

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 2021

Country report: Latvia

Anda Rozukalne, Riga Stradins University

Research Project Report

Issue -
June 2022



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. About the project	4
1.1. Overview of the Project	4
1.2. Methodological notes	4
2. Introduction	6
3. Results of the data collection: Assessment of the risks to media pluralism	8
3.1. Fundamental Protection (27% - low risk)	9
3.2. Market Plurality (66% - medium risk)	12
3.3. Political Independence (37% - medium risk)	15
3.4. Social Inclusiveness (60% - medium risk)	18
4. Pluralism in the online environment: assessment of the risks	21
5. Conclusions	25
6. Notes	28
7. References	29
Annexe I. Country Team	
Annexe II. Group of Experts	

© European University Institute 2022
Chapters © Anda Rozukalne, 2022

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC-BY 4.0) International license which governs the terms of access and reuse for this work. If cited or quoted, reference should be made to the full name of the author(s), editor(s), the title, the series and number, the year and the publisher.

Views expressed in this publication reflect the opinion of individual authors and not those of the European University Institute.

Published by
European University Institute (EUI)
Via dei Roccettini 9, I-50014
San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)
Italy
ISBN:978-92-9466-291-0
doi:10.2870/765448



With the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The European Commission supports the EUI through the EU budget. This publication reflects the views only of the author(s) and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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 2021. 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 notes

Authorship and review

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 is carried out centrally by the CMPF team. The research is based on a standardised questionnaire that was developed by the CMPF.

In Latvia the CMPF partnered with Anda Rozukalne (Riga Stradins University), 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 being intertwined with the traditional media and the 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 and 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, in order 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, MPM2022 scores may not be fully comparable with those in the previous editions of the MPM. For more details regarding the project, see the CMPF report on MPM2022, available on: <http://cmpf.eui.eu/media-pluralism-monitor/>.

