

MONITORING MEDIA PLURALISM IN THE DIGITAL ERA

APPLICATION OF THE MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, ALBANIA, MONTENEGRO, THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, SERBIA & TURKEY IN THE YEAR 2020

Country report: Greece

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Research Project Report

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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 of the European Union and in candidate countries. This narrative report has been produced on the basis of the implementation of the MPM carried out in 2020. The implementation was conducted in 27 EU Member States, as well as in Albania, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. This project, under a preparatory action of the European Parliament, was supported by a grant awarded by the European Commission to the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) at the European University Institute.

1.2. Methodological note

Authorship and review

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

In Greece the CMPF partnered with Dr. Evangelia Psychogiopoulou and Dr. Anna Kandyla (Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)), who conducted the data collection, scored and commented on the variables in the questionnaire and interviewed experts. The report was reviewed by the 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 Annexe II for the list of experts). For a list of selected countries, the final country report was peer-reviewed by an independent country expert.

Risks to media pluralism are examined in four main thematic areas: Fundamental 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).

Fundamental 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 women
Independence and effectiveness of the media authority	Media viability	State regulation of resources and support to media sector	Media Literacy
Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet	Commercial & owner influence over editorial content	Independence of PSM governance and funding	Protection against illegal and harmful speech

Table 1: Areas and Indicators of the Media Pluralism Monitor

The digital dimension

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 also extracts digital-specific risk scores and the report contains a specific analysis of risks related to the digital news environment.

The calculation of risk

The results for each thematic area and indicator are presented on a scale from 0 to 100%.

Scores between 0 and 33%: low risk

Scores between 34 to 66%: medium risk

Scores between 67 and 100%: high risk

With regard to indicators, scores of 0 are rated 3% while scores of 100 are rated 97% by default, to avoid an assessment of total absence or certainty of risk.

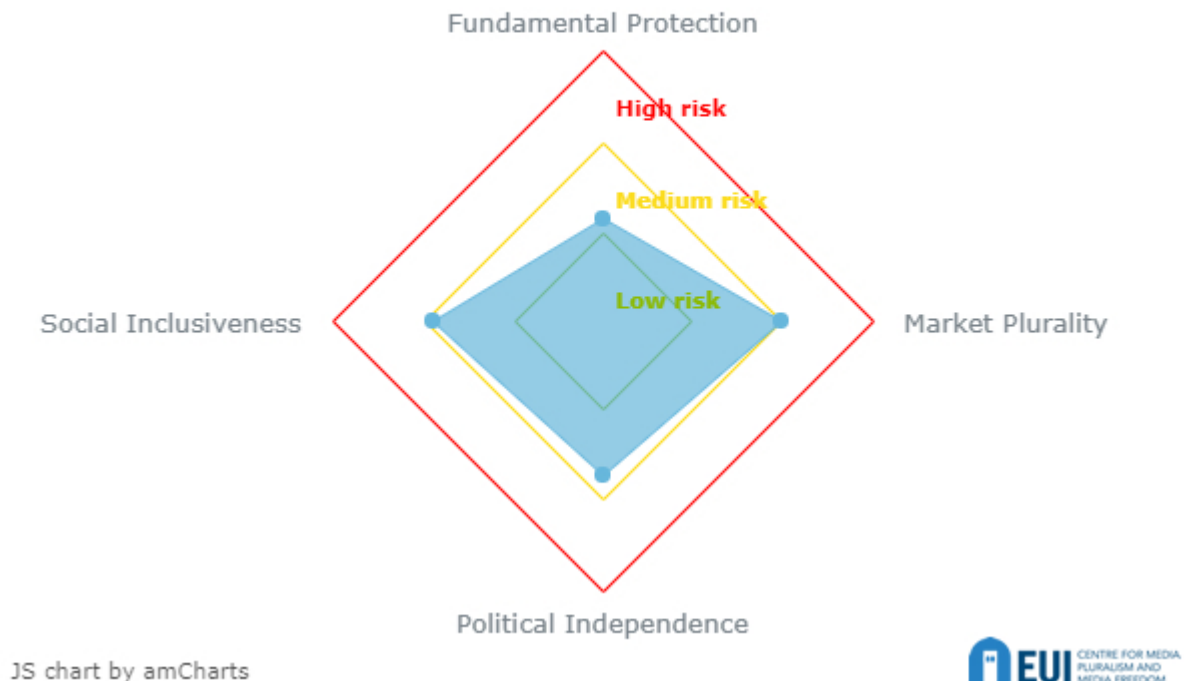
Disclaimer: The content of the report does not necessarily reflect the views of the CMPF, nor the position of the members composing the Group of Experts. It represents the views of the national country team that carried out the data collection and authored the report. Due to updates and refinements in the questionnaire, MPM2021 scores may not be fully comparable with previous editions of the MPM. For more details regarding the project, see the CMPF report on MPM2021, soon available on: <http://cmpf.eui.eu/media-pluralism-monitor/>.

2. Introduction

- Greece has a population of 10.82 million inhabitants. Almost one third of the population lives in the capital region of Attica.
- Greek is the official language.
- Around 199,100 EU nationals reside in Greece (1.8% of the population). Non-EU nationals are estimated at 706,000 (6.5% of the population) (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2020). There is one officially recognized minority in Greece, the Muslim minority of Western Thrace, with an estimated population of 100,000 persons.
- After a decade of recession, the Greek economy entered 2020 on a weak albeit positive growth rate (European Commission, 2020a: 1). However, the containment measures implemented to tackle the spread of COVID-19 infections and the continuing health crisis have undermined the country's path to economic recovery. The country's annual GDP fell by 10% in 2020 (European Commission, 2020b).
- The economic crisis also had a profound impact on Greek politics. The centre-right New Democracy, which is currently in government, and the left-wing Syriza now form the twin poles of the Greek party system (Altiparmakis, 2019).
- Regarding media consumption, according to the 2019 Eurobarometer survey, television is the most popular source of news (80%) (European Commission, 2020c). Websites and social media are also very popular national news sources. 55% of respondents prefer to use websites for news on national political affairs and 38% use social media. The proportion of respondents who prefer to use the radio is 32% and 21% use newspapers. Smartphones are very much used to access news, more often, in fact, than computers (Reuters Institute, 2020). As regards the audiovisual media market, in addition to private operators, ERT, the public service media (PSM), offers TV, radio and online services.

