

RECENT CHANGES OF THE ROMANIAN MASS MEDIA – A SOCIOLOGICAL VIEW

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Introduction

The first Romanian newspaper was published in 1829, and the press grew relatively fast, to 1090 publications in 1922, and 2300 (118 dailies) in 1936. The first Romanian news agency was established in 1889. The first radio station went on the air in 1928, television was introduced in 1959 (about 600 hours of programming) and the first small-scale illegal cable operations appeared in the late 1980s.

Under communism, all mass media operations became public property. Their output was drastically reduced to make possible a strict control of the Communist Party. The number of media outlets shrank from 56 dailies and 47 radio stations in 1975 to 36 dailies and 9 national and local radio stations in the late 1980s. The two-channel television station that broadcast 4,642 hours of programming in 1975, was limited in 1985 to 22 hours a week on a single channel that reached 90% of the country.

The events of December 1989 exacerbated people's need for information and increasing abruptly the demands for all forms of media. In December 1989 and the months that followed the self-proclaimed Free Romanian Television provided round-the-clock news service and „became a veritable experiment in community broadcasting”¹.

The article was intended mainly to present a general image of the Romanian mass media system. No statistical hypothesis were formulated but there are some areas of interest mapped in advance.

¹ P. Gross, *Mass media in revolution and national development: The Romanian laboratory*, Amos Press, 1996, p.35