



Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era: Application of the Media Pluralism Monitor in the European Union, Albania and Turkey in the years 2018-2019

Country report: Albania

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Annexe 1. Country Team

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Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era: Application of the Media Pluralism Monitor in the European Union, Albania and Turkey in the years 2018-2019

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1. About the project

1.1. Overview of the Project

The Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) is a research tool designed to identify potential risks to media pluralism in the Member States and Candidate Countries of the European Union, and considering both online and offline news environments. This narrative report has been produced within the framework of the implementation of the MPM carried out in 2019, under a project financed by a preparatory action of the European Parliament. The implementation was conducted in 28 EU Member States, Albania and Turkey with the support of a grant awarded by the European Union to the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) at the European University Institute.

1.2. Methodological note

The CMPF partners with experienced, independent national researchers to carry out the data collection and to author the narrative reports, except in the case of Italy where data collection was carried out centrally by the CMPF team. The research is based on a standardised questionnaire and apposite guidelines that were developed by the CMPF.

In Albania the CMPF partnered with Kristina Voko, Besar Likmeta (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Albania), Dorian Matlija (Res Publica), who conducted the data collection, scored and commented the variables in the questionnaire and interviewed relevant experts. The report was reviewed by CMPF staff. Moreover, to ensure accurate and reliable findings, a group of national experts in each country reviewed the answers to particularly evaluative questions (see Annex II for the list of experts).

Risks to media pluralism are examined in four main thematic areas, which are considered to capture the main areas of risk for media pluralism and media freedom: Basic Protection, Market Plurality, Political Independence and Social Inclusiveness. The results are based on the assessment of a number of indicators for each thematic area (see Table 1 below).

Basic Protection	Market Plurality	Political Independence	Social Inclusiveness
Protection of freedom of expression	Transparency of media ownership	Political independence of media	Access to media for minorities
Protection of right to information	News media concentration	Editorial autonomy	Access to media for local/regional communities and for community media
Journalistic profession, standards and protection	Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement	Audiovisual media, online platforms and elections	Access to media for people with disabilities
Independence and effectiveness of the media authority	Media viability	State regulation of resources and support to media sector	Access to media for women
Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet	Commercial & owner influence over editorial content	Independence of PSM governance and funding	Media literacy

Table 1: Areas and Indicators of the Media Pluralism Monitor

The Monitor does not consider the digital dimension to be an isolated area but rather as intertwined with traditional media and existing principles of media pluralism and freedom of expression. Nevertheless, the Monitor allows for an extraction of a digital-specific risk score and the report contains a specific analysis of risks related to the digital news environment. The results for each domain and indicator are presented on a scale from 0 to 100%. Scores between 0 and 33% are

considered low risk, 34 to 66% are medium risk, while those between 67 and 100% are high risk.

On the level of indicators, scores of 0 were rated 3% and scores of 100 were rated 97% by default, to avoid an assessment of total absence or certainty of risk.

Disclaimer: The content of the report does not necessarily reflect the views of the CMPF or the EC, but represents the views of the national country team that carried out the data collection and authored the report. Due to updates and refinements in the questionnaire, the MPM2020 scores may not be fully comparable with MPM2017 ones. For more details, see the CMPF report on MPM2020, soon available on: <http://cmpf.eui.eu/media-pluralism-monitor/>.

2. Introduction

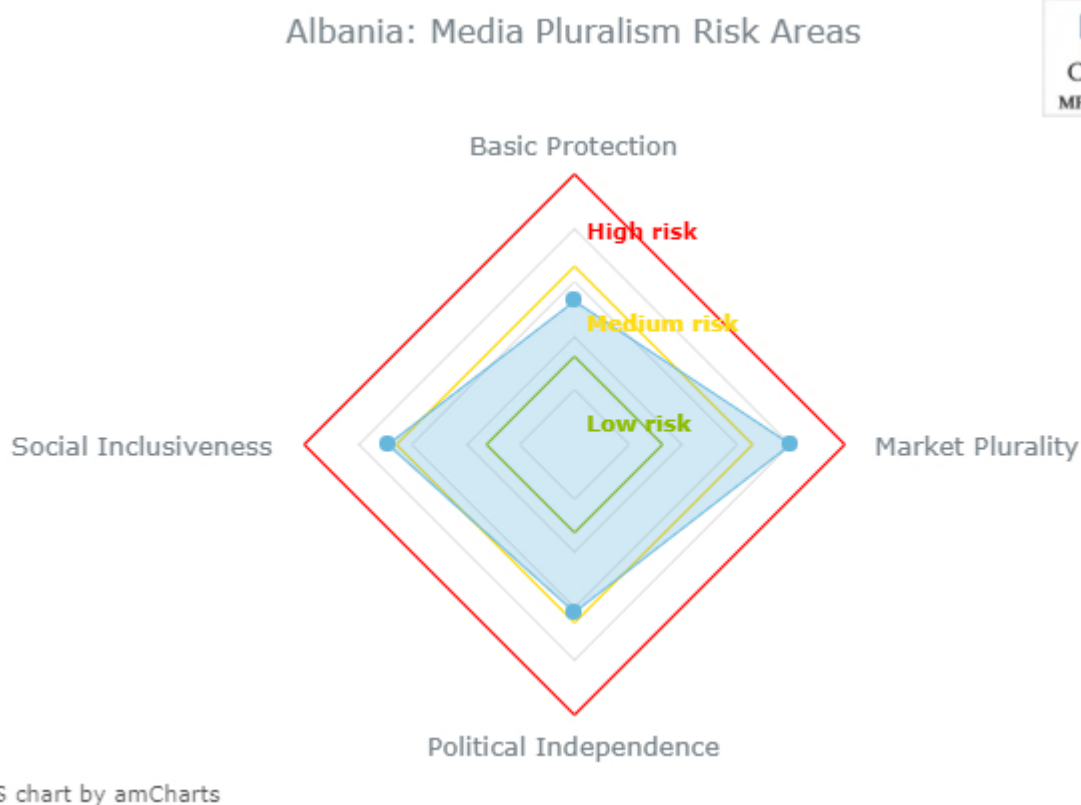
The Republic of Albania is a European, Western Balkan country that borders Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Greece with 2.8 million inhabitants. The majority of the population is ethnic Albanian and according to the 2011 national census, minorities comprise less than 1.5 per cent of the population (INSTAT, 2012). However, census data remain controversial because only 83.2 per cent of the respondents declared themselves ethnic Albanians, while 14.07 per cent refused to answer questions on the basis of nationality. According to the law on national minorities, approved by the Albanian parliament in 2017 (Ligji Nr. 96/2017 Për Mbrojtjen e Pakicave Kombëtare në Republikën e Shqipërisë, 2017), recognized ethnic and/or cultural minorities in Albania include: Greeks, Macedonians, Aromanians, Egyptians, Montenegrins, Serbs and Bulgarians. The largest national minority in Albania is the Greek minority, which is concentrated mainly in the country's south, close to the border with Greece, followed by the ethnic Macedonian minority and the Roma.