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

Greece: Media Pluralism Risk Areas



All areas of the MPM have a medium risk score. The area of Fundamental Protection has the lowest risk for media pluralism. The score for the remaining areas ranges from 57% to 66%. The area of Market Plurality is the area with the highest risk.

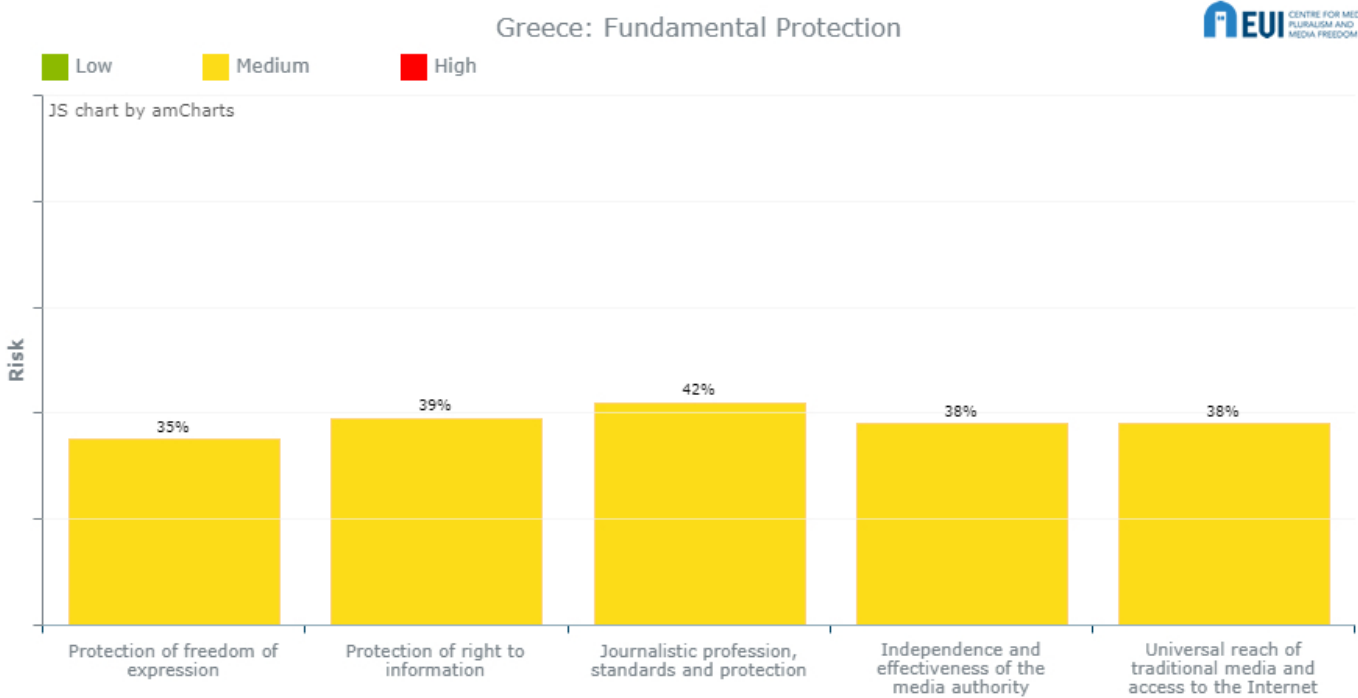
The indicators with a high risk score can be found in the domains of Market Plurality, Political Independence and Social Inclusiveness. More specifically, a high risk score is given to the following indicators: 'online platforms concentration and competition enforcement', 'media viability', 'commercial and owner influence over editorial content', 'political independence of media', 'editorial autonomy', 'independence of PSM governance and funding', 'access to media for minorities' and 'access to media for women'. All of the indicators in the domain of Fundamental Protection are identified as medium risk. A low risk score is attributed to the indicator 'state regulation of resources and support to the media sector' under the domain of Political Independence. Indicators that relate to the EU's rule of law assessment mechanism (e.g. the indicators 'journalistic profession, standards and protection', 'independence and effectiveness of the media authority' and 'transparency of media ownership') are all identified with a medium risk score.

The online-related risks are all flagged as medium risk scores. Political Independence is the area with the lowest risk score. The highest risk score is attributed to the area of Market Plurality. The assessment of risks for online media pluralism mirrors the overall risk assessment for the domains of Fundamental Protection and Media Plurality. In the domains of Political Independence and Social Inclusiveness, the digital indicators receive a lower risk than their non-digital counterparts. A key concern remains the lack of publicly available data on a wide range of issues concerning the digital media ecosystem and limited regulatory adjustment to the specificities of the latter.

In the following sections, we discuss the scores attributed to the various areas and indicators, taking, where relevant, into account the impact of Covid-19.

