



Media Report

Media Reporting

Sustainable Governance Indicators 2019

©vege - stock.adobe.com

Indicator

Media Reporting

Question

To what extent do media in your country analyze the rationale and impact of public policies?

41 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = A clear majority of mass media brands focus on high-quality information content analyzing the rationale and impact of public policies.
- 8-6 = About one-half of the mass media brands focus on high-quality information content analyzing the rationale and impact of public policies. The rest produces a mix of infotainment and quality information content.
- 5-3 = A clear minority of mass media brands focuses on high-quality information content analyzing public policies. Several mass media brands produce superficial infotainment content only.
- 2-1 = All mass media brands are dominated by superficial infotainment content.

Finland

Score 9

By providing a continuous flow of information and background analysis, the main print media, TV and radio stations in Finland offer substantive in-depth information on government decisions. This provision takes different forms, such as inserts in regular news programs, special features, debates between proponents of conflicting views, debates between representatives of the government and opposition parties, regular broadcasts of government hearings in parliament, and so on. Empirical information about program volume is not available, but subtracting for “infotainment programs,” between five and seven hours a week of television and radio programming is dedicated to governmental issues. Although declining, daily newspaper circulation numbers remain reasonably high, with most newspapers often providing high-quality political reporting.

Citation:

Lauri Karvonen, Heikki Paloheimo and Tapio Raunio, *Evolution of Political Power in Finland*, pp. 335-344 in Lauri Karvonen, Heikki Paloheimo and Tapio Raunio, eds. *The Changing Balance of Political Power in Finland*, Stockholm: Santérus Förlag, 2016.

Ireland

Score 9

The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) aims to ensure that “the democratic values enshrined in the constitution, especially those relating to rightful liberty of expression, are upheld,” and that broadcasting services are “open and pluralistic.”

The largest TV and radio stations in Ireland are operated by RTÉ, a state-owned public-service broadcaster financed by revenue from the mandatory TV license, as well as by advertising. Since 1988, RTÉ has faced competition from privately owned

radio and television stations. RTÉ devotes a significant proportion of TV and radio air time to news and commentary on current affairs and political issues. It also undertakes original investigative journalism. The privately owned TV and radio stations have to devote specified proportions of airtime to current affairs and public-service programs. However, in terms of listener hours, music and entertainment outweigh current affairs and analysis.

The main stations produce high-quality information programs and programs devoted to in-depth analysis of government policy and decisions. They provide forums for discussions of current affairs, as well as outlets for opinions and grievances. These programs elicit reactions and responses from politicians. The two largest-circulation daily newspapers provide ample information on and analysis of government decisions.

The Press Council of Ireland provides an independent forum for resolving complaints about the press. In 2012, the United Kingdom's Leveson inquiry mentioned the Irish Press Council as a model.

Irish newspaper circulation (print and electronic versions combined) continued to fall over the review period, but the main newspapers are devoting additional resources to improved electronic dissemination of news and analysis.

Norway

Score 9

The mass media's treatment of government decisions and policy is fairly accurate and informative. The two largest broadcast-television channels, NRK and TV2, both produce broad-ranging evening news programs that typically devote considerable space and time to governmental and political affairs. Both channels also regularly (almost daily) broadcast debates and discussions on current affairs.

Statistics show news programs and political debates to have a high number of viewers. Both large television organizations have, over time, maintained and to some extent strengthened their news coverage, in TV2's case by having a new news channel, and in NRK's case by developing a strong brand for news, documentaries and public debate. Political news is frequently featured on popular televised infotainment shows on Friday nights. The leading radio channels (i.e., NRK and to a lesser extent P4) and major digital media publications also devote considerable coverage to political news.

Changes to the media economy – including digitalization, the need for new funding mechanisms and the increasing domination of Facebook and Google – has posed massive challenges to many Norwegian media outlets. Staff cuts have resulted in a reduction of news production, which will likely undermine reporting quality and the media's role as the fourth “pillar of government.” At the same time, social media has

become a key source of news. Powers and resources have therefore also shifted from the professionally edited media, to new digital media actors and to a more complex mix of edited and unedited news.

Sweden

Score 9 Together with Norway, Japan and Finland, Sweden ranks very high regarding news consumption. The overall quality of the political coverage provided by Swedish media is good, if not extremely good.

Public service radio and television in Sweden is still central to the media system. There have been discussions and Commissions concerning the future of public service but thus far no major changes have been put on the agenda.

Compared to many other countries, the coverage is presented by journalists who are experts on Swedish politics. The level of analysis is good and, for the most part, balanced. There is obviously sometimes less professional coverage, too, but taken together, the quality of Swedish newspapers is very good.

Citation:

Andersson, Ulrika, Anders Carlander, Elina Lindgren, Maria Oskarson (eds.) (2018), *Sprickor i fasaden* (Gothenburg: The SOM Institute).

Switzerland

Score 9 Radio and television programs are of high quality in Switzerland. With very few exceptions, radio reports are reliable and analyses are performed on an independent basis in a professional way. Some television programs are trending toward infotainment and the personalization of politics.

On 4 March 2018, voters rejected a popular initiative (“Ja zur Abschaffung der Radio- und Fernsehgebühren”) aiming to eliminate per capita fees for the Swiss public broadcaster (SRF). A strong majority of 71.6% and all cantons voted against the initiative, signaling a strong commitment to public media. In spite of this strong showing, the SRF responded to the aggressive campaign with a downsizing project that led to the abolishment of the radio station in the Swiss capital, Bern. This, in turn, led to public protest faulting the SRF for violating its mission to cover the federalist cultural diversity of Switzerland.

Citation:

<https://www.admin.ch/gov/de/start/dokumentation/abstimmungen/20180304/volksinitiative-ja-zur-abschaffung-der-radio-und-fernsehgebueh.html>

Canada

Score 8

Canada's main TV and radio stations produce a mix of infotainment and high-quality information programs. Public broadcasters, including the CBC and provincial TV channels such as TV Ontario (TVO), provide extensive and often high-quality coverage of politics and news, with a minimum of five to seven hours per week of in-depth information on government decisions. Examples of such programs include TVO's *The Agenda* and CBC's *The House*. A 2013 study comparing news coverage in 11 countries found that the share of news content as a percentage of total broadcast time was highest in Canada, both for domestic and international news coverage. Canadian media coverage is further enhanced by international news channels such as CNN, BBC World News and Al Jazeera, which are readily available. One caveat is that there is little competition among public broadcasters. Conversely, private broadcasters, with the exception of the Canadian Parliamentary Access Channel, are generally focused primarily on infotainment, but also provide some analysis of government decisions. Certain print media, such as the *Globe and Mail*, provide comparatively high-quality and comprehensive analysis of public policy. Others, such as *La Presse*, the *National Post* and other Postmedia publications, provide good coverage of public-policy issues.

As part of their ambitious agenda, the Liberal government promised to make government more open and transparent by revamping the Access to Information Act. A recent report from the information commissioner criticized the proposed legislative amendment (Bill C-58), arguing that the planned changes would curtail of existing rights and restrict media outlets' ability to provide in-depth political coverage.