2. Introduction

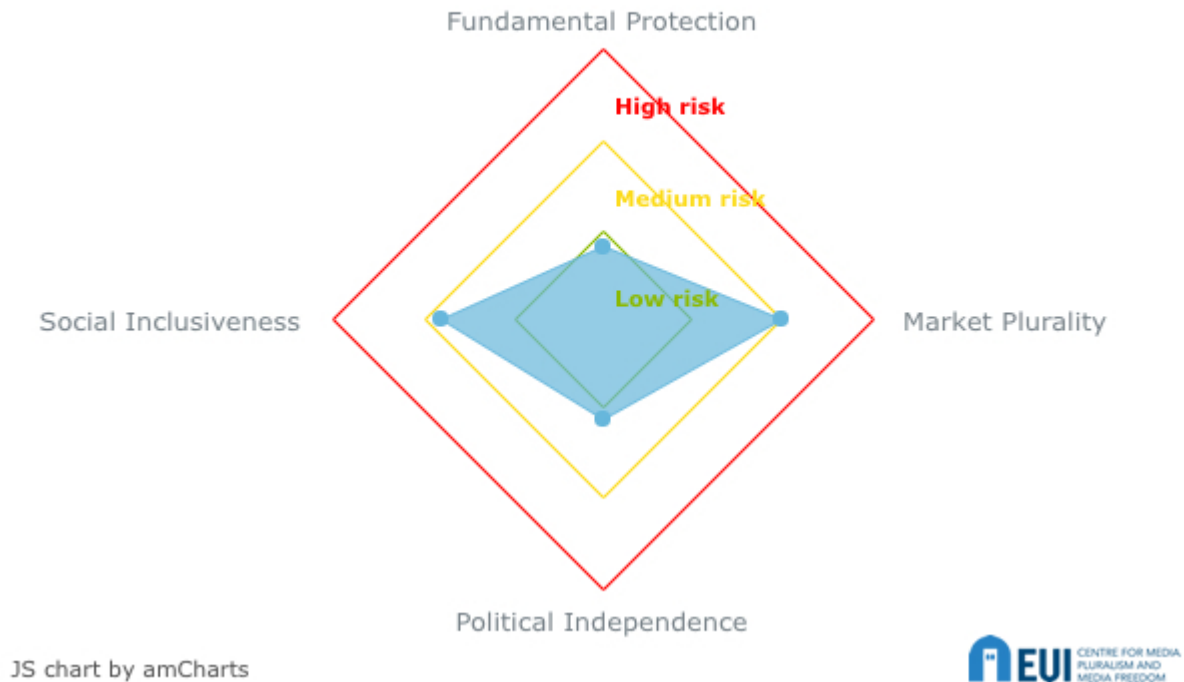
- **Country overview:** In 2021, 1.89 million people lived in Latvia, which covers an area of 64.6 thousand square meters. The global pandemic had a negative impact on the population of Latvia. In 2021, 34,142 deaths were registered, which is the highest number of deaths registered in the last 20 years and twice exceeds the number of births (CSB, 2021, p.12.). In 2021, Latvia had one of the lowest birth rates in 100 years (17,115 new-borns)
- **Languages:** Latvian is the state language of Latvia. Most of the Latvian population in 2021 are Latvians (62.7%), 24.4% of the population are Russians, 3% Belarusians, 2.2% Ukrainians, 1.9% Poles, 1.1% Lithuanians, 4.7% representatives of other ethnic groups. Only 160 people associate themselves with the second Latvian historical ethnic group Livs (CSB, 2021, p.26.).The second most used language in Latvia is Russian - about 35% of the population belonging to different ethnic groups use Russian daily.
- **Minorities:** Minorities are not officially defined in Latvian legislation. However, the media regulation provides conditions and a budget for the creation of media content for minorities. In 2021, the PSM multimedia platform RUS.LSM was established where the content in Russian of several PSM programs for minorities is available.
- **Economic situation:** Until the COVID-19 pandemic, economic growth in Latvia remained stable, exceeding the EU average. From 2011 to 2019, GDP grew by 3.3% on average each year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy in Latvia went into recession. In 2020, GDP in Latvia shrank by 3.6%. With the improvement in the epidemiological situation due to vaccination, economic activity was gradually increasing in 2021. At the end of the second quarter of 2021, the economy exceeded pre-COVID levels. In the third quarter, GDP (32,9-billion-euro total) increased by 5.2 per cent compared to the corresponding period of 2020 (EM, 2021).
- **Political situation:** Latvia's political landscape in 2021 was heterogeneous, as none of the seven political parties elected to the Latvian parliament in 2018 had a significant advantage. The government was formed from five parties "For Development!" and the "New Unity" (liberal), the New Conservative Party (conservative), the National Union (national, conservative), Who owns the state? (right-wing), currently "For a Human Latvia" (centre-right). The Social Democratic "Harmony" and the Green Peasants' Union (centre-right) form the parliamentary opposition. The Latvian government, formed by various political parties and led by Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš ("New Unity"), became the longest-running government in the history of democratic Latvia. The next parliamentary elections are expected on 1 October 2022.
- **Media market:** Data shows that the use of media by the Latvian population in 2021 was characterised by the growing role of digital media (LF, 2021, pp.19 -21); 87% of the population use Internet news portals (80% in 2020), 82% use social networking platforms (75% in 2020). TV usage is gradually decreasing - in 2021, 81% of Latvians watched television (in 2020 - 89%). Radio listening habits are stable - 79% of the population listened to the radio (80% - in 2020). During the year, press use decreased from 73% in 2020 to 66% in 2021. In 2021, the use of video (34% of the population) and audio (32%) streaming services increased. In the Top 10 of the most popular media in Latvia in the first

place is YouTube (76% use it), followed by Facebook (72%), Latvian Television (71%), news portal Delfi (67%), Latvian Radio (61%), commercial TV3 (60%), news site tvnet.lv (57%), news site Apollo (48%), commercial TV24 (47%), PSM news site lsm.lv and regional TV channel RE: TV (45%) (LF, 2021, p. 52-55). In 2021, the use of Latvian public television has increased (71%, 68% - in 2020). Fifty-nine per cent of its users are between the age of 16 and 30, and 55% of viewers belong to minorities. The use of Latvian public radio has also increased from 54% in 2020 to 63% in 2021. Public radio was listened to by 55% of the population aged 16 -30, 48% belonged to minority audiences.