3.1. Fundamental Protection (38% - medium risk)

The Fundamental 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** has a medium risk score of 35%. The Greek Constitution safeguards freedom of expression, and major international and European human rights instruments have been ratified by the Greek state. Restrictions are defined in the law, and they must respect the principle of proportionality. However, the Greek state has not decriminalised defamation. The jurisprudence of the ECtHR also shows that remedies in cases of infringement of free speech are not always effective. *Balaskas v. Greece*,^[1] issued on 5 November 2020, adds to the ECtHR rulings where a violation of Article 10 ECHR was found. In this case, the ECtHR declared that domestic courts had failed to balance the right to freedom of expression of the applicant journalist against the protection of the reputation of a public figure in accordance with the principles laid down in ECtHR case law.

The indicator **Protection of the right to information** has a medium risk score of 39%. The right to information is recognised in the Greek Constitution^[2]. Restrictions can only be imposed by law^[3], provided they are necessary and justified for reasons of national security, combating crime or protecting the rights and interests of third parties. The Greek Constitution also provides for a right of access to documents held by public bodies. Domestic rules specify the procedures for the exercise of this right but allow domestic authorities to refuse access to documents that refer to discussions of the ministerial council. The Greek state further lacks a comprehensive framework for the protection of whistleblowers. Data on how the patchy rules work in practice is not publicly available, and there have been no measures raising awareness about

the available protection and its impact.

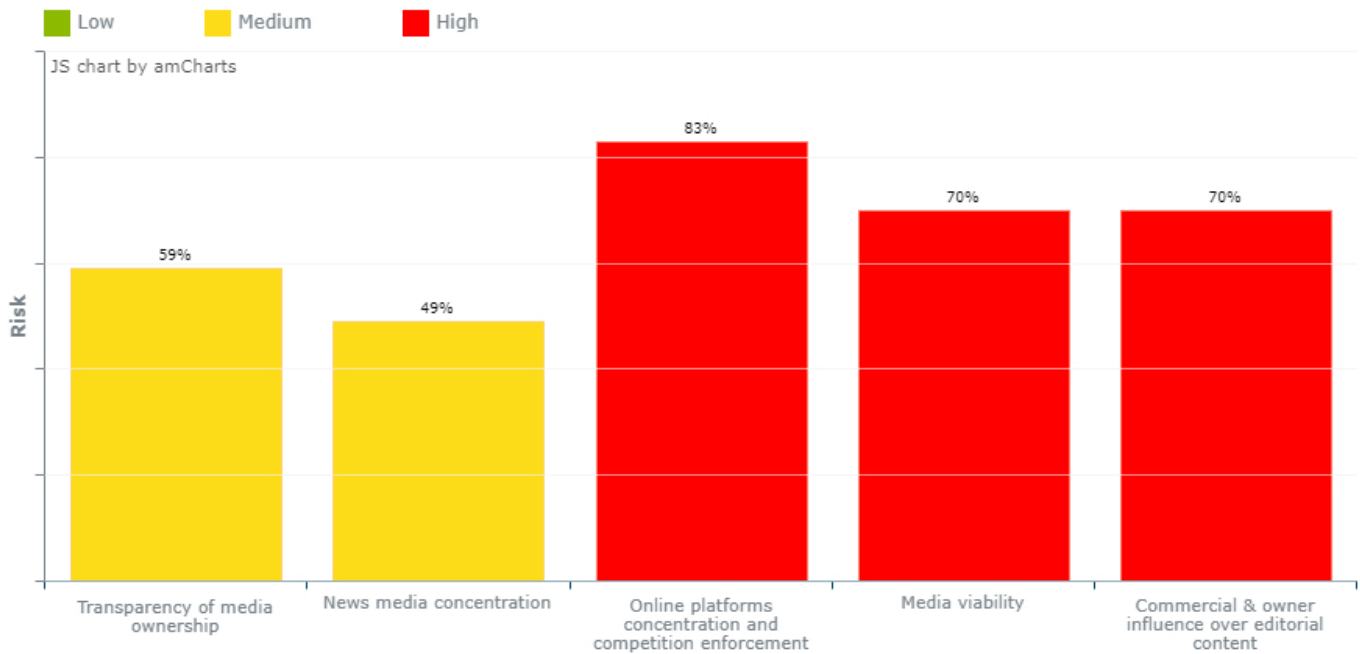
The indicator **Journalistic profession, standards and protection** is attributed a medium risk score of 42%. The score reflects journalists' deteriorating working conditions, especially during the pandemic and the fact that journalists are not free from attacks and threats to their physical safety and arbitrary arrests and detention (Mapping Media Freedom, 2020; Council of Europe Platform, 2020).^[4] Moreover, respect for professional standards is not effectively guaranteed. The existing self-regulatory system targets journalists and therefore lacks the power to ensure the commitment of media houses to professional ethics. Concurrently, the dispersed nature of journalists' unions results in fragmented advocacy for the promotion of journalistic autonomy.

A medium-risk score of 38% is assigned to the indicator **Independence and effectiveness of the media authority**. Appointment procedures to the media authority remain insufficiently transparent whilst the qualifications required are determined in general terms, which does not rule out member selection on the basis of political considerations. In addition, although the tasks and responsibilities of the media authority are defined in law^[5], abstract legal provisions, combined with limited resources and personnel, might hamper the effective discharge of the authority's monitoring duties. Deficiencies, as far as transparency is concerned, can also be noted. The latest activity report covers the activity years 2018 and 2019 and it was published in early 2021 (National Council for Radio and Television, 2021).

A medium-risk score of 38% is attributed to the indicator **Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet**. Domestic legislation guarantees universal coverage of PSM, and net neutrality is overall respected. However, weaknesses in levels of broadband penetration and average Internet connection persist.