Under the Stalinist regime of former dictator Enver Hoxha, Albania was the most isolated country in Europe for nearly half a century – comparable only to today's North Korea - and the media was tightly controlled, roughly a mere extension of the state propaganda apparatus. Following the collapse of the regime in 1991 and the transition to a parliamentary democracy, freedom of expression was guaranteed by law. As the small Mediterranean country experienced a tumultuous transition to democracy, over the past three decades its media scene also transformed radically, with dozens of newspapers and television stations competing for readers and audiences in an oversaturated market.

In the last five years, online media has played an increasingly important role in the media market. Hundreds of online outlets have opened up, reducing the advertising share of newspapers and leading the closure of some historic dailies, including *Shekulli* - once Albania's highest circulation daily newspapers. However, the opening of new online outlets has not translated necessarily in a more plural media market and a handful of broadcast companies still hold sway over audiences. A fact-finding mission by seven international media watchdog organizations in June 2019 (European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, 2019), noted a deterioration of media freedom in the country; highlighting the fact the physical attacks against journalist remain unresolved while smear campaigns by the highest echelons of power, including Prime Minister Edi Rama – who regularly refers to critical outlets as “trash bins” (“kazan” in Albanian), have become the norm.

In December 2019, parliament approved the so called “*anti-defamation package*”, a series of amendments empowering an administrative body to control the content of online media and levy heavy fines to enforce its rulings. The package of laws has been criticized by journalists, local and international rights groups as well the European Commission and the Council of Europe as posing a threat to media freedom and freedom of expression (Erebara, 2019).

3. Results from the data collection: assessment of the risks to media pluralism



Albania scores with a medium risk (53%) rating regarding the Basic Protection of media pluralism. Although there is a solid regulatory framework which guarantees freedom of expression, the lack of enforcement leads to a medium and high risk ratings within many indicators.

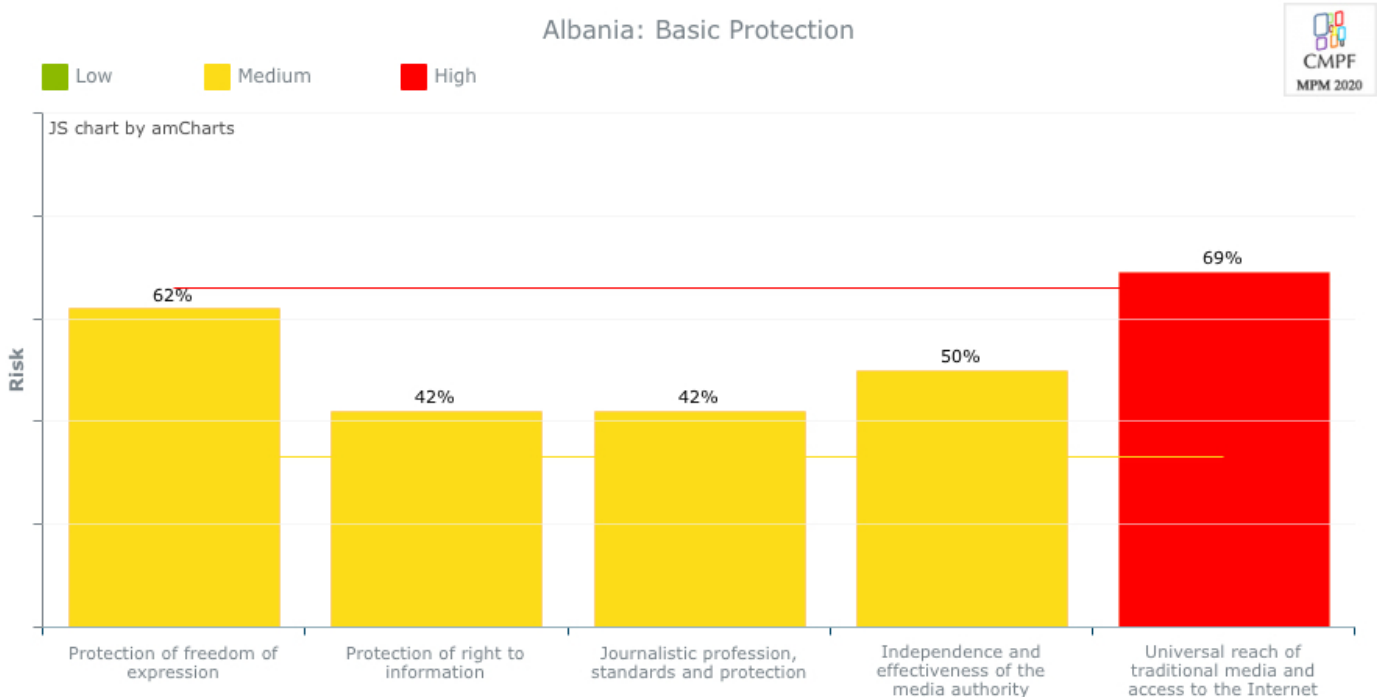
When it comes to Market Plurality, the Albanian media scene is classified as high risk (80%) due to the lack of transparency in media ownership and the influence of commercial interests and the economic and political interests of media owners over the editorial policy of media outlets. Journalists and editors in Albania are often under harsh economic and political pressure leading to widespread self-censorship. Media workers also struggle to carry out their professional duties due to the poor enforcement or the lack of labor contracts, late payment of salaries, lack of protections in place in cases of change of management or/and editorial policy, as well as physical and verbal attacks that go unpunished.