Citation:

Aalberg et al (2013). International TV News, Foreign Affairs Interest, and Public Knowledge, *Journalism Studies*, 14:3, 387-406.

Information Commissioner of Canada, "Failing to Strike the Right Balance for Transparency Recommendations to improve Bill C-58: An Act to Amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to Make Consequential Amendments to Other Acts" posted at http://www.ci-oic.gc.ca/eng/rapport-special-c-58_special-report-c-58.aspx

Denmark

Score 8

Media play an important role in the democratic process and, through editorial choice, the media has an important influence on agenda-setting. Among media outlets, there is a tendency to make the news easier for the public to relate to by simplifying or personalizing the stories reported, and emphasizing an element of conflict. There is also a tendency to favor senior politicians and government representatives. Weaker actors, such as representatives of immigrants or ethnic minorities, get less coverage, although immigration stories have become important in recent years and are now regularly reported.

In addition to daily news programs, some television and radio stations offer more analytical in-depth programs, which can be quite informative. It is worth mentioning that the education of journalists has improved in recent years. Overall, the Danish media focus more on national rather than international news, including EU issues.

Traditional media face increasing competition from alternative news sources (e.g., news websites and social media) and their financing is declining due to falling advertisement revenue. Policymakers are increasingly using social media (e.g., Twitter) to make policy statements.

Media access to internal government documents has been a sensitive issue because of changed legislation regarding the access to such documents (offentlighedsloven). The new law entered into force 1 January 2014. The two aspects of the new law most criticized were the possibility of the government denying access to internal documents exchanged between a minister and experts (Article 24) and between a minister and a member of the parliament (Article 27). Despite criticism from the Danish Association of Journalists that the exemptions are too extensive, the law remains in force.

The funding of public TV and radio has been debated for some years, and – as a result the funding of the main operator Danmarks Radio (DR) – has been changed from a near-universal license fee to financing via general taxation.

Citation:

Peter Munk Christiansen og Lise Togeby, *Magten i Danmark*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.

“Fakta om ny offentlighedslov,” <http://www.politiko.dk/nyheder/fakta-om-ny-offentlighedslov> (accessed 23 October 2014).

“Ny offentlighedslov – ny praksis for journalister,” <http://www.aabenhedstinget.dk/ny-offentlighedslov-ny-praksis-for-journalister-2/> (accessed 23 October 2014).

Dansk Journalistforbund, Udtalelse fra DJ’s delegeretmøde: Styrk offentlighedsloven, <https://journalistforbundet.dk/nyhed/udtalelse-fra-djs-delegeretmode-styrk-offentlighedsloven> (Accessed 7 October 2018).

Jørgen Grønnegård Christiansen and Jørgen Elklit (eds.), *Det demokratiske system*. 4. udg. Chapter 7. Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2016.

Estonia

Score 8

By providing a continuous flow of information and background analysis, the main daily newspapers, TV and radio stations offer substantive information on government plans and policies. There are three national daily newspapers, two main weeklies, two online news portals, four TV channels and three public-radio channels. Together, these comprise the majority of the entire domestic media market (except for radio broadcasting, where music stations account for the largest market share) and provide adequate information and some analysis of government policy. Policy-

related information takes different forms, including inserts in regular news programs, interviews with experts, debates between proponents of conflicting views, debates between representatives of government and opposition, regular broadcasts of parliament sessions and government press conferences.

However, there are two important challenges. First, the media tends to pay more attention to the performance of political parties as organizations than to parties' policy positions; media coverage can also be overly simplified or sensationalist. This is a particularly salient issue in the print media where the small market size means that journalistic competencies are rather low. Secondly, information on government activities is typically not provided in advance of government decisions, but only after decisions have already been made.

United Kingdom

Score 8

The main TV and radio stations in the United Kingdom – especially those like the BBC that operate under a public charter – provide an extensive array of high-quality news services. Government decisions feature prominently in this programming, and information and analysis on government decisions are both extensive and held to a high standard. There is substantial competition for viewers, in particular between the BBC, ITV, Sky and Channel 4. In addition to news programs, all provide in-depth analysis programs on politics and policy in a variety of formats. The Today Programme on BBC Radio 4 is well known for its highbrow political analysis and scrutiny, and often sets the tone for political debates. Newsnight is the flagship political-news program on TV.

The style of interview on these programs is often explicitly not deferential, and even quite confrontational – especially toward ministers. This is justified by the need to hold politicians and especially government ministers to account. Local radio and press also have a tangible influence within their localities and an increasing number of people resort to online services, most notably BBC Online, as a source of information on government.

Scandals both in the private sector (News of the World) and the public sector (BBC) may have cost some credibility but have so far had no recognizable influence on the functioning of the media system as a whole. Despite political pressure, The Guardian newspaper played a crucial role in the global surveillance disclosures of 2013 and was awarded the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for its efforts.

Germany

Score 7

Public TV and radio broadcasters generally offer in-depth reports on political processes. Competition between the two main public television broadcasters, ARD and ZDF, has forced them to copy the private channels' successful infotainment and politainment formats. Nevertheless, by international standards, ARD and ZDF, in

particular, offer citizens the opportunity to obtain a relatively deep knowledge of political decision-making and their market share has stabilized in recent years. The plurality of the country's television broadcast market is enhanced by the availability of programming from international broadcasters such as CNN, BBC World, CNBC Europe and Al-Jazeera. Public opinion polls demonstrate that public trust in the media is increasing: 42% of the Germans trust the media, 41% are indifferent and only 17% mistrust it. Only 13% believe that the media are lying, the year before it had been 20%. Trust in the media concentrates mainly on the public television and radio broadcasting.

Citation:

faz.net (2018a)Wo zeigt der Kompass denn hin?, faz.net 03.01.2018
<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/medien/nachrichtenredaktion-von-ard-aktuell-feiert-jubilaeum-15370727.html>

faz.net (2018b): Stimmungsmache, faz.net 29.01.2018 <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/bei-der-ard-gibt-es-buhs-fuer-trump-und-jubel-fuer-die-gruenen-15423125.html>

Handelsblatt (2017): Yougov survey, In Media We Trust, Say Germans, Handelsblatt global, January 4, 2017
<https://global.handelsblatt.com/politics/in-media-we-trust-say-germans-672316>

<http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/medienvertrauen-luegenpresse-hysterie-ebbt-laut-neuer-studie-ab-a-1190749.htm>

Israel

Score 7

Israel's media industry is adapting to the global trend of decreased consumption of print and radio news media and the increased dominance of television, the internet and social-media websites. While the Israeli media sector has been bolstered in recent years by the creation of strong independent investigatory websites and blogs that have gained considerable attention in professional and public circles, other new popular outlets such as the free daily Israel Ha'yom often fail to deliver in-depth news coverage.