3.2. Market Plurality (66% - medium risk)

The Market Plurality area focuses on the economic risks to media pluralism, deriving from lack of transparency and concentration of ownership, sustainability of the media industry, exposure of journalism to commercial interests. The first indicator examines the existence and effectiveness of provisions on transparency of media ownership. Lack of competition and external pluralism is assessed separately for the news media (production of the news) and for the online platforms (gateways to the news), considering separately horizontal and cross-media concentration; the concentration of online advertising market; and the role of competition enforcement. The indicator on media viability measures the trend of revenues and employment, in relation with GDP trends. The last indicator aims to assess risks to market plurality posed by business interests on production of editorial content, both from commercial and owners influence



Audiovisual media are required to disclose their ownership details to the media authority. Newspapers must inform on their publisher and director on their front page. In order to register with the Registry of the Regional and the Local Press, regional and local newspapers must provide on one of their first two pages details on their owners. Failure to meet the transparency obligations can lead to sanctions ^[6]. Whether or not these are effectively applied depends on the ability of domestic authorities to monitor compliance and verify what is reported. Overall, disclosure of news media ownership to the public is not systematic. The above give Greece a medium risk score of 59% for the indicator **Transparency of media ownership**.

The indicator **News media concentration** receives a medium risk score of 49%. Media legislation sets forth ownership rules for electronic (TV and radio) 'information' media. Relevant provisions are aimed at countering a high degree of horizontal concentration. They go hand in hand with rules on specific thresholds designed to prevent a high degree of horizontal concentration in 'information' media markets (TV, radio, newspapers and magazines) and cross-media concentration ^[7]. The score takes into account that data on market and audience shares in certain media markets and the media market as a whole is not publicly available.

The indicator **Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement** has a high risk score of 83%. The score is due to various factors: the fact that access to news online is mainly through 'side-doors' (through news aggregators, search engines, social media and other intermediaries); the absence of competition tools and enforcement practices that reflect the specificities of the digital news media market; the lack of instruments devised to hamper unfair competition between different players in the digital ecosystem as far as taxation is concerned; and the lack of publicly available data on advertising and audience concentration online, disaggregating between different operators (i.e. traditional news media with an online presence, digital native media and online platforms).

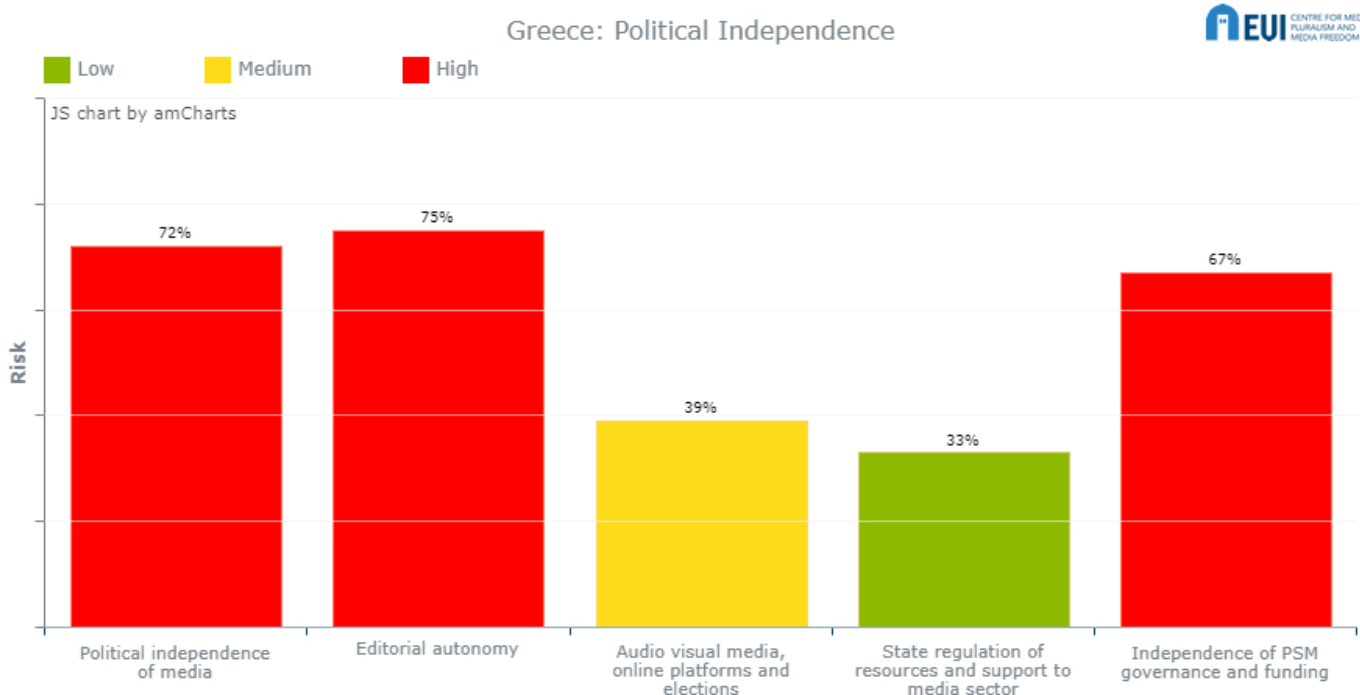
The indicator **Media viability** is given a high risk score of 70%. The score stems from the lack of publicly available data on media revenues in certain media markets and the media sector in its entirety. The lack of data on employed journalists as a proxy for sustainable journalism and the limited number of news media initiatives aimed at developing alternative sources of revenue as a means to address the challenges of the

digital environment also increase the risk. The same applies for the absence of publicly available data on layoffs and salary cuts by news media organizations, freelance journalists' working and pay conditions, and expenditure for advertising (online and offline). Due to the lack of data, a comprehensive assessment of the viability of the news media ecosystem and the impact of Covid-19, taking into account the general downturn of the economy, has not been possible. The lack of data has been scored as a risk according to the methodology of the MPM.