The majority of the media outlets in Albania is not independent and supports the ruling party – particularly broadcast media, which are regulated and considered the main source of information. For this reason, the area of Political Independence scores between medium and high risk (62%). While for digital environment this area is assessed as high risk due to the influence of political parties over digital native media, lack of journalists self-regulation in use of social media, as well as lack of regulation to ensure transparency of political advertising online and candidates spending during the electoral campaign.

The Social Inclusiveness score is rated as high risk (69%). Minorities and people with disabilities have little access to Albanian broadcast media – mainly through a specified time slot for news in ethnic tongue in the second channel of the PSM, which reaches a limited audience. Media in Albania lack gender equality policies, although there are some talented women in editorial and management positions. Albania has no concrete policies on media literacy and the latter has only a very limited presence in the education curriculum.

3.1. Basic Protection (53% - medium risk)

The *Basic Protection* indicators represent the regulatory backbone of the media sector in every contemporary democracy. They measure a number of potential areas of risk, including the existence and effectiveness of the implementation of regulatory safeguards for freedom of expression and the right to information; the status of journalists in each country, including their protection and ability to work; the independence and effectiveness of the national regulatory bodies that have competence to regulate the media sector, and the reach of traditional media and access to the Internet.



The indicator **Protection of freedom of expression** acquires a 62% medium risk score. In Albania there are regulatory safeguards in place for the protection of freedom of expression. The Albanian Constitution as well as national media legislation guarantees freedom of expression. However, these guarantees in practice are not always respected and systematic violations of freedom of expression over the last two years have led to a deterioration of media freedom in the country.

With regards to the **Right to information**, Albania scores as medium risk and the indicator acquires a score of 42%. In the local legislation there are regulatory safeguards and an appeal mechanism in place; however, the public administration often misuses procedures to delay or limit access to information. Although there is legislative framework for the protection of whistleblowers in place, their protection is not enforced in practice.

The **Journalistic profession, standards and protection** acquires a medium risk score of 42%. The entry to the profession of journalism in Albania is open to everyone and there are no restrictions or licensing mechanisms in place. There are no laws and self-regulatory bodies that prescribe who may practice journalism or requiring the licensing or registration of journalists. In Albania there are several journalist associations, but they are not effective in guaranteeing editorial independence and professional standards. Journalists in Albania routinely resort to self-censorship due to pressure from media owners, politicians and organized crime. According to surveys, Albanian journalists often face high irregularity of payments and high job insecurity (BIRN Albania, 2015). Also, physical security is one of the main factors reported by journalists as a push factor towards self-censorship, with more than 60% of them declaring that they have avoided covering news which may affect their personal safety. Several cases of serious physical attacks registered in the last two years have not been investigated properly by authorities, while verbal attacks from politicians against journalists and media outlets have become the norm (European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, 2019).