Despite a frequent tendency to focus on prominent and popular topics of the hour, the Israeli press, public television channels and radio shows do offer interpretative and investigatory journalism that informs the public regarding policy decisions and long-term strategies. Nonetheless, the growing rate of news consumption through social-media websites, the decline in citizens' exposure to print media and TV, and the shallow nature of coverage in new media all significantly reduce the percentage of civilians exposed to in-depth journalistic information.

According to the Israel Democracy Institute's Israeli Democracy Index of 2017, while the public still prefers traditional media channels to social media as their political news source of choice, public trust in social media is revealed to be a more complicated issue. Although the public in general appears to put less trust in social media compared to traditional media, dividing the sample according to ethnicity reveals that the Arab population expresses far larger distrust in social media than the

Jewish population, in which the younger audience appears to be just slightly more trusting of social media than the older audience. Therefore, increasing reliance on social media might be an issue of concern

Citation:

Goldenberg, Roi, “‘The seventh eye’ website won the Israeli prize for critical media,” *Globes* 28.1.2013: <http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000817765> (Hebrew)

Mann, Rafi and Lev-on, Azi, “Annual report: Media in Israel 2016 – agendas, uses and trends,” Ariel University School of Communication: https://store.ariel.ac.il/downloadable/download/sample/sample_id/6/ (Hebrew)

Persisco, Oren, “Restraint and prudence,” *The seventh eye website*: <http://www.the7eye.org.il/9774> (Hebrew).

“Freedom of the Press: Israel 2017,” Freedom House, 2017 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/israel>

Italy

Score 7

The space allocated to political themes in Italian media is quite significant in the 10 most important mass media brands (the three main national newspapers, *Corriere della Sera*, *la Repubblica* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*, which have print and online versions; the three state television channels, RAI1, RAI2 and RAI3; the two Mediaset channels, Canale 5 and Rete 4; and two other private TV channels, Skynews and La7). Television time (both public and private) allocated to political themes is substantial. For instance, the La7 channel alone averages approximately 10 hours per week of political content. A large part of this time is devoted to debates and talk shows involving politicians, journalists and experts, and to covering the most important aspects of current political controversies.

However, detailed, in-depth analysis of government decisions is much rarer, and debates tend to focus on the personality-driven dimensions of power politics. National newspapers provide more in-depth coverage of government decisions, often providing detailed dossiers on their content. Some radio and internet programming gives high-quality information in advance. The broader public has no access or does not seek access to these media.

Luxembourg

Score 7

Luxembourg’s media outlets offer quality reporting on public affairs. All parliamentary debates are conducted in Luxembourgish and in public. Parliamentary meetings are broadcasted on Chamber TV (also available online) and debates of the country’s four largest local councils (Luxembourg City and Esch/ Alzette, Differdange, Dudelange) can be followed online. Furthermore, the Ministers’ irregular public press briefings are given more importance than under the previous administration.

In daily and weekly papers, articles are written mostly in German, often in French and sometimes in English. Certain newspapers are printed only in French; although an English-language monthly journal is also published. Moreover, the government is reforming the press subsidy system to include online media in recognition of the shifting media landscape.

Media coverage is often reactive, when issues have already reached the public in the form of draft legislation or through parliamentary debate. Furthermore, media outlets are quite often used as instruments by interest groups or lobbyists seeking to influence government decision-making in its early stages. Such procedures often have a strong influence on government thinking, as political actors need to take into account views and opinions that are published in the media. In addition, since the 2013 general election and especially since the 2018 elections, social media has become more important due to the increasing number of social media users, and potential for disseminating information easily and rapidly.

Reporting has lost some of its partisan bias. Most media outlets, especially newspapers, have adopted more balanced reporting to preserve or enlarge their audience. The media does play an important role in uncovering information behind government scandals or issues. One example is the extensive media coverage of the so-called Bommeleer affair (a series of bombings of public infrastructure in the 1980s) that was finally brought to court, but without a result. Allegations of dubious activities of the State Secret Service (SREL) also received extensive media coverage and were subsequently the subject of a special parliamentary inquiry. In these two events, media outlets played a crucial role in bringing light to issues that were not made clear by public prosecutors.

Citation:

“Das Bommeleer-Dossier.” Luxemburger Wort. www.wort.lu/de/lokales/das-bommeleer-dossier-5092c3a9e4b0fe37043e8be8. Accessed 24 Oct. 2018.

Reporter. www.reporter.lu. Accessed 24 Oct. 2018.

“Länderporträt Luxemburg.” Mediandatenbank. www.mediadb.eu/de/europa/luxemburg.html. Accessed 24 Oct. 2018.

Netherlands

Score 7

In the digital sphere, viewers and consumers clearly have more choices. The past decade has seen a large expansion of digital radio and television programming. This has resulted in a richer supply of broadcasters, bundled in so-called “plus packages” for viewers, which serve their own target groups with theme-specific broadcasts.

Dutch public television and radio stations produce high-quality information programs analyzing government decisions on a daily basis. Of the 13 national public broadcasters in the Netherlands, eight may be said to consider it their task to inform

the public about governmental affairs and decision-making. The main public TV news channel, NPO, is required to provide 15 hours of reporting on political issues every week. On the radio, the First Channel is primarily tasked with providing information. In recent years, the outreach of the First Channel within society has been decreasing. This is not surprising since new media (i.e., the internet) have grown at the expense of more traditional media and are becoming more influential in the provision of news. NPO broadcasts Politiek 24, a digital television channel on the internet that contains live streams of public debates, analyses, background information and a daily political show. As noted under the “Media Freedom” section, recent policy has pushed for a merger between public media organizations, as well as for limiting their broadcasts to issues of information and culture, leaving entertainment largely to commercial media.

In 2015 – 2018, a majority of Dutch citizens (55%) still read a newspaper or listen to the radio every day. Newspaper readers are to be found increasingly among the older and more highly educated population segment; digital subscriptions are on the rise. The number of high-quality newspapers is fairly low. Younger people actually spend more time listening, watching and communicating on online platforms than older people. Social media platforms have become sources of news, even for journalists. Regional and local newspapers in particular are experiencing severe financial troubles, leading to strong consolidation and concentration tendencies, and a significant increase in one-paper and even no-paper cities. The internet is used daily by 86% of Dutch citizens.

The Commissariat for the Media, tasked with monitoring the diversity and accuracy of media information about government and public policy issues, has expressed concern about the fragmentation of information sources and the “news snacking” habits of media audiences. This fragmentation, continuing commercialization and “infotainment” may have resulted in a situation where media-logic disregards its social and political responsibility to timely and accurately inform citizens about governmental and public affairs. However, the Mediamonitor 2018 reported that Dutch citizens, compared to citizens in other countries, have high trust in media reporting and report relatively little fake news. Nevertheless, there is a substantial decline in younger people reading quality newspapers, while politically relevant information is increasingly acquired via social media.

Citation:

Raad voor Cultuur, Advies Meerjarenbegroting 2009-2013 Nederlandse publieke omroep. Politici en journalisten willen te vaak scoren.