- **Regulatory environment:** The year 2021 was important for Latvian media from a regulatory perspective. The *Law on Public Media and Administration 2021* was adopted, and a new Public Media Supervisory Board was established. The new law envisages paying more attention to the self-regulation of PSM and establishes an ombudsman institution.
- **COVID-19:** In the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the media environment gradually recovered from declining revenues. In the field of media, Media Support Fund's (MSF) activities were important. A total of 2.3 million euros has been allocated for media support via MSF (MAF, 2021).
- **War in Ukraine:** When Russia invaded Ukraine, the Latvian media restructured its content and increased the amount of information devoted to the war. The PSM offers many new news programs (EJO, 2022), documentaries, and discussions. Amendments to Article 13 (5) of the *Electronic Communications Law 2004*^[1] were adopted shortly to limit the dissemination of hate speech, war propaganda, incitement to war, and genocide support in society, giving the electronic media regulator National Electronic Media Council (NEEMC) the right to restrict access to websites available in the territory of Latvia, where content is distributed that endangers or may endanger national security or public order and safety by denying access to the domain name or Internet Protocol (IP) address of these websites. On 17 March 2022, the NEMMC decided to block 71 websites (NEPLP, 2022b), including the Russian official information site kremlin.ru. The decision sparked a debate in the professional organisation of journalists, whose members were divided on whether such a decision was justified and how to inform the public about Russia's official decisions in such circumstances. "Even if such decisions could be understood during the war, there are concerns that such censorship powers will be used in peacetime," said Ilya Kozin, chair of the Board of the Latvian Association of Journalists (Alternberga, 2022). Public media organisations are looking for opportunities to offer jobs to Ukrainian journalists. Minority language radio channel LR4 has begun to offer news, music, and an evening fairy tale for children in Ukrainian. Please, note that the report covers data referring to the year 2021. The impact of war in Ukraine is not reflected in the overall scores and scores for the different areas.

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

Latvia: Media Pluralism Risk Areas



The Media Pluralism Monitor 2022 shows a heterogeneous landscape in Latvia and a medium level of media pluralism risks. Compared to the MPM2021 data, the situation in the areas of Fundamental Protection, Market Plurality and Political independence has improved, but the level of risk has increased in the area of Social Inclusiveness.

The **Fundamental Protection** area data indicate a low-risk situation (27%). The regulation of freedom of expression (FoE) and access to information in Latvia complies with international standards. The level of availability of digital technologies in Latvia is high. However, the regulation of the digital environment in the area of fundamental protection is not developed. In 2021, the independence of the media authority had improved (18%), as the new *Law on the Public Service Media and Administration 2021* has entered into force, which enables the new PSM authority Public Service Media Council to gain a higher level of independence. Latvia has strengthened fundamental protection by transposing The EU Directive 2019/1937 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law. The new *Whistleblowing Law 2021* entered into force in early 2022.

The overall rating of the **Market Plurality** domain corresponds to a medium risk situation (66%), however, the media market concentration indicators show high risk scores, especially regarding **News media concentration** (86%), **Commercial & owner influence over editorial content** (80%), and the **Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement** (88%). Those data indicate the impact of global platforms and the lack of regulation of the digital media landscape.