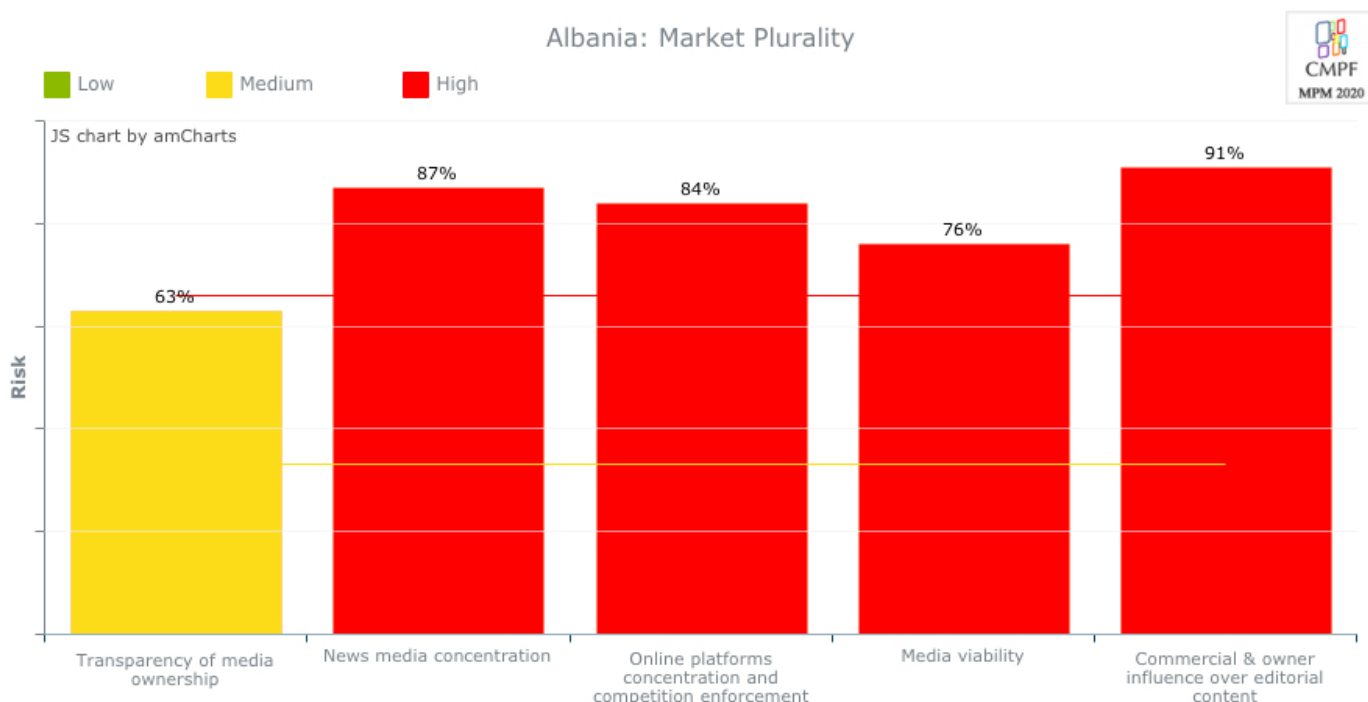
The **Independence and effectiveness of the media authority** indicator falls under the medium risk score of 50%. Although the appointment procedures that are designed to minimize the risk of political or economic interference, they

are not respected in practice. The task and responsibilities are clearly defined in the law and the authority has sanctioning powers; however, its room for maneuver is often small, due to the close ties between media owners and politics. There is no appeal mechanism for the decisions of the Audio Visual Media Authority before judicial review and the authority's powers are not always used in an independent manner. Regarding the authority's political independence, de facto cross party representation does not guarantee an independent decision-making and does not avoid politicization.

The indicator **Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet** acquires a 69% high risk score. The Public Service Media should cover at least 90% of the territory and 90% of the population through its signal, while at least one of the channels should cover 99% of the population. The broadband subscription in the country is evaluated at 63%. The biggest ISP's in Albania are mobile telecommunication companies, with an estimated coverage equal to 63% of the market. Fixed ISPs have only a 7% penetration. The Law on the Electronic Communications refers to 'net neutrality' under its Article 1, goal of the law, but there are no specific provisions on how to enforce it.

3.2. Market Plurality (80% - high risk)

The Market Plurality indicators examine the existence and effectiveness of provisions on transparency of media ownership and the existence and effectiveness of regulation or self-regulation against commercial & owner influence on editorial content. In addition, they assess the risks related to market concentration in the production as well as in distribution of news: as for production, considering separately horizontal concentration in each sector and cross-media concentration; as for distribution, assessing the role of online platforms as gateways to news, the concentration of online advertising market, and the role of competition enforcement and regulatory safeguards in protecting information pluralism. Moreover, they seek to evaluate the viability of the news media market.



The indicator on **Transparency of media ownership** indicator shows a medium risk score of 63%. Although the Audio Visual Media Authority collects and disseminates data from broadcasters, the law does not include any specific provisions on ownership transparency. Although there is no specific provision requiring media's ownership disclosure, it is possible to access this information through National Registry of Business for audiovisual, print and online media.

The indicator **News media concentration** poses high risk with a score of 87%. The audio-visual media law does contain concepts on the limitation of the owner's shares/voting rights in respect to a second media company. Regarding audio-visual media, restrictions are imposed on the percentage of the total capital (20%) in a second company holding a

national license, while for analogue audio broadcasting media, the maximum amount of participation in a third media with a national license is limited to 10% of that media company's capital. The audio-visual media law also provides for a restriction of a commercial nature, which concerns the prohibition of occupying a share of more than 30% of the advertising market by a company that holds a national audio or audio-visual broadcasting license. The Audio Visual Media Authority oversees compliance for broadcast media outlets.