Media monitor, Jaarverslag 2015 (mediamonitor.nl, consulted 10 November 2016)

Commissariaat voor de Media, 15 jaar Mediamonitor, 20 July, 2017 (mediamonitor.nl, consulted 3 November 2017)

Mediamonitor 2018. Media bedrijven en markten; Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2018 ((mediamonitor.nl, accessed 3 November 2018)

Spain

Score 7

The main print periodicals (El País, El Mundo, ABC, La Vanguardia) provide a fairly significant amount of in-depth analyses of the policy process and sophisticated op-ed analyses of government decisions, despite their partisan preferences. The print-media readership is declining, and the impact of these publications is thus limited, but a growing number of readers follow online newspapers (either electronic versions of the mainstream print publications or standalone online publications such as El Confidencial or eldiario.es) and politics-themed blogs (such as Agenda Pública).

TV is the most important source of political information for the average citizen, since almost 70% of Spaniards watch TV news every day. However, a large portion of the time devoted to political information is given over to news and talk shows. In addition, several infotainment-style debate shows are aired during workday mornings and on some evenings (on weekends) but these are often superficial, focusing on polarized arguments with limited contextualized analysis.

A third of Spaniards also follow political news via radio stations, which devote many hours a week to political information. All main stations have early-morning and afternoon programs combining both background news and political debate, as well as a late-night news program. Privately owned radio stations are more ideologically biased than the major TV stations (with participants in the radio debates blatantly biased in favor of or against the government). There are also daily radio programs of reasonable quality focused on business, and therefore on economic policymaking.

Citation:

Evolución de audiencia (2018), <https://www.ojdinteractiva.es/medios-digitales/eldiario-evolucion-audiencia/totales/anual/3896/trafico-global/#>

Austria

Score 6

The freedom of the press in Austria is guaranteed by European and national law. Nevertheless, two problems are relevant:

- The Austrian media lack pluralism. The publicly owned Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) dominates the radio and television broadcast markets, although competition by foreign and privately owned media is growing. In response to criticism of this dominance, the ORF offers guarantees of internal independence and internal political pluralism. The ORF is impartial by law and fulfills its mandate reasonably well, making up for deficits existing elsewhere in the media environment. The increasing significance of social media is a deepening challenge because it is not bound by the rules of impartiality as the ORF is.

- The country's print-media market is highly concentrated. One daily paper, Die Kronen Zeitung, serves more than a third of the country's readership, and increasingly uses this dominant position to issue biased political information, often in a simplified manner. Moreover, the expanding role of freely distributed print media, more or less dependent on funds for commercial or political promotion is problematic insofar as it makes it more difficult for readers to distinguish propaganda from information. High-quality political information is available from daily and weekly papers with more limited circulation, but high-quality media face considerable financial difficulties.

The new government will have an impact on media reporting, especially concerning the ORF. The ORF faces ever-more criticism from the right-wing – now in government – for its independent reports. It can be expected that the law which defines structure, functions and finances of the ORF will be rewritten, but to what extent is unclear.

The government's intention to change the structures of and rules for the ORF have not as yet been defined in detail. But the government (and especially the FPÖ) has accused some ORF programs of being unbalanced. Regarding the print media, the problem of high concentration remains the main challenge for a system which guarantees media freedom but does not seem to offer enough pluralistic choices. The impact of social media has been acknowledged but no clear political strategy has been developed for dealing with media beyond the traditional rules of responsibility.

Citation:

The government's intention to change structures of and rules for the ORF have not – yet – become defined in detail. But the government (and especially the FPÖ) accuses some ORF programs of being unbalanced. Regarding the print media, the problem of high concentration is still to be seen as the main challenge for a system which guarantees media freedom but does not seem to offer enough pluralistic choices. The impact of social media has been acknowledged but no clear political strategy has been developed how to deal with media beyond the traditional rules of responsibility.

Belgium

Score 6

Television-news programs provide a relatively reasonable level of information, with a greater share of high-quality content and less focus on personalities than in Italy or France, for example. However, the economic crisis in the media sector is accelerating a trend toward sensational, lower-quality information, as well as a growing inability to conduct in-depth investigations or monitor policymaking. As a consequence, public perception of media quality is on a downward trend.

Bucking the trend, however, a spate of national and international scandals emerged during the review period. These ranged from abuse of public office to international tax evasion. This stimulated popular attention to the news, and induced newspapers and other media to improve the depth of their information on specific political and policy matters. But their capacity to maintain attention to specific issues over time and to explain complex policies effectively remains weak.

Citation:

<http://www.institut-solidaris.be/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/LaConfianceDansLesMedias.pdf>

Czechia

Score 6

The main TV and radio stations provide daily news programs and some deeper discussion and analysis programs on a weekly basis. However, much of the commentary is superficial, and debates are usually structured to represent the views of the main political parties. The quality of information on government decisions has improved with the digitalization process. Czech TV established CT24, a channel dedicated to news, which also broadcasts online and offers continual analysis of domestic and international events. The 2018 presidential campaign showed more balanced reporting from state tv channels, while most private outlets were deemed to be imbalanced in their reporting by the Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting. The Council also noted that in some cases, these private outlets used populist rhetoric and demonstrated a clear bias in favor of the president. The print media is dominated by Prime Minister Babiš's MAFRA group which typically praises ANO ministers and criticizes Social Democrat ministers and the opposition. However, the growing diversity of the online and blended media sphere (i.e., combined online and print media) has increased the availability of investigative journalism and in-depth analysis. The ownership structure of the new media includes non-profit, crowdsourcing and paid content. Citizens are increasingly concerned and willing to support independent journalism. The circulation of quality weeklies, which provide in-depth analysis, increased between 2017 and 2018 by an average of 10%. Online media often engage experts, members of parliament and stakeholders in in-depth debates. Social media play an important role in increasing the visibility of policy issues.

France

Score 6

Mass media, notably morning (radio) and evening programs, offer quality information concerning government decisions. As for print media, the crucial issue is the division between local and national media. A few quality daily papers and weekly papers provide in-depth information, but their circulation is low and on the decline. In many instances, the depth and magnitude of information is dependent upon the level of polarization of the government policy. Instead, in local newspapers, information is often superficial and inadequate. The same division applies to private and public audiovisual channels (some private channels offer only limited, superficial and polemical information), and to the emerging online media (only some of which offer quality information and analysis). On the whole, economic information is rather poor. Social media networks tend to substitute for traditional media and usually offer a very poor alternative. Mobilization is becoming more

important at the expense of providing fair and checked information. This tough competition contributes to a deterioration in the quality of traditional media. Rather than provide neutral information about an issue, media tends to illustrate its purpose by relying on the testimony of a “citizen of the street,” usually dissatisfied with the consequences he or she might face or fear.

