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**Public Statement to the Government of Serbia,**

It is alarming that the future of Serbian news agency Tanjug is threatened after what seems to be a second failed attempt to privatise the agency. The board of the European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA) is urging the Serbian government to make changes needed to secure the agency’s mission as a provider of unbiased news reports to Serbian and international media.

Tanjug’s continued operation as a provider of unbiased news services is vital both for media pluralism in Serbia and for information about Serbia in the European media community. In a time of hardship, dramatic international developments including migration affecting the whole of Europe, it is important to secure the trustworthy and internationally respected Tanjug brand that citizens can rely on in order to be well informed.

Tanjug is a well-known brand in the news agency business and the agency has for decades now been a member of the international news agency community. Tanjug was one of the founders of the European Alliance of News Agencies when a number of European news agencies in 1956 decided to create a news agency organisation for cooperation and the exchange of experiences etc. The agency has under the present management been re-vitalised both financially and editorially. This positive development led to that CEO, Ms Branka Djukic, a few years ago was awarded the European EANA Award for Excellence in News Agency Quality,

For a news agency´s trustworthiness, both within the country and towards its international partners, it is vital that the ownership structure, whichever one chosen, is clear, transparent and makes the provision of true and unbiased news the foremost editorial goal. The EANA member agencies represent various forms of ownership, both private and public. EANA represents European news agencies in contacts with the EU Commission etc to secure economic and legal environments for news agencies operating in accordance with the principles of press freedom and unbiased news.

We appreciate the Serbian government´s ambition to modernise the rules under which Tanjug operates but it is important that the lack of interest for privatisation of the agency under the present legal framework does not threaten the agency’s mission. The board is therefore urging the government to make the changes needed to secure the agency’s mission under whatever ownership arrangements chosen.

The EANA board takes it that the Serbian government is open for a discussion on how to secure Tanjug’s future as an unbiased and respected news provider and the board would appreciate a meeting with the government for a discussion about media pluralism, ownership structures and Tanjug’s future. We look forward to as soon as possible know when we can visit the Serbian government for such a discussion.

October 12, 2015

Clive Marshall, CEO of PA Group, London and President, EANA

Branka Gabriela Valentic, CEO of HINA, Zagreb and Board Member, EANA

Jonas Eriksson, CEO of TT, Stockholm and Board Member, EANA

Alexandru Giboi, CEO of Agerpres, Bucharest and Board Member, EANA

Erik Nylen, Stockholm, Secretary General, EANA