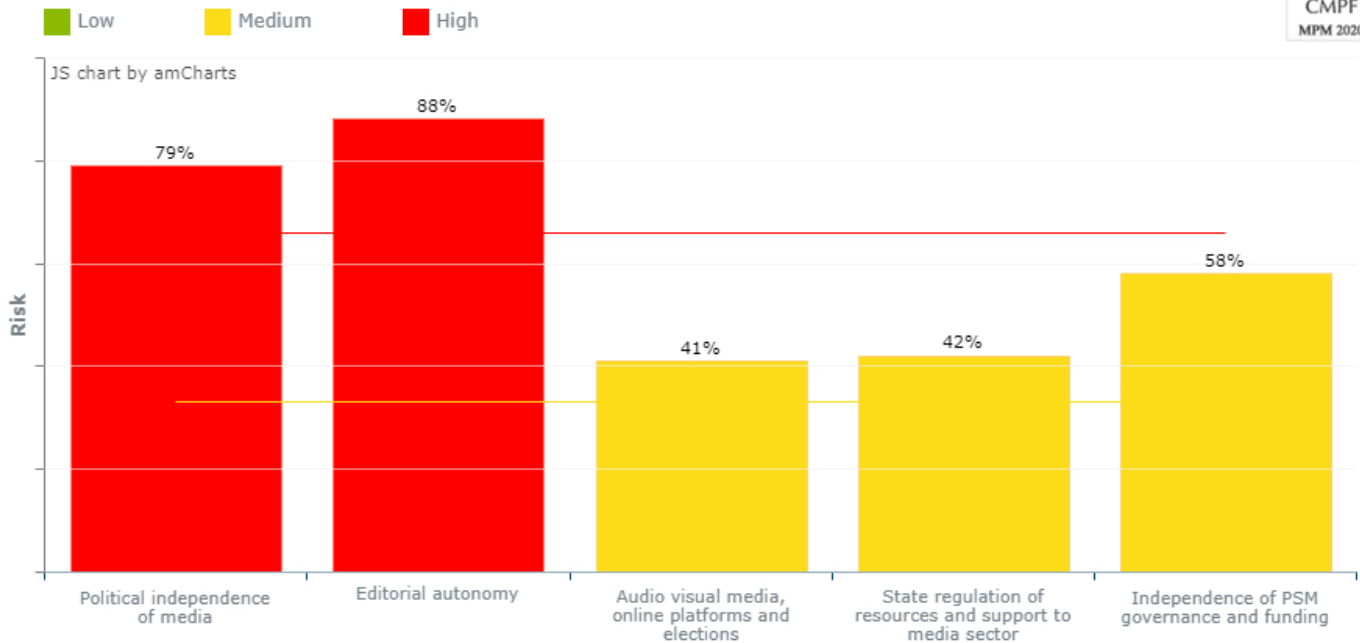
The indicator **Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement** shows a high risk score of 84%. According to surveys, most of media representatives declare that social media helps a lot in increasing the audience of a news website; however, there are no data available which is the main way people access news in the country. A high degree of vertical concentration in the market should be regulated only by the law "On competition protection", which should also be applicable to the media and in particular to the audio-visual media, as it is the most influential medium. However, the Competition Authority of Albania has shied away from ruling on media concentration cases, declaring the Audiovisual Authority as the responsible body. The law on Audiovisual Media imposes a restriction on the total amount of advertising that a television station can broadcast, with a ceiling set at 30% of market share; however, such provision cannot be easily enforced as the law does not specify how to measure the advertising share, whether this percentage refers to the value of the advertisements or to the advertising airtime.

The indicator **Media viability** poses a 76% high risk score. Data shows that in the last 2 years there has been a decrease in the revenues in the audiovisual and newspaper/publishing market and a slight increase in revenues in the radio market. There is generally a lack of data on the number of journalists employed in each sector. There are no laws that establish favorable public support schemes for the news media sector, while a few online outlets encourage donations.

The indicator **Commercial & owner influence over editorial content** acquires the highest risk score of all indicators of market plurality at 91%. There are no laws or self-regulatory mechanisms granting social protection to journalists in case of changes of ownership or editorial line. Self-regulatory safeguards which seek to ensure that decisions regarding the appointment and dismissals of editors in chief are not influenced by commercial interests are not in place. The Code of Ethics of the Albanian Media stipulates that the media should avoid any conflict of interests due to financial interests and that editorial content should be clearly distinguished from advertising. However, most media outlets in the country do not respect and endorse the Code of Ethics. Media owners' economic and political interest and other commercial entities systematically influence editorial content. The advertising market in Albania is largely not transparent, while hidden advertising and native ads continue to be a widespread practice.

3.3. Political Independence (62% - medium risk)

The Political Independence indicators assess the existence and effectiveness of regulatory and self-regulatory safeguards against political bias and political influences over news production, distribution and access. More specifically, the area seeks to evaluate the influence of the State and, more generally, of political power over the functioning of the media market and the independence of public service media. Furthermore, the area concerns with the existence and effectiveness of (self)regulation in ensuring editorial independence and availability of plural political information and viewpoints, in particular during electoral periods.



The **Political independence of media** has a high risk score equal to 79%. Although there are some regulatory safeguards in place for the selection of members of the board of the Audiovisual Media Authority and the board of the public service media (PSM), they do not make government office incompatible with media ownership or prohibit media proprietors from holding government office. The Law on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Public Office includes provisions which prohibit members of the Council of Ministers and parliament to actively own company shares – including media companies, while for mayors, the provisions are limited only to companies within the territory of their municipality. There are no specific provisions which prohibit politicians, partisan parties and political parties to own the media.

The indicator **Editorial autonomy** has the highest score of all indicators of Political Independence area with acquired 88%. There are no regulatory safeguards in the Audiovisual media law regarding the appointment of the editor in chief of a media outlet and there have been several cases in the past when undue political influence was associated with dismissals of some editors in chief. The Albanian Media Code of Ethics stipulates independence from political interference, but it is not effectively implemented and is not endorsed by mainstream media outlets. Media outlets often display a strong political bias, and their reporting is influenced by the economic or political interests of their owners.

The indicator **Audio visual media, online platforms and elections** has a medium risk score of 41%. The law on audiovisual media states that the Board of the PSM should monitor and guarantee impartiality of information. Also, provisions on impartiality are included in the Statute and Editorial Policy of the PSM. The Albanian Electoral Code guarantees access to airtime on PSM channels and services for political actors during election campaigns and is effectively implemented. Traditionally, the PSM channels in Albania tend to favor the political party in power. However, in 2018, the Albanian Public Television has developed and approved editorial principles to guard against political interference. The Electoral Code stipulates that private radios and televisions cover the electoral campaign only during normal and special news editions, as well as the television stations must apply an equal time ratio to all parliamentary parties that in the last elections to the Assembly obtained up to 20% of the seats. Despite the legal provisions, different groups of political actors are represented in a biased and non-proportional way, clearly favoring some political actors over others.