A high risk score of 70% is also identified for the indicator **Commercial and owner influence over editorial content**. The score reflects the absence of laws and self-regulatory instruments that grant social protection to journalists in case of changes of ownership or editorial line. It also takes note of the absence of tools designed to ensure that decisions regarding appointments and dismissals of editors in chief are not influenced by commercial interests. Importantly, the decision-making practice of the media authority reveals failings in compliance with TV programme sponsorship rules and the requirement to distinguish television advertising and teleshopping from editorial content ^[8].

3.3. Political Independence (57% - 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 is concerned 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 indicator 'political independence of media' shows a high risk score of 72%. While political parties are not prevented from owning media, none of the currently leading media at the national level is directly owned by political parties represented in Parliament. However, legal safeguards against indirect media ownership

by parliamentarians through the use of intermediaries are lacking and so is data about the extent to which indirect ownership is present in the market. Another factor contributing to the risk is the lack of regulatory safeguards for the independence of news agencies. There is one news agency in Greece, ANA-MPA, which is public, and presently under the General Secretariat of Information and Communication which is under the office of the Prime Minister. The independence of its board is not fully ensured in law, as according to domestic rules, the President is selected by the Minister responsible for the media (now the Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister).

The indicator 'editorial autonomy' also has a high risk score of 75%. This is mainly attributed to the absence of self-regulatory measures stipulating editorial independence from political interference. Crucially, collective or individualized self-regulation at the level of media enterprises is lacking in Greece. Self-regulation is limited to journalists and their unions. As this system does not include the media enterprises within its purview, it does not bind media proprietors to the standards of editorial independence.

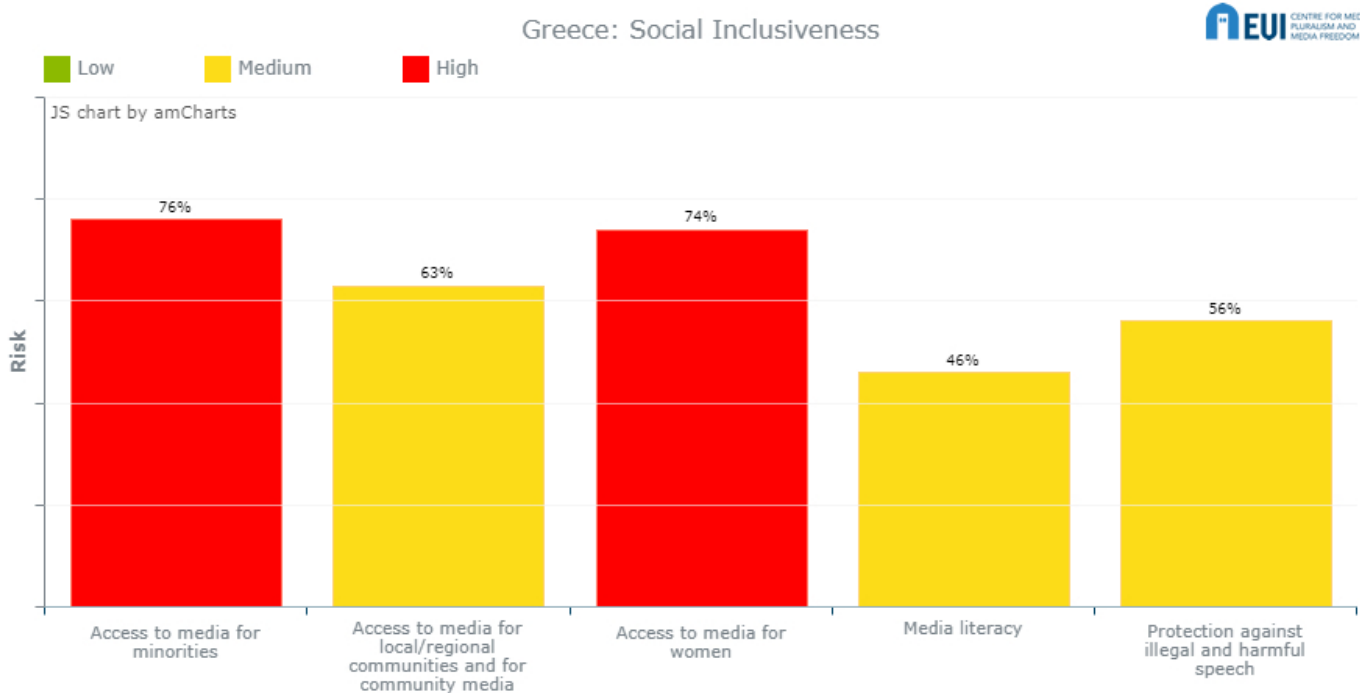
A medium risk score of 39% is given to the indicator 'audiovisual media, online platforms and elections'. This score reflects the existence of rules aiming at impartiality and political pluralism in news and informative programmes on PSM. It also recognizes that political advertising on audiovisual media is regulated and that there are legal safeguards that guarantee access to airtime for political actors during election campaigns. Airtime is distributed to political parties on the basis of the principle of proportional equality, taking into account the results of the latest election. However, data on the extent to which the audiovisual coverage of the electoral campaign offers fair representation of different political viewpoints is lacking.

The indicator 'state regulation of resources and support to the media sector' receives a low risk score of 33%. As regards spectrum allocation, the domestic legal framework respects the general regulatory principles and policy objectives of the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme of the EU.^[9] Concerning support to the media sector, indirect support schemes take the form of lower value-added tax for print media. When it comes to state advertising, the law governing its distribution to the media sets safeguards against preferential treatment.^[10] However, publicly available data does not enable an assessment of whether government bodies and state-owned institutions and companies comply with the criteria set in law, placing their ads to the media offering the best value for money. It should also be noted that during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, the Greek government launched a public health awareness campaign ('we stay at home') through emergency legislation, failing to specify the criteria upon which the media that 'carry' the campaign would be selected. The government eventually published the list of recipient media outlets but did not clarify the selection criteria used.

