

Press publishing market in 2020 indicates unceasing fall in paid circulation

The regular market investigation into the Croatian press publishing market in 2020 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 2019.

The Croatian Competition Agency (CCA) carried out its regular market investigation into the Croatian press publishing market in 2020 with the view to defining the market shares of the relevant market participants.

The market study included a total of 33 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. It included a new weekly Imperial that was less than in year present in the market and discontinued in the relevant report year.

In 2020 there were five publishers less than in 2019. Some of them like the BnM published by Croata d.o.o. were discontinued while the regional general information daily the Bjelovarski list changed the publisher and since 1 January 2020 it has been published by Mozaik-Media d.o.o. from Bjelovar.

The weekly Virovitički list published by Informativni centar Virovitica d.o.o. started to publish semi-monthly in March 2020 (like the former weekly Globus that started to publish semi-weekly in the beginning of 2019). Narodni list discontinued its print edition in March 2020.

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 42.9 million copies of general information dailies sold in Croatia in 2020. In comparison with the preceding year this was a fall by 19 %. This fall is even more significant than in 2019 compared to 2018 when it was 12 %. All dailies recorded the circulation fall compared with 2019.

Like in the preceding years, the daily “24sata” had the highest circulation in 2020. Its market share was between 30 % and 40 %, yet, with the falling circulation trend despite the slightly rising market share. 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 2019.

Worth mentioning in 2020 was the paid circulation of the “Slobodna Dalmacija” (Hanza Media Group) with a market share of 10 % to 20 % and the “Novi list” (Glas Istre) holding a market share of

5% to 10%. They are both regional dailies and both recorded a circulation shrinkage compared with 2019.

All dailies' publishers recorded a more significant fall in circulation than in 2019, only the "Jutarnji list" experienced a more moderate fall.

The ownership structure reveals that the highest share of some 50 % to 60 % in the general information daily newspapers market in 2020 was held by Styria AG ("24sata" and "Večernji list") with a slightly rising market share compared with the previous year. The rising trend of the common market share of both Styria Group publishers continued.

The market share of Hanza Media Group ("Jutarnji list", "Slobodna Dalmacija") was 20 % to 30 % indicating a slight fall in the market share.

The third newspapers publishing group Glas Istre ("Novi list", "Glas Istre" and "Zadarski list") held a combined market share of some stagnating 10 % to 20 % in 2020. 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. Like in 2019 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 2020 dropped by 20 % in comparison with 2019. There was a total of 2.3 million of copies sold in 2020 compared with 2019 when 2.9 million copies were sold. The fall is more significant in 2020 compared with 2019 than in the previous report for 2018/2019.

The majority of the regional weeklies followed the general negative trend in 2020, except "Nacional", and "Međimurske novine" that indicated even a slight rise in paid circulation.

Unlike in the general information dailies market there have been some position changes among the three leading rivals.

"7Dnevno", published by Singar d.o.o. lost its first position. Despite its fall in paid circulation the leader in 2020 became the weekly Međimurje published by List Međimurje d.o.o. that held third position in 2019. The second place is taken by "Hrvatski tjednik" published by Tempus d.o.o. from Zadar, whereas "7Dnevno" took third place in 2020. They all held a market share of 10 % to 20 %.

A significant drop in circulation was recorded by the weekly "7Dnevno", the regionals "Podravski list", "Međimurje" that takes the first position by the copies sold in 2020, and "Dubrovački vjesnik".

Print advertising market – dailies and weeklies

The total revenue that the publishers made from advertising in the daily papers in 2020 was 117.3 million Kuna (151.3 million Kuna in 2019) or 34 million Kuna or 22 % less than in the previous year.

For the sake of comparison, the fall in the previous report 2018/2019 was merely 4.3 million Kuna.

The fall from the print dailies advertising per individual publisher ranged from 11 % to 36 %.

Eight out of nine dailies' publishers included in the survey recorded the drop in advertising revenues. Only RTD d.o.o. – the publisher of the "Zadarski list" slightly increased the revenue. For the sake of comparison, in 2019 out of nine general information dailies publishers six recorded a fall whereas three increased their turnover from advertising compared with 2018.