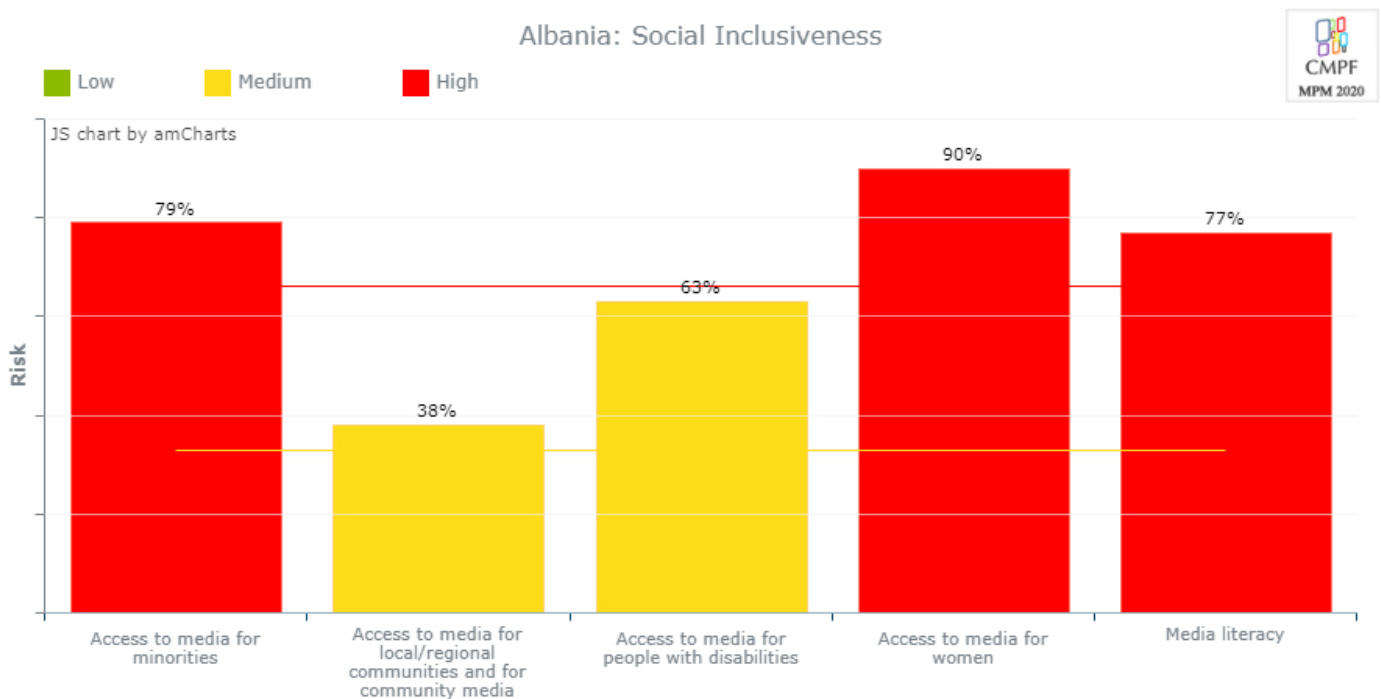
State regulation of resources and support to media sector indicator scores 42% and is rated as medium risk. The Audiovisual Media Law provides rules and regulations for the Audiovisual Media Authority to allocate the spectrum. The board of AMA is politically elected and the institution is not perceived as completely independent. The digitalization process and distribution of frequencies was supervised by AMA and resulted in a highly concentrated

market. The legislation does not entail the distribution of direct subsidies to media outlets. Some rules exist on state advertising, but the distribution of state advertising is not transparent. The rules on distribution of state advertising are not clear and no public information is available on the actual recipients of state advertising.

The indicator on **Independence of PSM governance and funding** is scored at 58%, classified as medium risk. Although the law provides fair and transparent appointment procedures for management and board functions in PSM, the appointments and dismissals of PSM management and board does not function independent from political influence in practice. There has been systematic political interference in the appointment and dismissal of managers at PSM. Current director of the PSM used to be editor in chief of the ruling Socialist Party newspaper and Director of the Information Department to a former Socialist premier.

3.4. Social Inclusiveness (69% - high risk)

The Social Inclusiveness indicators are concerned with access to media by various groups in society. The indicators assess regulatory and policy safeguards for community media, and for access to media by minorities, local and regional communities, women and people with disabilities. In addition to access to media by specific groups, the media literacy context is important for the state of media pluralism. The Social Inclusiveness area therefore also examines the country's media literacy environment, as well as the digital skills of the overall population.



The indicator **Access to media for minorities** acquires a high risk score of 79%. The law that regulates the activity of the PSM does not guarantee access to airtime to legally recognized national minorities. In Albania there are six recognized ethnic or cultural minorities - Greek, Montenegrin, Vlach, Macedonian, Roma and Egyptians – which, starting from 2018, have limited access to airtime on PSM channels. There is a 5-minutes daily news edition in each of the languages in the second PSM channel. Also PSM local branches (TV Korca and TV Gjirokastra) have allotted some timeslots to minorities in their areas, or cover the activities of ethnic minorities. However, the sustainability of this project is threatened by PSM's lack of investments in human resources and journalists from minority groups.