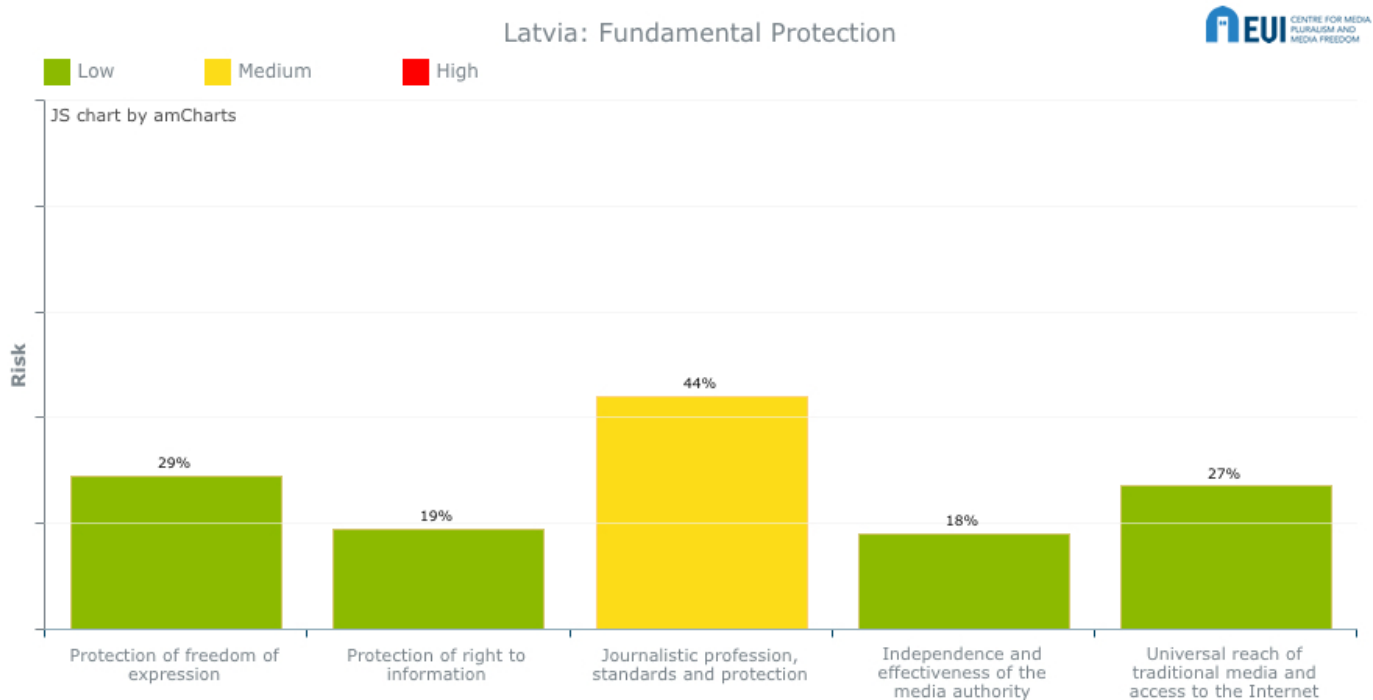
The media viability situation shows a contradictory picture. During the pandemic years, media companies had limited access to alternative sources of income, but the economic difficulties were partly offset by direct state support through the Media Support Fund (MAF, 2021). Compared to 2020, the amount of media advertising revenue in Latvia in 2021 has increased by 10% (LRA, 2022).

Political Independence records a medium risk score (37%) due to improvements in the transparency of media owners and the independence of the PSM. Analysing the domain indicators, it can be concluded that different levels of independence remain in various media segments and no regulation has been established that determines any relations between media owners and ruling parties, partisan groups, or politicians.

The Social Inclusiveness area risk level is slightly elevated since the previous edition of the MPM. The data shows a medium risk score (60%) due to underdeveloped media literacy policies and failures in limiting hate speech and harassment in the digital environment.

3.1. Fundamental Protection (27% - low 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 the competence to regulate the media sector, and the reach of traditional media and access to the Internet.



In the assessment of the **Fundamental Protection** area, Latvia is assessed as a low-risk in almost all indicators, except for the indicator **Journalistic profession, standards, and protection (44%)**, which shows a medium risk. Such an assessment is determined by several circumstances. First, the Latvian Association of Journalists (LAJ) is active in protecting the freedom of the press and editorial independence; however, it represents a small part of media professionals. At the beginning of 2022, the LAJ reports 139 members only. Secondly, during the pandemic, the decline in advertising investment in the media has led to an increase in the instability of journalists' work, with freelance journalists being particularly vulnerable. Thirdly, although no cases of arrests or killings of journalists have been recorded in Latvia, journalists receive online threats and are targets of hate speech on a regular basis, especially when covering controversial issues (e.g., vaccination, public health management, migration, gender equality, and regulation of same-sex relations).