The last indicator on the 'independence of PSM governance and funding' has a high risk score of 67%. For the most part, the risk in this area has to do with the lack of safeguards concerning appointment procedures in ERT's management and board positions. On the one hand, the law foresees that ERT's President and Managing Director are selected on the basis of certain qualifications and professional expertise following an open call for applications.^[11] The Committee on Institutions and Transparency, a cross-party parliamentary committee, is involved in the process, giving its opinion on the nominees. On the other hand, it is the Minister that makes the nominations and decides on the appointments. Moreover, the resignation of the President and the Managing Director following a change in the government is standard practice.

3.4. Social Inclusiveness (63% - medium risk)

The Social Inclusiveness area focuses on the access to media by specific groups in society: minorities, local and regional communities, women and people with disabilities. It also examines the country's media literacy environment, including the digital skills of the overall population. In addition, for the 2021 edition of the MPM, a new indicator has been added to the Social Inclusiveness area in order to assess new challenges raising from the uses of digital technologies: Protection against illegal and harmful speech. Due to this modification of the indicators, comparison with previous editions of the MPM should be handled with extreme care.



The indicator '**Access to media for minorities**' is assigned a high risk score of 76%. This indicator is concerned with two aspects. The first one is minority access to media. A relevant contributing factor is the absence of provisions guaranteeing access to airtime to the legally recognized Muslim minority of Western Thrace on PSM^[12]. The second aspect is media accessibility to people with disabilities. Policy in this area is still underdeveloped in Greece. For instance, the law imposes on TV channels the obligation to broadcast part of their programme with a simultaneous display of subtitles^[13] and to offer daily news bulletins in sign language^[14], but it does not provide for audio description for the visually impaired.

The indicator '**Access to media for local/regional communities and for community media**' shows a medium risk of 63%. On the one hand, ERT maintains several regional branches which are meant to provide local news^[15]. Also, reduced postal service rates apply for regional newspapers. On the other hand, domestic legislation (Law 4173/2013) does not explicitly mandate private network providers to provide access to local TV or radio channels via must-carry rules. What increases the risk is also the lack of provisions on community media, i.e. media that is non-profit, open and accountable to its community, in Greek media law^[16].

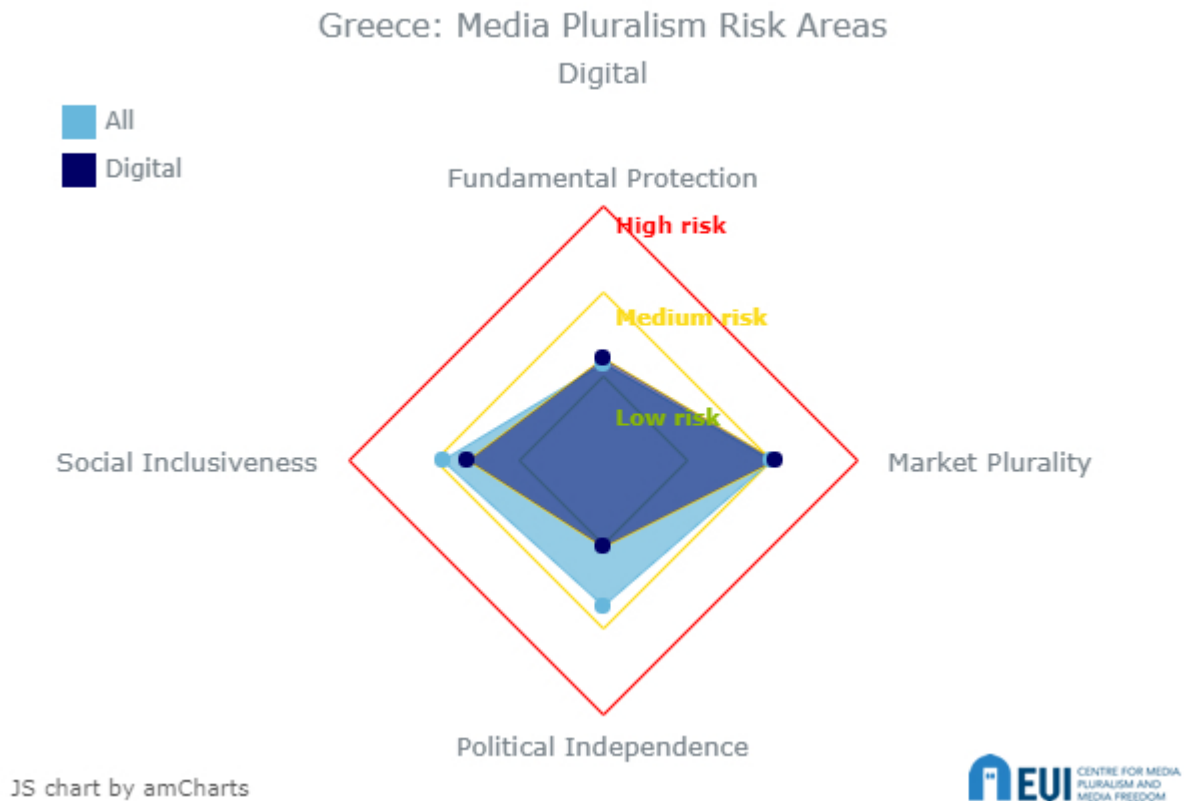
The indicator '**Access to media for women**' is assigned a high risk score of 74%. Although the Greek PSM is bound by law to respect the principle of gender equality in personnel selection and appointments^[17], ERT lacks a comprehensive gender equality and diversity policy, and women are currently underrepresented on

its Board. Moreover, as regards broadcast media content, there is evidence that overall women are not represented in news and current affairs programmes in a way that is proportionate and free from stereotypes.