Access to media for local/regional communities and for community media acquires a medium risk score of 38%. The law does grant regional and local media access to platforms after the digitalization process is completed; however, some local broadcasters have complained that hosting cost are too high for Albania. The Albanian law does not provide any subsidies for media. Community media are recognized by the Audiovisual media law, but they are considered mostly under the audio frequencies and not the visual ones. Also, the law stipulates that the community media are

exempted from the licensing fee, but still have to apply for a permission, which may be rejected. Also, they are not allowed to air for-profit advertisement. There are currently 4 community radio stations in Albania linked with religious organizations. There is no reported evidence of violations of their independence.

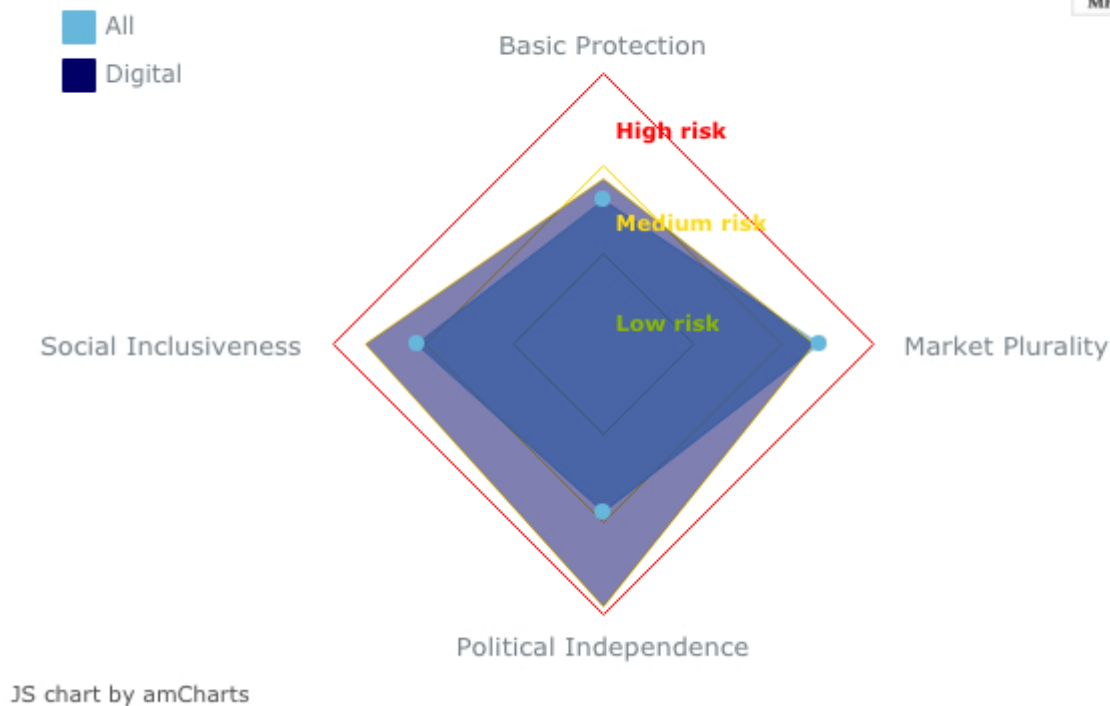
The indicator on **Access to media for people with disabilities** acquires a medium risk score of 63%. In Albania, there are several provisions on facilitating access to information for people with disabilities, but recent monitoring reports state that these provisions have not been implemented and no concrete measures have been undertaken. Programming in sign language is only available on the PSM and is limited to a 10-minute news programme daily. Hearing-impaired people do not have access to information because programmes and news casts on various TV stations are not subtitled. Also, there is a lack of training of public and private media staff on rights of people with disabilities. The biggest private TV channels with the largest audience share in the country do not provide audio description.

The indicator **Access to Media for Women** has a high risk score of 90%. In Albania the PSM does not have a comprehensive gender equality policy. There are only few general provisions in its editorial policy against the use of gender based stereotypes. Only one member out of 11 is a woman in the administrative council of the PSM. In the administrative board there are two women out of five members. Out of six members of the board of two main TV national private stations in the country only one is a woman. Also, in most popular media outlets in the country, only one radio station has an editor in chief that is a woman, for the rest of the media the editors in chief are men. Despite the skewed gender balance in management, women are proportionally represented in current affairs broadcasting and news.

Media literacy indicator acquires a 77% high risk score. Albania has no proper policy on media literacy. The law on pre-university education, bylaws, and strategies do not specify media literacy as part of the education process in elementary, basic, or secondary school. However, parts of certain school subjects do touch on media literacy concepts, although there is no separate subject of media literacy, neither in elective subjects, nor in the main curricula. Also, the level of knowledge and training of teachers/professors on media literacy in Albania lags behind. Training in media literacy is provided only on sporadic cases through non-formal education.

4. Pluralism in the online environment: assessment of the risks

Albania: Media Pluralism Risk Areas - Digital



The assessment of Media pluralism Online in Albania ranges from medium to high risk. While the areas Market Plurality and Social Inclusiveness are ranked better in digital when compared to all media, Basic Protection and particularly Political Independence are ranked as having a greater risk in digital when compared to other media outlets. In regard to digital media in Albania the area of Social Inclusiveness has the lowest risk denominator, ranked as medium risk with a score of 44%, followed by Basic Protection with 61% - also considered as medium risk. While when it comes to the area of and Market Plurality and Political Independence, digital media in Albania ranks as in high risk, scoring respectively 78% and 97%.