Protection of freedom of expression (29%) reflects a low risk. It is explicitly recognised in the *Constitution* (1922). In describing the area of freedom of expression, specific circumstances that arose in the second half of 2021 should be mentioned due to the worsening situation at the Latvian (including Lithuanian and Polish) border with Belarus as asylum seekers were incentivised to come to the EU by the Belarusian government. During this time, several politicians attacked the public media, blaming them and reporters from the border for biasing the situation and threatening national security. The media also tried to show the humanitarian side of this conflict and the suffering of the people at the border. The Latvian Association of Journalists strongly opposed (LŽA, 2021) efforts to review the principles of creating public media content at a meeting of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee of the Parliament, believing that it was a threat to editorial independence and political pressure to reflect a specific political position in the public media.

The general regulation on **Freedom of expression** (FoE) applies to the digital environment and also shows low risk. In 2021, there were no cases of the government blocking or filtering access to the internet or specific services with the aim to limit freedom of expression. At the same time, some cases of closing websites or limiting their operations for a particular time due to violation of law occurred.

Electronic Communications Law regulates all aspects of electronic services. The Council of Regulation of Public Services is a regulatory body that monitors the landscape of electronic services. Facebook report of 2021 (from Jul - Dec 2021) has identified 13 cases of restrictions at the national level only in Latvia and 12 cases of global restrictions externally imposed. There are no cases mentioned in the Twitter report (July - December 2021).

Latvia has still not decriminalised defamation in mass media. Under Article 157 of the *Latvian Criminal Law 1998*^[2], defamation is defined as [knowingly committing] intentional distribution of fictions, knowing them to be untrue and defamatory of another person, in printed or otherwise reproduced material, as well as orally, if such has been committed publicly. Defamation is normally punished with fines or community service.

The **Protection of the right to information** indicator shows a low-risk score (19%). These rights are clearly defined in the *Law on Freedom of Information 1998*^[3]. Although there is a strong legal basis that protects rights to access information, journalists have been complaining about the limitations of information access from public institutions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when almost all institutions worked remotely and press conferences and press briefings were organised online, journalists found it even more difficult to obtain information from public officials. The journalists also confirmed (Auzāns, 12 May 2021) that the situation related to access to information has been getting worse during the COVID-19 pandemic due to remote working. Especially news journalists from PSM admitted that online press conferences and briefings made it convenient for public officials to avoid complicated questions. Members of the parliament and ministers regularly avoided answering questions outside press conferences.

At the beginning of 2022, a new *Whistleblowing Law 2021*^[4] to transpose the EU Directive on Whistleblowing has been adopted in Latvia. An annual report on whistle-blowing statistics in Latvia shows that out of the 517 applications processed as whistle-blower reports, 122 applications were identified as whistle-blower reports.

With the new law on whistle-blowing adoption, the previous law on whistle-blowers adopted in 2018 becomes invalid. The new law aims to promote the raising of alerts on infringements in the public interest and ensure the establishment and operation of alert mechanisms and the adequate protection of whistle-blowers. There was no public discussion about this law in Latvia. Nevertheless, a critical view of whistle-blowers' awareness has been expressed publicly (LSM, 2021). The head of the Fair Policy NGO *Delna*, Inese Tauriņa, believes that alert systems work minimally. "The data from the State

Chancellery's contact point for alerts on the received reports are insignificant and do not show any improvement," Tauriņa said in an interview with Latvian Radio.