The indicator '**Media literacy**' is assigned a medium risk score of 46%. Media literacy has gained salience on the agenda. However, media literacy education is still not integrated into compulsory schooling and teacher training. Media literacy is, nonetheless, present in non-formal education with several media literacy initiatives taking place at different settings. Relevant initiatives tend to address specific target groups (i.e. students, educators, journalists).

The indicator '**Protection against illegal and harmful speech**' is assigned a medium risk score of 56%. The domestic legal framework^[18] penalizes the dissemination of false news, including through the Internet. Greece has also implemented the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.^[19] Yet, up to the end of 2020 Greece had not yet transposed the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS) which requires Member States to ensure that video-sharing platform providers under their jurisdiction adopt appropriate measures to protect users from content that incites violence or hatred and from content that is deemed illegal under Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA.^[20] (The directive was finally transposed in 2021, already after the completion of the data collection and the writing of this report.)

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



In the area of **Fundamental protection**, a medium risk score of 40% is given to the digital indicators. Art. 14(1) of the Greek Constitution on freedom of expression does not expressly refer to the online environment but applies to it. The Constitution also safeguards the right to participate in the information society (Art. 5A(2)). Free speech online must be exercised ‘in compliance with the laws of the State’^[21] and any restrictions must be proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued. There is no evidence that public authorities interfere with online content in an arbitrary way. However, instances of blocking or filtering content by online platforms and other intermediaries are not always reported in a sufficiently transparent way. Concerning the journalistic profession, incidents of digital threats against journalists have been reported (Reporters without Borders, 2020). Moreover, following the annulment of Directive 2006/24^[22] by the Court of Justice of the EU,^[23] it remains unclear whether the data retention obligations established in law in response to the directive are compatible with fundamental rights. Regarding the indicator ‘universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet’, according to the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission (2020), there have been improvements regarding transparency in network management and the provision of information to end-users. However, broadband coverage and the average Internet connection speed remain within MPM’s medium risk range.

The area of **Market plurality** has a high risk score of 68%. The score for the indicator of Transparency of media ownership takes into account that registration with the Registry of Online News Media (RONM) requires interested media to inform on their ownership structures. However, the RONM can only be accessed by registered members and no media-specific rules require disclosure, by digital native media, of ownership details directly to the public. Shortcomings concerning the indicator on News media concentration mostly relate to the fact that both the media ownership limitations set forth in national legislation and the media-specific rules adopted to thwart horizontal and cross-media concentration do not address digital innovation. The score also takes into consideration the absence of publicly available data on

the market shares of online news media operators (covering the online outlets of legacy media and digital native media); and concentration trends in the media market defined as the sum of the audiovisual, radio, newspapers and digital native media markets. The lack of publicly available data is also a risk-increasing factor for the indicators 'Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement' and 'Media viability'. As for the indicator 'Commercial and owner influence over editorial content', it is acknowledged that journalists' self-regulatory code, which contains safeguards for journalistic independence, applies to journalistic work, irrespective of whether this takes place in legacy or online media. Attention is also given to the adoption of an online news media code of conduct, which lays down rules on journalistic autonomy, amongst other issues. However, enforcement of the journalistic code of conduct in the digital environment does not feature high on the agenda of journalists' unions and the online news media code of conduct lacks an enforcement body.

In the area of **Political independence**, a medium risk score of 34% is given to the digital indicators. As regards the indicator 'political independence of media', ownership data for digital native media is not publicly available, thereby preventing an assessment of the extent to which these are directly controlled by political parties or Parliamentarians. As to the indicator 'editorial autonomy', data on whether the leading news media enterprises have put in place specific guidelines for journalists' responsible use of social media is not available. The picture is more reassuring for the indicator 'audiovisual media, online platforms and elections' where the transparency of online political advertising during electoral campaigns is considered. Political parties and candidates are required to report on their campaign spending, including on the amount spent on advertising on the Internet. Relevant information then becomes publicly available through a dedicated website database maintained by the Ministry of Interior. However, there are no specific disclosure requirements for advertising expenditure on social media.

The digital indicators assessed in the area of **Social inclusiveness** score a medium risk of 53%. The score for the indicator 'media literacy' takes into account that 51% of the population has basic or above basic overall digital skills, while those with low digital skills make up only 24%. The score for the indicator 'protection against illegal and harmful speech' reflects the existence of a handful of initiatives aimed at improving the detection of disinformation online and increasing resilience. It also gives consideration to the fact that research concerning the extent to which disinformation is present in the news and social media in Greece is limited. Finally, when it comes to hate speech in social media, there is no data enabling an assessment of whether there have been efforts to remove expressions of hate against some potentially at-risk groups (such as women and people with disabilities).

5. Conclusions

The assessment of the MPM variables shows that Greece faces challenges with respect to media pluralism in all four domains under study. In the area of 'fundamental protection', key issues are: failing to decriminalize defamation, deficiencies in domestic remedies in cases of infringement of free speech, deteriorating working conditions for journalists and ineffective tools to ensure respect for professional standards and journalistic ethics. It is imperative that corrective action is taken to address these issues.

In the area of 'market plurality', a key concern remains the lack of publicly available data on a broad range of issues, from concentration trends to journalists' levels of employment and remuneration, as well as the effects of the pandemic on the latter. Data collection is piecemeal and fragmented. This is a structural deficiency that requires immediate action. Careful consideration should also be given towards strengthening transparency through rules and practices that guarantee systematic disclosure of ownership information to the public. Identified risks in the area of 'market plurality' further point to the need for revisiting domestic rules and enforcement practices, so that the exigencies of the digital media ecosystem receive proper attention.