The area of **Basic Protection** for digital media in Albania ranks as medium risk with a score of 61%. This score is slightly higher when it is compared to the assessment for the same area for all media outlets, which is equal to 53%. Although freedom of expression is clearly defined in the Albanian Law of Audio Visual Media (only for TVs and radios) and the Albanian Constitution, there is no law that defines what online media are or that regulates them. On the other hand, in case law (cases on defamation) there is no difference between audio, audio visual, press and online media outlets, which enjoy the same rights and responsibilities. Apart from some sporadic cases the state generally refrains from filtering, monitoring, blocking and/or removing online content in an arbitrary way. There are no reported violations of ISP's in this regard. Although individuals have access to effective legal remedies to address violations of rights, online and offline, conducted by state or non-state actors - through the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Information and Data Protection Commissioner and the Complaints Council in the Audio Visual Media Authority, such remedies are not always effective. Threats to digital safety of journalists in Albania are not frequent, although this indicator might be underreported due to lack of data. There are no data retention obligations in the Albanian law that establishes obligations on Electronic Telecommunications Operators and Internet Service Providers to retain data affecting the right to privacy and right to freedom of expression. The legislator provides that personal data cannot be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose for which they were collected or further processed. In Albania less than 2/3 of the population is reached by broadband internet. The Law on the Electronic Communications refers to 'net neutrality' under its Article 1, goal of the law, but there are no specific provisions on how to enforce it.

In the area of **Market Plurality** digital media is assessed as high risk with a score of 78%. This result is due to the lack of legal provisions on the transparency of digital media with updated information to identify the beneficial and ultimate

owners of online outlets. In Albania also there are no regulations regarding the concentration of ownership that apply to the digital news media or cross-ownership between the different media, or specific regulations that prevent concentration. There are no data on the revenues of native digital media outlets in the last two years or online advertising revenues in general, while only a limited number of outlets employ a paywall.

The area of **Political Independence** for digital media in Albania is ranked as high risk with the highest possible score of 97%. The risk is considered as high because the leading digital native media in Albania are politically controlled. This does not include direct ownership but indirect control through financing. In several cases, ownership of news websites is not known and the source of their finances is also not known. There are news websites that operate for years without apparent revenues from ads. There are no social media guidelines for journalists in Albania. There is no regulation to ensure equal opportunities and transparency of online advertisement during electoral campaigns and no specific rules that political parties and candidates competing in the elections to report campaign spending on online platforms. Although, political parties must report all their spending during campaigns, there is a lack of transparency on spending of political parties online.

The area of **Social Inclusiveness** for digital media in Albania is assessed as media risk with a value of 88%. In Albania there are no data on the percentage of the population that has basic digital skills and generally there are no efforts being made to remove hate speech toward ethnic or religious minorities, women and people with disabilities from social media. There have been only some fragmented initiatives to combat hate speech, supported mainly by local or international non-profit organizations.

5. Conclusions

Albania scores medium risk on several indicators and high risk on others. Most indicators where the country has a medium risk score relate mainly to the legislative framework in place to guarantee media freedom, market plurality and political independence. However, the actual enforcement in practice of this legislative framework is less than perfects and the government and media community should do more for its implementation.

In regard to the **Basic Protection** indicators Albania should do more to implement its existing regulatory safeguards, particularly through better enforcement of labour code and contracts in order to increase job security for journalists as well as the investigation of cases of physical attacks in order to curb one of the main push factors that lead to self-censorship.

In the **Market Plurality** chapter there is a need to make the safeguards present in the law functional and address the high degree of actual concentration due to licensing in the broadcast market following the TV digitalization process. Self-regulatory mechanisms need to curb owners and commercial interests influence on editorial content and provide greater job security for journalists and editors.

Although **Political Independence** is classified as medium risk with a score of 62%, this is mainly due to the normative variables regarding the state regulation of resources and support to media sector while in practice the political independence of the media and its editorial autonomy score as high risk. The lack of editorial autonomy and high level of political interference is due to the lack regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms to curb political and commercial bias, which is widespread in local media outlets.

Social inclusiveness it's also an area that local media community should do more, particularly in promoting women in managerial positions, providing greater access to minorities and airtime for broadcasts in minority languages, as well as access to media content and programming to people with disabilities. In order to curb the risks of disinformation and fake news, Albania should draft a clear policy on Media Literacy, train teachers and professors and include it as a mandatory subject in pre-university education.

Regarding the **Pluralism and Online Environment** Albania should do more to reduce the political independence of leading online media outlets, increase transparency regarding the ownership of digital outlets and the digital advertising market – during and in between political campaigns.

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ANNEXE I. COUNTRY TEAM

First name	Last name	Position	Institution	MPM2020 CT Leader
Kristina	Voko	Executive Director	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Albania	X
Besar	Likmeta	Editor in Chief and Researcher	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network Albania	
Dorian	Matlija	Executive Director	Res Publica	

ANNEXE II. GROUP OF EXPERTS

The Group of Experts is composed of specialists with a substantial knowledge and experience in the field of media. The role of the Group of Experts was to review especially sensitive/subjective evaluations drafted by the Country Team in order to maximize the objectivity of the replies given, ensuring the accuracy of the final results.

First name	Last name	Position	Institution
Ilda	Londo	Lead Researcher	Albanian Media Institute
Mimoza	Kociu	Coordinator	Association of Professional Journalists of Albania
Koloreto	Cukali	Executive Director	Albanian Media Council
Pajtim	Melani	Head Of Department, Economic Regulation and Statistics	Electronic and Postal Communications Authority