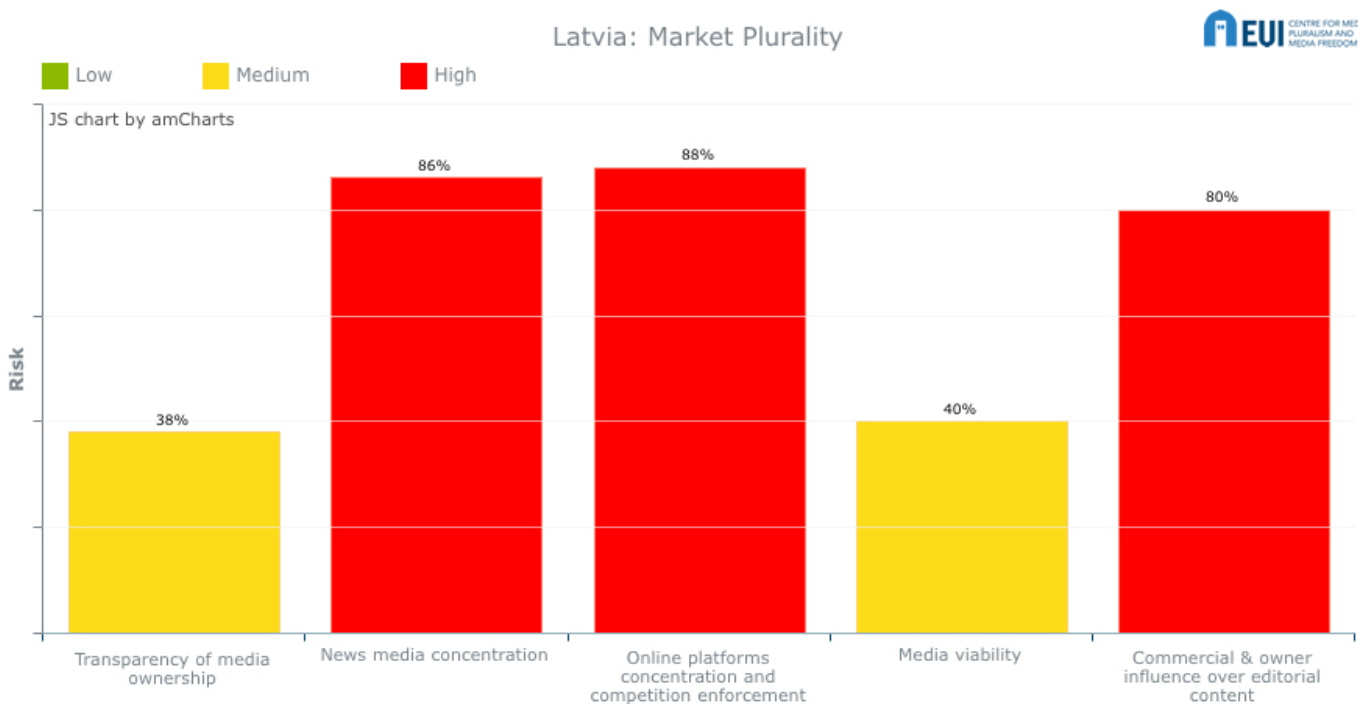
The indicator on the **Independence and effectiveness of the media authority** shows low risk (18%). Until 2021, Latvia had only one audiovisual media authority - the National Electronic Mass Media Council (NEEMC). NEEMC has been partially effective, with insufficient resources for monitoring commercial media content and activities. At the same time, NEEMC has been open and transparent.

With the entry of the new *Law on the Public Service Media and Administration 2021*^[5] into force, a new Public Media Council was established. The statutory approval procedure guarantees a higher degree of its independence. The Council consists of three members, who are approved by the Parliament and one of whom is nominated for approval by the President; one by the Council for the Implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation between Non-Governmental Organisations and the Cabinet of Ministers; and one by the Parliament. However, the new law has not solved the problem of financing PSM. The PSM budget has to be approved by the Parliament when adopting the state budget. The new PSM Council is due to propose a new PSM funding model in 2022.

The universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet is rated as low risk (27%). Latvia has fast, good quality internet. The Public Utility Commission is responsible for net neutrality. Ninety-eight per cent of the population is covered by signals from all public TV and radio channels, 92% is covered by broadband, 88% have broadband subscriptions.

3.2. Market Plurality (66% - medium risk)

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



Three out of five **Market Plurality** indicators constitute a high-risk situation; two indicators are rated as medium risk. This situation is due to the high level of market concentration in the various media segments and the fact that media legislation has not established specific thresholds and/or other limits that are based on objective criteria in order to prevent a high degree of cross-media concentration of ownership. At the time of writing, data on the structure of media market shares in several segments were not available.

