



RADIO “SADOI DUSHANBE” HEARD IN ISRAEL

Eilat (Israel) hosted the 4th International festival of TV and radio programmes in Russian language entitled “Air Box” and organized by the International Academy of Television and Radio. The event took place on 18-22 November 2009. 44 participants from 13 countries gathered on the coast of the Red Sea. One of the winners Irina UMAROVA presented the “Ordinary Maria or one more “migrant story” programme broadcasted on the republican radio “Sadoi Dushanbe”. With double pleasure I congratulate my colleague with another award, perhaps, because it was she who “opened” the doors of the Tajik media world for me. Upon her arrival I met with Irina and our conversation took much longer than we expected...I was so impressed that it seemed that Israel is the right place to go...

- Irina, I'm really glad for you even though I got used to your luck...

- I'd like to note that our programme was presented at the festival thanks to our sponsors. And I'm really lucky to have them. I'm afraid that there would be no celebration and no award without the Alliance of Central Asian Mountain Communities (AGOCA) and CAMP KUHISTON public organization who covered all transport charges. Due to the crisis festival organizers announced an opportunity to cover transport charges. I'd like to use the chance to express my sincere gratitude to these two organizations for their financial assistance and wish them all the success and fortune! The Alliance of Central Asian Mountain Communities mainly focuses on raising awareness and potential of villagers via trainings and supports further exchange of experience between them. AGOCA also supports the establishment of a network and management of partner relations with organizations operating in other regions throughout the world. “We support and promote the interests of mountain communities of Central Asia and improve living standards of rural population” – the slogan of the alliance says. These organizations are raising awareness of the people in Central Asia about sustainable development of mountain communities. Availability to masses through accessible means, through dissemination of information via radio and print editions let me tell the story of Maria. Both AGOCA and CAMP KUHISTON establish contacts with the audience and impact on it trying to form a public consciousness on such topics as “Climate change”, “Natural disasters” and “Labour migration”. I think it's great when there are people who support your ideas, people who believe in you! That's why I think the Diploma is our common award!



- Now you have one more Diploma in your box. I remember that in September you twice appeared on the scene at the Ecologic festival...

- I always honest when I say that I strive to win, not just to participate. You must admit that you have a more confident feeling and more serious intention when you have a concrete goal. As for the “Air Box” 4th festival in Israel, it was not positioned as a contest but as a definite platform of communication between Russian-speaking TV and radio journalists. And organizers have completely achieved this goal. Festival means festive occasion when the participants have an excellent opportunity to present their products and see products made by the others, when there is an open chance for constructive criticism and recommendations. The “Air Box” festival is practically the only platform for Russian-speaking journalists to demonstrate their products to their colleagues from other countries, to share their products and ideas. This is the only place to get a quite wide impression about the work of Russian-speaking broadcasters from other countries of the world.

One of the features of the festival is a unique opportunity for all the participants to openly discuss the demonstrated material straight after the demonstration. This helps to stimulate the participants since this is the only event where they can get professional evaluation of their work.

- What was your work about?

- Labour migration – is so pressing for our country that sometimes it seems that the subject is completely exhausted by all the media. But I've found a quite unusual story, which, perhaps, is very sorrowful but quite instructive. The story is about a young woman who in her 34 years was left alone with her 5 children. She faces so many problems and obstacles that hardly makes both ends meet. Finally, she leaves her children with her old mother and goes to Russia in search of job. She works in a crew of constructors but as they complete the construction of a building their customers walks away with their money. She has to return back home to her problems. Such problematic life forces her to go to Russia again. She has nothing to do but to fulfill the ranks of labour migrants. This time she was legally protected but the economic crisis hit unexpectedly. The story is not finished but if recommendations of our experts help someone, we will know that our efforts are not useless. We are really striving to protect our labour migrants from all those troubles they may face at the corners of the long way called "labour migration" (Author's note: the article "Ordinary Maria or one more migrant story" was published in the "Mir Novostei. Tajikistan" newspaper, №9, page 10).

- What was the most amazing in the holy land of Israel?