In the area of 'political independence', there is lack of safeguards to thwart political influence via PSM appointment procedures and to secure the independence of the country's public news agency. But neither are private media fully shielded from political interference. Self-regulatory measures that would safeguard editorial independence are lacking. Moreover, although the rules governing the distribution of public sector advertising seek to prevent preferential treatment, potential misuse of advertising funds as a tool for political influence cannot be assessed due to the lack of comprehensive publicly available data. It is high time that these important and longstanding challenges to media pluralism be addressed.

As regards 'social inclusiveness', action should be taken to address gender stereotypes in news media broadcasting. Attention should also be afforded to supporting media pluralism in the online environment. For instance, measures to improve data collection and to foster an online media environment that is inclusive and non-discriminatory, with due respect for freedom of expression, should be considered. The opportunities offered by digitization to improve access to the media for people with disabilities should also be placed on the agenda.

6. Notes

- [1] ECtHR, *Balaskas v. Greece* (appl. no. 73087/17), 5/11/2020.
- [2] The Constitution of Greece as revised in 2008, <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/en/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Syntagma/>.
- [3] The right of access to public-sector information is governed by the the Code of Administrative Procedure (Law no. 2690/1999). Presidential Decree no. 28/2015 established the obligation to publish laws, presidential decrees and various acts issued by public bodies and authorities online.
- [4] Attacks and threats to the physical safety of journalists have also been condemned by domestic journalists' associations.
- [5] See mainly the following legislation: Law no. 2863/2000, Law no. 2328/1995, Law no. 3592/2007, Law no. 4339/2015 and Law no. 4512/2018.
- [6] See mainly the following legislation: Law no. 2328/1995, Law no. 2863/2000, Law no. 3548/2007, Law no. 4339/2015, Law no. 4512/2018.
- [7] See mainly Law no. 3592/2007.
- [8] See for instance decisions 11/2020, 62/2020 and 63/2020 of the media authority.
- [9] Decision No. 243/2012/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2012 establishing a multiannual radio spectrum policy programme, OJ L 81, 21.3.2012, p. 7–17.
- [10] Presidential Decree 261/1997.
- [11] Law 4173/2013.
- [12] The Muslim minority of Western Thrace is a religious minority whose rights are guaranteed by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. It consists of three main ethnic groups, each with its own language: Turkish, Pomakish and Roma (<http://www.hri.org/MFA/foreign/musmingr.htm>).
- [13] See mainly Joint Ministerial Decision 3586/2018 and Law 4339/2015.
- [14] See mainly Joint Ministerial Decision 3586/2018 and Law 4339/2015.
- [15] ERT's Code of Operation stipulates that ERT maintains 19 regional branches which provide the link between the company and local communities through broadcasting radio news programme and programmes about the culture, customs and musical tradition of each region. See: <https://diavgeia.gov.gr/doc/ΨΩ4H465Θ1E-65Ψ?inline=true>
- [16] That said, broadcasting legislation foresees that legal entities in the form of public limited companies set up by local authorities may participate in auctions for a license for the provision of digital terrestrial TV content services (Art.3(1)(b) of Law 4339/2015). Legal entities in the form of public limited companies set up by local/municipal authorities may also participate in auctions for a local radio license, either analogue (Art. 8(9)(d) of Law 3592/2007) or digital terrestrial (Art. 222(1)(b) of Law 4512/2018).
- [17] ERT's Staff Rules (Arts 5(1) and 5(2)). See: <http://company.ert.gr/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/GenikosKanonismosProsopikoyERT-New.pdf>
- [18] Article 191 of the Law 4619/2019 (Hellenic Penal Code).
- [19] Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, OJ L 328, 6.12.2008, p. 55.
- [20] Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities, OJ L 303, 28.11.2018, p. 69. The AVMS Directive was eventually transposed in 2021.

[\[21\]](#) See Art. 14(1) of the Greek Constitution.

[\[22\]](#) Directive 2006/24/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 on the retention of data generated or processed in connection with the provision of publicly available electronic communications services or of public communications networks and amending Directive 2002/58/EC, OJ L 105, 13.4.2006, p. 54.

[\[23\]](#) CJEU, C-293/12 and C-594/12, Digital Rights Ireland and Seitlinger and others, judgment of 8 April 2014, ECLI:EU:C:2014:238.

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Annexe I. Country Team

First name	Last name	Position	Institution	MPM2021 CT Leader
<i>Evangelia</i>	<i>Psychogiopoulou</i>	<i>Senior research fellow</i>	<i>Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)</i>	X
<i>Anna</i>	<i>Kandyla</i>		<i>Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)</i>	

Annexe II. Group of Experts

The Group of Experts is composed of specialists with a substantial knowledge and recognized experience in the field of media. The role of the Group of Experts was to review the answers of the country team to 16 variables out of the 200 composing the MPM2021. Consulting the point of view of recognized experts aimed at maximizing the objectivity of the replies given to variables whose evaluation could be considered as subjective, and therefore to ensure the accuracy of the final results of the MPM. However, it is important to highlight that the final country report does not necessarily reflect the individual views of the experts who participated. It only represents the views of the national country team that carried out the data collection and authored the report.

First name	Last name	Position	Institution
<i>Giannis</i>	<i>Kotsifos</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>Journalists' Union of Macedonia and Thrace Daily Newspapers (ESIEMTH)</i>
<i>Despina</i>	<i>Anagnostopoulou</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>University of Macedonia</i>
<i>Elpida</i>	<i>Vamvaka</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>Homo Digitalis</i>
<i>Tasos</i>	<i>Xinaris</i>	<i>General Manager</i>	<i>Athens Newspaper Publishers Union</i>

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