Iceland

Score 6

Iceland’s main TV and radio stations provide fairly substantive in-depth information on government decisions. Radio analysis typically tends to be deeper than that found on television since the small size of the market limits the financial resources of TV stations. However, in-depth analysis on TV increased significantly when the private TV station Hringbraut increased such analyses in their program in 2016. However, in 2018, the TV station is struggling financially and sponsored programs are frequent at present. Critical analysis of government policies by independent observers, experts, and journalists is a fairly recent phenomenon in Iceland.

The Special Investigation Committee report had a separate chapter on the media before and during the 2008 economic collapse. The report criticizes the media for not having been critical enough in their coverage of the Icelandic banks and other financial institutions before the 2008 economic collapse. The report argues, on the basis of content analyses of media coverage of the banks, that the media was too biased toward the banks. This bias, well known in the United States during the 1920s for example, was associated with overlapping ownership of the banks and media companies.

Japan

Score 6

The Japanese media system is dominated by five major TV networks, including public broadcaster NHK, plus a handful of major national newspapers. These publications are widely read, though their circulation is declining, and provide information in a sober style. However, because of their close personal links to political figures, which finds its institutionalized expression in the journalist club system, these newspapers rarely expose major scandals. Nonetheless, their editorials can be quite critical of government policy. Investigative journalism is typically undertaken by weekly or monthly publications. While some of these are of high quality, others are more sensationalist in character. Another source for exposing scandals is the international press.

Personnel changes at NHK after the Abe-led government took power produced a leadership that openly declared its intention to steer a pro-government course. The government’s assertive approach has also been evident in other media areas. In terms of public trust in the media, Japan holds a middling rank in international comparison

according to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's Digital News Report 2018. However, in the 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer it received the third-lowest rank among 28 reviewed countries.

In part as a reflection of these trends, new social media such as YouTube, Line, Twitter and Facebook, along with the news channels based on them, have gained a considerable following. This also holds true for new online publications such as BuzzFeed Japan and Huffington Post. However, while their impact on the overall quality of information is unclear, they do seem to be contributing to the emergence of so-called partisan media in Japan.

Citation:

Tomohiro Osaki, Academics, TV journalists slam minister's threat against 'biased' programming, fear media self-censorship, *The Japan Times*, 2 March 2016, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/03/02/national/tv-journalists-slam-ministers-threat-biased-programs-fear-media-self-censorship/>

Philip Brator, Sticky bonds of the media and government, *The Japan Times*, 24 June 2017, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/06/24/national/media-national/sticky-bonds-media-government/>

Kaori Hayashi, Japan's Media: Facing Public Indifference More than Distrust, Nippon Communications Foundation, 24 April 2018, <https://www.nippon.com/en/currents/d00398/>

Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Digital News Report 2018

Edelman, 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer - Japan, 16 February 2018, <https://de.slideshare.net/EdelmanJapan/2018-edelman-trust-barometer-japan>

Portugal

Score 6

There continues to be a lack of systematic in-depth policy analysis. Policy analysis is usually delegated to expert commentators, with little or no journalistic work performed on policy issues.

In an earlier SGI report, we noted the large amount of commentary time allotted to former politicians, particularly on television, a pattern that generates potential conflict-of-interest questions and does not seem to have contributed to improving the quality of policy analysis. The most salient example of the confluence between politicians and television is provided by Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, a former leader of the PSD and Portugal's most popular TV commentator, who was elected president of Portugal in January 2016.

Slovenia

Score 6

In Slovenia, the majority of both electronic and print mass media fail to provide high-quality information on government decisions, but mostly focus on superficial subjects. However, there is a clear distinction to be made between the private and public media here. Whereas the private media, especially private electronic media,

tend to focus on non-political information and infotainment, the public media, especially television and radio broadcasters, put more emphasis on providing high-quality information about government decisions. They even devote some attention to the debates preceding these decisions. This particularly applies when debates are initiated by the government.

South Korea

Score 6

South Korea's main media-related problem is the low quality of many outlets, rendering them unable to serve as facilitators of public debate or civic culture. Part of the problem here is the country's strong commercialism and associated weakness in political journalism. Newspapers and TV rely heavily on advertising revenues. Most prominent TV stations produce a mix of infotainment and quality information about government policies. Information on international events in particular receives little coverage in the Korean news media. The major newspapers clearly lean to the political right, although alternatives do exist. In general, political reporting tends to be framed as personalized power politics, diverting attention away from important political issues. The internet news sector is dominated by two major news portals, Naver and Daum, although there are alternatives such as Newstapa, an investigative journalism network. On a positive note, the media played an important role in uncovering and reporting on the political scandals during the last year of the Park Geun-hye administration.

Citation:

Sang-young Rhyu, "McCarthyism in South Korea: The Naked Truth and History of Color Politics," East Asia Foundation Policy Debates, No.68 (March 28, 2017).

Newstapa, <https://newstapa.org/>

United States

Score 6

For the interested citizen, it is easy to find a large volume of serious, high-quality reporting on government and policy, with balanced, reasonably objective treatment of issues – in print, on the internet or on television. But such qualities do not describe the majority of major news outlets, nor the outlets used by the largest audiences. A majority of citizens obtain most of their news from television rather than newspapers or the internet, and the quality of the national news broadcasts has been declining. However, reputable news-reporting and news-analysis programs are available on radio and TV networks. The information quality of talk shows varies, ranging from “infotainment” to the serious discussion of policy issues with reputable experts.

In the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election campaign, investigations have determined that Russian content farms, working through disguised social media accounts, created false and misleading news posts on Facebook and other social media that were received hundreds of millions of times by unsuspecting social

media users. The posts were generally designed to increase division and conflict in American society and, in particular, to promote the candidacy and subsequent presidency of Donald Trump, and have continued to do so. Facebook and other media companies have been embarrassed by their failure of self-policing. It is unclear how effectively such interventions can be prevented.

Australia

Score 5 Television and radio stations vary in the time they devote to substantive information on policy issues and government decisions. Commercial broadcasters devote relatively little time to such matters, but the state-owned broadcaster, which has one national television station and a number of radio stations, as well as a website, devotes a considerable amount of time to high-quality analysis of government decisions. Newspaper coverage is likewise variable, with the popular newspapers providing superficial coverage and the quality broadsheets providing more in-depth coverage and discussion. While Australia used to have more high-quality newspapers, market concentration has contributed to a decline in print media diversity and quality. The takeover of Australia's respected newspaper publisher Fairfax by the television station Channel Nine will lead to greater concentration and may further weaken existing newspapers.

To some extent, countering this decline has been the emergence of a number of online-only news providers. While the impact of these news outlets is difficult to assess, it is clear that at least several of them have risen to the status of mass-media outlets that are widely read by the Australian community.