The highest market share of some 20 % - 30 % was held in 2020 by the publisher of the "Jutarnji list" Hanza Media, indicating a downfall in the advertising revenues compared with 2019. It was followed by the "Slobodna Dalmacija" with 20 % - 30 % market share and the "Novi list" with 10 % to 20 % market share. The publisher of the "Večernji list" Večernji list d.d., the fourth on the list, held a 10 % to 20 % market share. The market share of the fifth rival publisher of the daily "24 sata" was less than 10 %.

Glas Slavonije d.d. in the ad generated revenue in 2020 was the sixth on the list whereas Glas Istre Novine d.o.o. took the sixth place. Both publishers held a market share of less than 10 % in 2020.

The ad generated revenue of the general information weekly publishers remained in 2020 the same as in 2019 and amounted to 26 million Kuna.

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 in 2020 like in 2019. The combined market share of Hanza Media Group, the publisher of Dubrovački vjesnik and Globus, in the relevant market in 2020 remained 10 % to 20 %. Unlike Dubrovački vjesnik, Globus recorded a rise in the ad generated revenue.

List Međimurje d.o.o. the publisher of the weekly "Međimurske novine" recorded a rise in the ad generated revenue and jumped to the second position in the ad market concerned.

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 rise in the ad generated revenue and held a market share in the weeklies advertising market of 5 % to 10 %. At the same time, it jumped from the sixth to the third place.

There were some other publishers that in 2020 indicated a minimum nominal rise in the ad generated revenues, like for example Novosti d.o.o., Sisak press d.o.o. and NIU Jednota.

In conclusion, out of 23 publishers of weeklies 13 reported a fall in ad generated revenue.

Press distribution market - wholesale and retail

There has been only one player present in the wholesale press distribution market at the national level in 2020 – the undertaking Tisak plus d.o.o. from Zagreb that in 2020 experienced a rather significant revenue fall associated with the fall in paid circulation. 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.

With respect to the press retail revenue of all undertakings included in the survey, they all recorded a fall in the press retail revenue by 17 %.

In 2020 Tisak plus was also the leader in the press retail. Its 863 points of sale (948 in 2019) experienced a rather noteworthy revenue fall compared with the previous year. The second rival was Hanza Media with a fall in the retail revenue, whereas the third place was taken by the publisher Večernji list that also recorded the fall in the press retail market in 2020.

With respect to its press retail revenue Inovine d.d. was on place four in 2020. As a specialized press and tobacco products retailer it owns 257 outlets (278 in 2019), 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 times less points of sale than Tisak plus.

The press distributor Fibis d.o.o. also had a fall in the press retail revenue compared with 2019. 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 the majority of newspaper publishers recorded a fall in the retail revenue. Individually, only three publishers (all members of the Glas Istre Group) recorded a rise in the press retail revenue compared with 2019. Whereas Glas Istre Novine d.o.o. significantly rose in percentage in comparison with Novi List d.d., Novi List d.d. on the other hand, had nominally higher revenue from press retail compared with Glas Istre Novine d.o.o. The third member of the group RTD d.o.o. with its "Zadarski list" recorded a rise in press retail revenue but its nominal press retail revenue was significantly lower.

For the sake of Comparison, the market study in 2019 showed that six publishers indicated a rising trend in the press retail business compared with 2018.

It must be noted that publishers apply diverse marketing activities with the objective of attracting potential subscribers and winning them over through annual subscriptions, by offering more favourable prices per copy, gifts –like a TV-set, sports accessories etc.

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.

Finally, it is noted here that on 19 March 2021 Tisak plus and Hrvatska pošta signed a purchase agreement under which HP-Hrvatska pošta acquired control over subscription distribution business of Tisak plus as of 1 April 2021. The purchase agreement also includes the relevant employment contracts of the workers employed in subscription distribution business of Tisak plus d.o.o. and the contracts with publishers and producers that were engaged in subscription distribution business in individual regions.

A detailed version of the Market study in the press publishing market in Croatia in 2020 in the Croatian language is available [here](#)