- I can talk about that forever... It is so appealing there that the surrounding things seem like paradise! The Dead Sea is a fantastic place! It is approximately 400 meters below sea level which means that this is the lowest elevation on the Earth's surface on dry land. There is no other place in Israel with such a wild and bare nature that surrounds the Dead Sea. The most unusual thing about swimming in the Dead Sea is that you can't really swim, you just float and you will never sink. You can even read a newspaper while floating, if you keep balance. The concentration of minerals and salts in the Dead Sea is several times the salinity of the oceans. Isn't it a miracle? The Dead Sea is continually fed water from the rivers and streams coming down off the mountains that surround it. But the kicker is this....no rivers drain out of the Dead Sea. There are no fish or any kind of swimming, squirming creatures living in or near the water. Masada located some 20km away from the Dead Sea. Masada is situated atop an isolated rock cliff, overlooking the Dead Sea. Herod the Great, the master builder, built this fortress as a refuge for himself. Even though we had the whole day to sightsee the fortress we had no time to see all the corners of it. People come to the Red Sea not only to swim in it, but mainly to write their wishes down, pack them into vessels and through into the sea. They say all the wishes come true. I also made a wish and through my vessel into the sea.

- What kind of wish?

- I'm not going to tell you about my personal wish, but I was not egoistic when making my wishes. I have also wrote several wishes for my close friends wishing them to find their happiness! I wished Parvona speedy recovery since she was also going to attend the festival in Israel (Author's note: Parvona Ahrori, director of Asia-Plus radio, sustained serious injuries in a car accident), I also made several wishes for my relatives, close friends and hope they will come true. You know, I'm knocking on wood, but something is already coming true!

- Did you like Israeli cooking?

- Israeli food is immensely diverse and original. But I'll open the secret and say that I prefer our traditional food since there is one key principle in Israel: religious Jews eat kosher food only. One more thing is that only those kosher restaurants survive there which meet the requirements of observing rabbis. (Author's note: The word "*kosher*" is the Anglicized form of *the Hebrew kasher*, which literally means "good" or "proper." Kashrut is a set of Jewish dietary laws.) This is the right food and I understand that it is very useful and healthy, but I failed to explain that to my spoilt stomach. Apart from its kosher concept, Jewish food is notable for Arab influence and generous use of various flavourings (sesame, cinnamon, mint, coriander) which make local

dishes so unique. Hummus – is a Levantine Arab dip or spread made from cooked, mashed chickpeas, blended with tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, salt and garlic can be found in almost every menu. There is another dip called “tahini” - a paste made from sesame seeds, onion and tomatoes. These two dips are usually served with pitta – a traditional Arab flat cake. Falafel - a ball or cake of ground spiced chickpeas, deep-fried and often served with pitta bread. As for fish – grilled Saint Peter’s fish is a traditional dish. You can also taste marinated tunny fish. Sweeties are very popular in Israel. Pahlavas, nut cookies, caramel pudding, sugared fruits and many other tasty things, but, to tell the truth, I’m not the one who likes sweets.

- Is it true that organizers consider Tajikistan as a potential place to conduct the 5th festival?

- Why not? Tajikistan is a beautiful country and we have all chances to amaze the guests. Our nature is adorable, our cooking is very nourishing, our people are very friendly, the weather is always good for rest! But speaking seriously, this issue will be considered by our culture, TV and radio officials. It’s quite easy to say: let’s conduct the next festival in Tajikistan, in Israel or in Riga! But you have to prepare everything for such event one year in advance. Let’s hope that senior officials will find a common language and will definitely help them to organize the event!

- Irina, I’m trying to understand where do you take your energy from? I remember you used to drive newcomers, worried for their first appearance, for errors during live broadcasts... and same picture can be observed during the past seven years. You tried to work on TV and, if I’m not mistaken, it was good. But why do you still deal with the radio?

- This is a frequently asked question. I used to say that “radio is like an incurable disease”, but now I think that you should not only develop, but also find your mission in both what you do and personal life. One wise man said that “everything is good in it’s season”. And I do not shy to look in my colleagues’ eyes, it’s a pleasure when my voice is recognized, it’s a pleasure to meet people who like the one who works on “Sadoi Dushanbe”, but I just think that it’s a high time for big changes...

- You look mysterious today...

- Maybe this is the influence of Israel? (laughs). I’d like to wish everyone strong health and we should treat each other in a more simple manner, forgive our offenders and be happy for successes of our relatives, find more time for good deeds because we have only one life. Why spending it on lack of talent, anger or depression? Let’s celebrate each day and thank God for our lives! Because this is the most important...



**Academics L. Zolotarevskii and L. Nikolaev
during delivery of the Diploma Irina Umarova**

Interview by Behrooz ZEVAROV

COMPETITION!

11 December - International Mountain Day

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