Citation:

<https://theconversation.com/the-death-of-newspapers-have-we-reached-the-tipping-point-54728>

<https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2013/july/1372600800/eric-beecher/death-fairfax-and-end-newspapers>

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2018/aug/03/the-fairfax-takeover-and-how-it-will-worsen-australias-media-industry-squeeze>

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/nov/19/fairfax-media-shareholders-approve-nine-takeover-bid>

Croatia

Score 5 As a result of the rise of media conglomerates and the dominance of foreign owners, the Croatian media sector is highly commercialized. Entertainment genres prevail in both the electronic and print media. Croatia lacks a great, serious daily newspaper comparable with Delo in Slovenia or Politika in Serbia. Nevertheless, the newspapers Jutarnji list and Vecernji list provide good coverage of Croatian political, economic and social affairs. As for electronic media, market share has shifted from the partisan public broadcaster HRT to the more objective independent broadcasters TV Nova and RTL Croatia.

Cyprus

Score 5

The media landscape features a generally low capacity to analyze and evaluate policies. This is due to poor issue knowledge, limited research and partisan biases as well as a low awareness of media ethics rules. Conspiracy theories are present in media reporting. Economic difficulties have reduced the number of dailies to four and increased media's dependence on financial interests.

Coverage of political issues offers little insight, with in-depth reporting, offered mostly by the public broadcaster and Sunday papers, becoming increasingly rare. Analysts often fail to disclose their political connections or possible conflicts of interest. Personal views and preferences influence journalists' reporting. In 2018, media did however continue to take a critical view of inconsistencies in some government policies. Still, the media's approach vis-a-vis institutions and politicians could sometimes hardly disguise their preconceived ideas or self-interest.

The usual polarizing and confrontational rhetoric in media coverage of issues related to the Cyprus problem dominated the 2018 presidential elections. A journalistic glossary of terms that could avoid inciting tension between the two sides in Cyprus, sponsored by the OSCE, sparked controversy and friction between journalists.

The absence of an audit body for print-media circulation figures and transparency in media ownership obstruct the public's capacity to evaluate the information received.

Greece

Score 5

While in terms of newspaper circulation and quality newspapers Greece is ranked in the middle among OECD countries, the reliability and accuracy of Greek news media is largely doubted by the public. Pew research published in October 2018 showed that in no other country do people as extensively believe that news reporting is inaccurate as in Greece. This finding is confirmed by a 2017 Reuters Institute report that also notes that Greece is the only country where trust of social media exceeds that of news media.

Meanwhile, the incumbent government has tightened its control over state-owned media and an oligopolistic structure has begun to emerge in the media sector. In the period under review, one major television channel (Mega) went out of business, while another (Alpha TV) was bought by one of its competitors. The most popular television and radio channels are privately owned and provide infotainment rather than in-depth reporting. Such channels may offer in-depth reporting only in cases in which the economic interests of private media owners are affected by a prospective government decision. Media owners often change sides, first favoring the government, then the opposition.

Political debates in the media tend to be rather general, along partisan lines, while in-depth reporting and analysis are rare. The presentation of issues is more sentimental and partisan (pro- or anti-government) than objective. Most people inform themselves through television programs or various news websites. Finally, there is recurrent, deep divide between pro-government and anti-government media (partisanship has been a strong feature of Greek media for decades). In short, one may find interesting in-depth reporting by browsing Greek websites, but overall there was a further decline in the already unsatisfactory performance of Greek media during the review period.

Citation:

Information on newspaper circulation and quality newspapers is available on this platform, through the SGI dataset. The Pew research, published in October 2018, which contained comparative tables on citizens' views on accuracy and reliability of news media is available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/01/11/publics-globally-want-unbiased-news-coverage-but-are-divided-on-whether-their-news-media-deliver/>

Reuters Institute, Digital News Research 2017
https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%202017%20web_0.pdf?utm_source=digitalnewsreport.org&utm_medium=referral

Latvia

Score 5

A minority of the ten most important mass-media brands in Latvia provide high-quality information. The majority of reporting is a mix of quality information and infotainment programs. The financial constraints on the media brought about by audience and advertising shifts to internet-based sources and limited budgets for public broadcasting have had a negative effect on the provision of high-quality content. Additional challenges include the proliferation of pro-Russian narratives in the media, broadcasted by Russia as well as Latvian outlets and shared through social networks.

Nevertheless, some media players have succeeded in meeting a high standard of quality. The weekly magazine IR, established in 2010, provides in-depth information on government policy plans as well as publishes leaked information of broad political significance. Investigative reporting on public and private television stations fulfills a watchdog function. In 2017, a concerted effort of investigative journalism by the public broadcaster put the treatment of children in institutions on the political agenda. Sustained analytical focus on issues of public concern is provided by the non-profit investigative-journalism center Re:Baltica, founded in August 2011. It focuses on issues such as the social costs of economic austerity, consumer protection and drug-money flows. By cooperating with the mainstream media, it has succeeded in moving these issues onto the public agenda.

Economic constraints on the media have exacerbated the media's tendency to allow financial pressures to influence content. Research indicates that hidden commercial advertising can be arranged in any media channel in Latvia. Hidden political

advertising is denied by the Latvian-language media, but acknowledged by the Russian-language media.

New concerns have arisen about the influence of Russia's "hybrid warfare" on the media environment in Latvia, especially for Russian-language media consumers. Proposals to expand the public-broadcasting services to include Russian-language programming have stalled, however.

Data from 2017 show that trust in media stands at 50% (6% completely trust, 44% mostly trust). This level of trust is slightly less than when information is obtained through social networks (e.g., friends and family). The most trusted media sources in Latvia are internet news site www.delfi.lv (cited by 18% as the most trusted), followed by the public broadcasters (11% for LTV, 7% for LR) and another internet site www.tvnet.lv (8%).

The key challenge in the near future is likely to be the successful implementation of media policy (e.g., a more robust implementation of the current Mass Media Policy Guidelines of Latvia 2016 – 2020).

Citation:

1. Rožukalne A. (2010), Research Paper on Hidden Advertising Issues in the Media, Available at (in Latvian): http://politika.lv/article_files/21_17/original/slepta_reklama_mediju_p_rakse.pdf?1343212009, Last assessed: 20.05.2013
2. Ministry of Culture (2017). Media Literacy. Available at (in Latvian): https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/mediju_politika/petijumi/Medijpratiba_petijuma%20rezultati_Latvijas%20Fakti_18_07_2017.pdf
3. Cabinet of Ministers (2016). Mass Media Policy Guidelines of Latvia 2016–2020. Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/286455>, Last assessed: 02.01.2019
4. Vita Zelce (2018), The Diversity of the Media Environment in Latvia (in Latvian, with and annotation in English), Available at: https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/mediju_politika/petijumi/Latvijas-mediju-vides-daudzveidiba-small.pdf, Last assessed: 05.01.2019

Lithuania

Score 5

A minority of mass-media organizations, whether TV, radio, print or online, provide high-quality information content analyzing government decisions. Since it is quite expensive to provide high-quality analysis within Lithuania's small media market, the state-funded National Radio and Television is in the best position to undertake in-depth analysis of government decisions. Andrius Tapinas, a famous Lithuanian journalist and television host, launched a weekly political discussion show, which attracted about 4,300 financial supporters and thousands of viewers. Other mass-media brands tend to produce infotainment-style programming. Although the Lithuanian media are regarded as quite independent, they are not widely trusted by the public. Indeed, in September 2018, only 34.7% of respondents to a national survey stated they trusted the media.

