Media Group) holding a market share of 10 % to 20 %, but also with the fall of the circulation compared with 2018 that meant a fall from the second to the third place on the daily newspapers paid circulation market.

Worth mentioning in 2019 was the paid circulation of the “Slobodna Dalmacija” (Hanza Media Group) and the “Novi list” (Glas Istre), that are both regional dailies and both recorded a circulation shrinkage compared with 2018. Their market shares were 10 % to 20 % and 5% to 10 %, respectively.

The ownership structure reveals that the highest share of some 50 % to 60 % in the general information daily newspapers market in 2019 was held by Styria AG (“24sata” and “Večernji list”) with a slightly rising market share compared with the previous year.

The market share of Hanza Media Group (“Jutarnji list”, “Slobodna Dalmacija”) was 20 % to 30 % in the general information daily newspapers market in 2019 indicating a slight fall in the market share. It must be noted that on 1 April 2019 due to internal restructuring within the group Slobodna Dalmacija d.d. was acquired by Hanza Media d.o.o.

The third newspapers publishing group Glas Istre ("Novi list", "Glas Istre" and "Zadarski list") held a combined market share of some 10 % to 20 % in 2019. In July 2016 JOJ Media House a.s. from Bratislava acquired the controlling interest over the undertakings Novi list from Rijeka, Glas Istre from Pula and RTD from Zadar – the publishers of dailies concerned.

With respect to the foreign press the data have been received from the one and only national press distributor TISAK plus d.o.o., the undertaking Inovine d.d. Zagreb and VIBM d.o.o. Cavtat that prints foreign press within the Press Reader Inc project (digital newspaper distribution) and sells it directly to the hotels and other accommodation facilities. The highest share of 85 % in the number of copies of the foreign dailies is held by TISAK plus d.o.o.

Weeklies paid circulation market

The paid circulation of the general information weeklies in Croatia in 2019 dropped by 15 % in comparison with 2018. The majority of the regional weeklies followed the general negative trend except "Hrvatski tjednik", "Nacional", "Međimurske novine" and "Bjelovarski list".

"7Dnevno", that was until May 2019 published by Eurocinik d.o.o. and since then by Singar d.o.o. had a market share of 10 % to 20 % and the highest but slightly falling circulation in comparison with the previous year. "Hrvatski tjednik" was in the second place with a market share of 10 % to 20 %. A significant drop in circulation was recorded by the weekly "Globus" that in the beginning of 2019 started to publish semi-monthly and now prints 26 issues annually. The highest drop in circulation was recorded by the regional weekly "Varaždinske vijesti".

Print advertising market – dailies and weeklies

The total revenue that the publishers made from advertising in the daily papers in 2019 was 151.3 million Kuna or 4.3 million Kuna less than in the previous year. Most publishers indicated a slight downward trend in the advertising revenues.

The highest market share of some 20 % - 30 % was held in 2018 by the publisher of the "Jutarnji list" Hanza Media, indicating a downfall in the advertising revenues compared with 2018. It was followed by Slobodna Dalmacija with 10 % - 20 % market share and Novi list with also 10 % to 20 % market share. The publisher of the "Slobodna Dalmacija" Hanza Media Group, taking the second lead, indicated a slight increase in the advertising revenue, whereas Novi list, taking the third position, indicated a slight ad generated revenue decrease. The publisher of the "Večernji list" Večernji list, the fourth on the list, held a 10 % to 20 % market share indicating a fall in the advertising revenue compared with 2018. The market share of the fifth rival publisher of the daily "24 sata" with a 10 % to 20 % market share recorded a slight downfall in the ad generated revenue.

Glas Istre Novine d.o.o. overtook in the sixth place Glas Slavonije d.d. in the ad generated revenue in 2019 with a rise in the ad generated revenue. Both publishers held a market share of less than 7 % in 2019.

The ad generated revenue of the general information weekly publishers remained in 2019 the same as in 2018 and amounted to 26.2 million Kuna. It must be noted that in 2018 there was a rising trend of 7 % compared with 2017.

The highest individual market share of some 10 % to 20 % in spite of a slight revenue fall was held by the publisher of Dubrovački vjesnik, Dubrovački vjesnik d.o.o. within the Hanza Media Group, that remained the leader both in 2018 and in the reporting 2019. The combined market share of Hanza Media Group, the publisher of Dubrovački vjesnik and Globus, in the relevant market in 2019 was 10 % to 20 %.

The second on the list of the weekly publishers at the national level was Nacional News Corporation d.o.o. (the publisher of the weekly "Nacional") recorded a fall in the ad generated revenue and held a market share in the weeklies advertising market of 5 % to 10 %. At the same time, it dropped from the third to the sixth place.

However, Media novine d.o.o., the publisher of the weekly "Međimurske novine" recorded a rise in the ad generated revenue and jumped from the sixth to the fourth position in the ad market concerned. There were some other publishers that in 2019 indicated a rise in the ad generated revenues, like for example Novosti d.o.o., Varaždinske vijesti d.d., List Međimurje d.o.o. and Zagorski list d.o.o.

Press distribution market - wholesale and retail

There has been only one player present in the wholesale press distribution market at the national level in 2019 – the undertaking Tisak plus d.o.o. from Zagreb that in 2019 experienced a rather significant revenue fall. As the only participant in this market Tisak plus is the biggest retail chain of newsstands and the leading Croatian distributor of newspapers, tobacco products, prepaid vouchers, mobile start packages and other products. It must be noted that on 1 April 2019 Tisak plus d.o.o. took over the business, the rights and obligations of the undertaking Tisak d.d.

In 2019 Tisak plus was also the leader in the press retail. Its 948 points of sale experienced a slight revenue fall compared with the previous year. The second rival was Hanza Media with a slight rise in the retail revenue, whereas the third place was taken by the publisher Večernji list that recorded the highest nominal rise in the press retail market in 2019.

With respect to its press retail revenue Inovine d.d. was on place four in 2019. As a specialized press and tobacco products retailer it owns 278 outlets, which makes it the second rival of Tisak plus. Compared with the previous year its press retail revenue decreased. Its outlets are dispersed all over the territory of Croatia, however, it owns 3.5 times less points of sale than Tisak plus.

The press distributor Fibus d.o.o. also had a minor fall in the press retail revenue compared with 2018. Although it owns a network of specialized outlets their number is negligible in comparison with Tisak plus or Inovine and they are mostly located regionally. In cooperation with the telecom operator A1 it has been spreading its activities in the area of mobile communications services and it has become one of its leading partners and pay-as-you-go voucher distributors.

The above said leads to the conclusion that through subscription and the newsies the newspaper publishers in general recorded a 1 % to 10 % rise in the press retail, whereas Glas Istre, Novine d.o.o. recorded a 50 % to 60 % rise based on solely on the subscription grow, yet, its nominal retail revenue rise was less than HRK 500,000.

The newspapers continue to sell on newspaper stands – some 50 % to 60 % are sold on newspaper stands (Tisak plus, Inovine, Fibis) with Tisak still producing the most significant effect.

A detailed version of the Market study in the press publishing market in Croatia in 2019 is available [here](#)