Citation:
<http://www.vilmorus.lt/en>

Malta

Score 5 Maltese media outlets often publish what can be described as “infotainment,” or sensational or superficial content. Two reasons may explain this: First, in the country’s highly polarized and very small society, media outlets tend to follow their owners’ political lead, which here is often political parties or people with political connections to a political party. Second, the competition for readership and audiences is fierce, and revenue constraints restrict the quality of publications’ output. High-quality analysis of government policies, for example, remains rare. That said, people in Malta today see their national media as being more free and independent, and as providing more diversity of viewpoints, than was the case five years ago. Improvements to the Freedom of Information Act in 2012 have also improved media reporting, though numerous restrictions still exist and newspapers cannot are often unable to obtain relevant data. The 2017 Media Pluralism Monitor assigned Malta a medium risk level (56%) in its protection of the right to information indicator. Malta is one of the few countries in Europe in which there is no media-literacy policy aimed at giving citizens the critical skills needed for active participation in the contemporary exchange of information.

Citation:
Aquilina, K Information Freedom at last, Times of Malta 22/08/12
<https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20180309/local/maltese-journalists-basic-protection-takes-a-dip-report.672768>Media
Media Pluralism Monitor 2017

Mexico

Score 5 The quality of the media is mixed. The quality of some Mexico City newspapers and magazines is high, but the majority of the press, and particularly radio and TV focus mainly on entertainment. This is particularly troublesome as there is a high degree of media concentration, with only two national TV companies (Televisa and TV Azteca) controlling 94% of commercial TV frequencies. These companies have similar programming and political inclinations, and account for 76% of the political news content consumed by Mexicans. The Mexican NGO Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social claims that the concentration of media ownership in only a few hands undermines media pluralism. The close ties between the two major television companies and the government limits their capacity to impartially inform the public. In 84% of the cases, the owners have familial or business relationships with well-known politicians. For example, the 2012 election created the “telebancada,” a prominent caucus of 20 congressmen who have worked directly or indirectly for one

of the two TV companies.

On the supply side, the quality of journalism remains a challenge. Particularly on security-related issues, increasing violence against critical and investigative journalism often results in self-censorship.

At the same time, media diversity (online media) has strongly increased in the last decade and Mexicans do have access to high-quality offerings if they are interested. Moreover, information on Mexican politics is easily accessible from United States and Latin American media outlets due to technical progress. However, this diversity in content and quality will hardly have an impact on the majority of the population as only a very small minority of Mexicans use the internet and newspapers as their main sources of political information. The influence of manipulating news and social media – a topic of increasing relevance in many OECD countries – is as yet an understudied theme in Mexico, but probably will gain importance.

Citation:

MOM (2018). Media Ownership Monitor Mexico: Who owns the media?. <http://mexico.mom-rsf.org/>

New Zealand

Score 5

Not all television and radio stations produce high-quality information programs, but both Television New Zealand (TVNZ) and Radio New Zealand provide a regular evaluation of government decisions. TVNZ's TVOne has three news programs per day, each lasting between 30 minutes to one hour, as well as a lighthearted daily current affairs magazine-style program. It also has an hour-long current affairs program, "Q and A," which screens once a week and focuses on domestic politics. TVNZ 7, a station established in 2008, offered a range of news and current affairs programming and attracted a small but loyal audience prior to its closure in 2012. A second television network, TV3, offers a similar news and current affairs schedule to that of TVNZ. Radio New Zealand has four extensive news features per day in addition to hourly news programs. Newspapers provide information and analysis on government decisions and policy issues, although many articles report government statements verbatim and such stories tend to be relegated to the inner pages, with crime and celebrity stories dominating the headlines. The decline of investigative journalism by electronic- and print-media outlets has been noted by media commentators, although internet commentary, including blogs, has to some extent provided a substitute.

Citation:

TV One: <http://tvnz.co.nz/tv-one> (accessed October 9, 2014).

Radio New Zealand: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/programmes> (accessed October 9, 2014).

Poland

Score 5

Government decisions are widely covered by the country's main TV and radio stations. Due to the media law, the public TVP is often referred to as TV-PiS. Jacek Kurski, a PiS party ideologist, was appointed as TV director and hired several party loyal journalists as anchors for the news shows and other relevant positions. In the private media, despite a tendency toward infotainment, the quality of reporting, especially of the two major TV companies, POLSAT and TVN, has increased. Rzeczpospolita, the second-largest daily paper in Poland, has benefited from a change in ownership and editorial staff, and has become less politically partisan. Still, there are few print outlets and TV and radio stations that have been able to resist political pressure, and the media is divided into pro- or anti-government camps. Public trust in the objectivity of the media has always been quite low, but has today reached a new, very low level. The leading TV news show – Wiadomosci, on TVP – has lost almost 20% of its viewers since 2015. Generally, survey respondents' party affiliations influence the level to which they trust public TV and radio organizations: for example, 87% of PiS supporters think the TVP public TV station is “good,” while only 21% of PO supporters have the same opinion; by contrast, 92% of PO supporters trust TVN, compared to just 46% of PiS supporters.

Slovakia

Score 5

The quality and professionalism of media reporting in Slovakia is not extraordinarily high. The public TV and radio stations provide daily news programs and some analytical, critical programs on a weekly basis. However, much of the commentary is superficial, and debates usually serve as a vehicle for the views of the parliamentary parties. The commercialization of nationwide broadcasters, with a consequent negative impact on public-interest news and current-affairs coverage, has not left the public stations untouched. TA3, a private TV channel dedicated to news, is heavily influenced by its owner, who allegedly sponsors SNS and its leader. The commercial media sector tends to eschew in-depth analysis of current affairs and instead follows an infotainment or scandal-driven news agenda. As for the print media, the recent ownership changes have raised concerns about the political agenda of the new owners and the resulting decline in journalistic quality. A new risk is the growing popularity of conspiracy websites, many of which are sponsored by Russia. For example, the negative and often inaccurate articles on migration issues in most of the print media testify to the lack of quality. The Kuciak and Kušnírová murders have somehow united journalists and has fostered interest in investigative journalism, but has not changed the structural constraints on media quality.

Bulgaria

Score 4

Bulgaria's media sector suffers from heavy bias, focusing on sensationalism and scandal as a means of gaining public attention rather than producing in-depth and consistent coverage and analysis of important societal processes. In recent years, in the TV programming, this has been accompanied by a heavy accent on reality shows, which is another drain on the broadcasting time available for analyzing government and policy decisions.

Most print-media organizations can be considered as appendages to their owners' businesses. As a consequence, high-quality journalism is secondary to the owners' respective business interests in print media. However, high-quality investigative journalism and political commentary is still available in print, electronic and online media.

In their coverage, most major media organizations tend to frame government decisions as personalized power politics, diverting attention away from the substance of the policy toward entertainment or sensationalism. Usually there is no coverage of the preparatory stages of policy decisions. When coverage begins, basic information about a given decision or policy is provided, but typically without any deep analysis of its substance and societal importance.

Online media, whose numbers and importance are increasing, offer a new venue for coverage of policy decisions. In some instances, online media promises timelier and more in-depth reporting on topical issues. This was the case in the summer of 2018 when the online investigative outlet Bivol uncovered possibly serious abuses and cronyism in public procurement.

Chile

Score 4

Legal norms are published in the Official Journal (Diario Oficial de la República de Chile), a state institution dependent on the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security. Its print version was terminated on 17 August 2016. Since then, the Official Journal is available only as an online edition.

Although locally or regionally produced news programs tend to be of higher quality and draw large audiences – particularly through radio – Chile's newspapers and the main public TV stations report tabloid news, and employ bold headlines and techniques with strong popular and infotainment appeal. Furthermore, statistics released by the National TV Commission (Consejo Nacional de Televisión) show that on average, less than five hours a week per channel or radio station is spent discussing in-depth political information. More than 50% of the news presented through publicly accessible channels is dedicated to sports and crime. Surveys

indicate that the Chilean audience would prefer less sports news and more focus on national and international politics. Due to the biased media landscape, there is a strong ideological framing of political information and policy discussion.

Chile's largest free TV channel (TVN) is state-owned, and by law is required to provide balanced and equal access to all political views and parties – a regulation which is overseen by the National Television Directorate (Consejo Nacional de Televisión, CNTV). Although La Nación and TVN are state-owned, they must operate according to market rules; they have to fund themselves by relying on advertising and high audience ratings.

During the period under review, the Senate approved an extra \$47 million in funding for TVN in order to save the channel from bankruptcy.

Since the print edition of the La Nación newspaper was eliminated by the end of 2010, the quality of its reporting and in-depth information on government decision-making has dropped significantly.

Citation:

http://www.cntv.cl/prontus_cntv/site/artic/20130723/asocfile/20130723171104/pluralismo_en_la_televisi_n_p_bli ca.pdf

<http://www.diarioficial.cl/quienes-somos/>

Romania

Score 4

Media coverage of government decisions and public policy continues to be highly partisan and emphasize political scandals and politicians' personalities rather than in-depth policy analysis. Crucially, a number of media outlets with major market shares (i.e., the Antena 3 television station) have continued to contribute to the radicalization of Romanian politics by manipulating or spreading misinformation regarding public opinion and political discourse. However, there is a clear minority of mass-media brands – such as the Digi 24 television station and HotNews.ro, an online news source – that produce higher quality, less partisan, and more in-depth policy-related information. The ability of this media to provide such information is, however, under threat from several fronts, including the governing coalition's attempts to control the media and the eroding public trust in the media.

Citation:

Boros, C., J. Cusick (2017): Bought and paid for – how Romania's media is pressured by corporate and political masters. openDemocracy, November 22, London (<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/bought-and-paid-for-how-romania-s-media-is-pressured-by-corporate-and-polit/>).

Hungary

Score 3

The Hungarian media landscape has undergone two different processes in the last years: depoliticization and scandalization. Depoliticization is the result of a new type of self-censorship, caused by the attacks of the government and their representatives on

the press and civil society organizations. The official media often does not report on the events that reflect poorly on the government, and since the majority of the population can reach only the state-controlled media, they are not informed of these events. The sharp polarization of political life in Hungary has facilitated a replacement of in-depth analysis by a preoccupation with scandals, whether real or alleged. There is relatively little in-depth analysis of government decisions in the state-controlled public media, or in those private outlets close to Fidesz. The independent policy institutes and some expert-based NGOs have regularly published policy analyses that have been widely discussed in the opposition media. The mass demonstrations, as well as the deepening rift within Fidesz, stemming from regular corruption scandals and provocative luxurious consumption habits, have elevated the significance of media reporting. The print media, including the tabloid press, have been important in discovering the big scandals and policy failures. The significance of online media – Index, 444, HVG, Átlátszó, Mércse – has grown tremendously because they have been decisive in revealing the government's behind-the-scene activities.

Turkey

Score 2

In the aftermath of the early presidential and parliamentary elections in June 2018, the pluralistic structure of Turkey's media was fatally undermined by the sale of Doğan Media, the flagship of Turkey's media, to Demirören media, a pro-government media conglomerate in 2018. Media freedoms deteriorated significantly after the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016. Numerous journalists were imprisoned without indictment, which had an intimidating effect on other journalists. In consequence, it is difficult for citizens to find objective or substantive in-depth information on government policies and government decision-making. A media-ownership structure based on industrial conglomerates (the so-called Mediterranean or polarized pluralist media model), the government's clear-cut differentiation between pro- and anti-government media, and the increasingly polarized public discourse make it difficult for journalists to provide substantial information to the public. News coverage and debates are mainly one-sided in the pro-government media, while self-censorship is common in the mainstream, neutral media. This is also true even of the main news agencies, such as Anadolu (a state-owned company) and Doğan, which has been sold to Demirören media. Superficial reporting, self-censorship and dismissal of critical journalists from their job are widespread within the major media outlets. Media ownership, and direct and indirect government intervention in private media outlets and journalism obscure the objective analyses of government policies. Thus, few newspapers, radio or TV stations offer in-depth analysis of government policies or their effects concerning human rights, the Kurdish issues, economic conditions and so on.

In 2017, internet freedom declined in Turkey and several internet sites were blocked, including sites managed by journalists in exile. Social media services and websites

(e.g. Wikipedia) were also blocked. The minister of transportation and communication stated that Turkey is often mentioned together with terrorist organizations on social media platforms. For example, Wikipedia articles include content that suggests Turkey supports terrorist organizations. Turkey is among 30 governments that employs “opinion shapers” to promote government views and agendas, and counter government critics on social media.

Citation:

European Commission, Turkey 2018 Report, Brussels, 17.4.2018, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-turkey-report.pdf> (accessed 1 November 2018)

Freedom House, Freedom of the Press 2017, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FOTP_2017_booklet_FINAL_April28.pdf (accessed 1 November 2018)

Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2018: The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/freedom-net-2018/rise-digital-authoritarianism> (accessed 1 November 2018)

N. Newman and et al., Reuters Institute Digital News Reports, <http://media.digitalnewsreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/digital-news-report-2018.pdf?x89475> (accessed 1 November 2018)

“Turkey spells out conditions to blocked site Wikipedia,” <http://www.euronews.com/2017/05/11/wikipedia-restriction-turkey> (accessed 1 November 2017)

Address | Contact

Bertelsmann Stiftung

Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256
33311 Gütersloh
Germany
Phone +49 5241 81-0

Dr. Christof Schiller

Phone +49 5241 81-81470
christof.schiller@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Dr. Thorsten Hellmann

Phone +49 5241 81-81236
thorsten.hellmann@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Pia Paulini

Phone +49 5241 81-81468
pia.paulini@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de
www.sgi-network.org