Transparency of media ownership scored as a medium risk (38%). The regulation of transparency of media owners in Latvia differs depending on the media segment. There is no specific regulation for digital native media companies in terms of publicly accessible data on the beneficial and ultimate owners.

All media must disclose the owners and beneficial owners for the Register of Companies and public authority (audio-visual media), but data do not have to be disclosed to the public. Since 2020, if the title of the media outlet is known, the basic information on the owners can be found in the Register of Companies database, Lursoft, without payment.

News media concentration indicators' data describes a high-risk situation (86%). The regulation of Latvian

media does not affect the tendencies of media market concentration. There is the universal regulation in the *Law of Competition 2001*^[6] that defines dominant position in the market from 40% of market share. Regulation of audio-visual media segment concentration is stronger where dominant position starts from 35% of market share. The evaluation of dominant position of media firms are provided only in case of merger of companies.

There are no restrictions on horizontal or cross-media concentration. The specific limitations and sanctions to address horizontal concentration for the news media sector does not exist in basic media law. The only way to limit horizontal concentration is the merger of companies, especially if media companies are included in the list of commercial companies significant to national security.

The audience concentration of the Top4 audiovisual media owners amounts 55%; audience concentration of the Top 4 radio owners is 72%. At the time of writing, there is no data on the market share of the Top4 audio-visual media and Top4 radio owners. Similarly, there is a lack of data on the market share of the Top4 online news media. The audience share of the Top 4 online news media is 54%.

Data on market share of the Top4 newspapers owners shows 65%. The readership concentration of the Top 4 newspapers is 19%.

The **Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement** shows high risk level (88%). Data on the news acquisition habits of the Latvian population show that the largest part of news users reach news via either google.com or social media (mostly Facebook) (LF, 2021, p.52). The online platforms market is characterised by a high level of concentration.

In Latvia, there are no precise data on the impact of global platforms on the advertising market, nor there are any regulatory measures that would restrict competition between global platforms (especially social networking platforms) in the national media and advertising market.

In 2021 Latvia failed to transpose the Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market and amending Directives 96/9/EC and 2001/29/EC. According to information provided by Media Politics Unit of Ministry of Culture, the working group that is formed of media organisations and other stakeholders has not yet reached a common decision on issues related to this document.

The **Media viability** indicator corresponds to a medium risk rating (40%). Media viability results were boosted by post-recession economic growth and direct state support for the media. Compared to 2020, the volume of advertising has increased by 10.1% (LRA, 2022), reaching 75.5 million euros. In general, due to slow recovery from pandemic-related economic recession, the volume of advertising in all media segments, except for the press, increased in 2021. Also, the dynamics of Latvian media advertising was influenced by the exit of the Latvian public media from the advertising market, the restrictions of Covid-19 and changes in the availability of Russian-language television programmes. According to new Baltic Media Health Check 2020 - 2021 data (Re:Baltica, 2022), ad revenue grows, but it is still below pre-pandemic level. Internet media reported increase in subscription fees.

In 2021, the growth of the radio segment in the field of advertising was 13.8%, advertising revenue amounted to 9.8 million euros or 12% of all advertising revenue. The second largest increase is observed in the Internet segment - 10.1%. There was a relatively small increase in the television segment - 4.4% (LRA, 2022).

Data on the viability of various media segments are conflicting. The hardest year was in the newspaper segment - newspapers lost from 30 - 50% of their advertising and retail revenue. Newspaper advertising accounts for only 0.5% (1.5 million euros) of all advertising (LRA, 2022). The most unstable are local and regional media, mainly newspapers, as even before the Covid crisis their advertising revenues were very low and retail revenues declined (Re:Baltica, 2022).

The revenue situation in the digital environment differs. Internet advertising accounts for 25% (19 million euros) of the Latvian advertising market (LRA, 2022). In 2021, the Internet news media recovered after a drop in revenue in the first year of the pandemic.

The Latvian media has found alternative sources of income, but during the pandemic the opportunities to use those sources (for example, to organise conferences or cultural tourism projects) decreased. Thus, the commercial media were more dependent on the input of the Media Support Fund, which support is available due to projects'competition procedure.

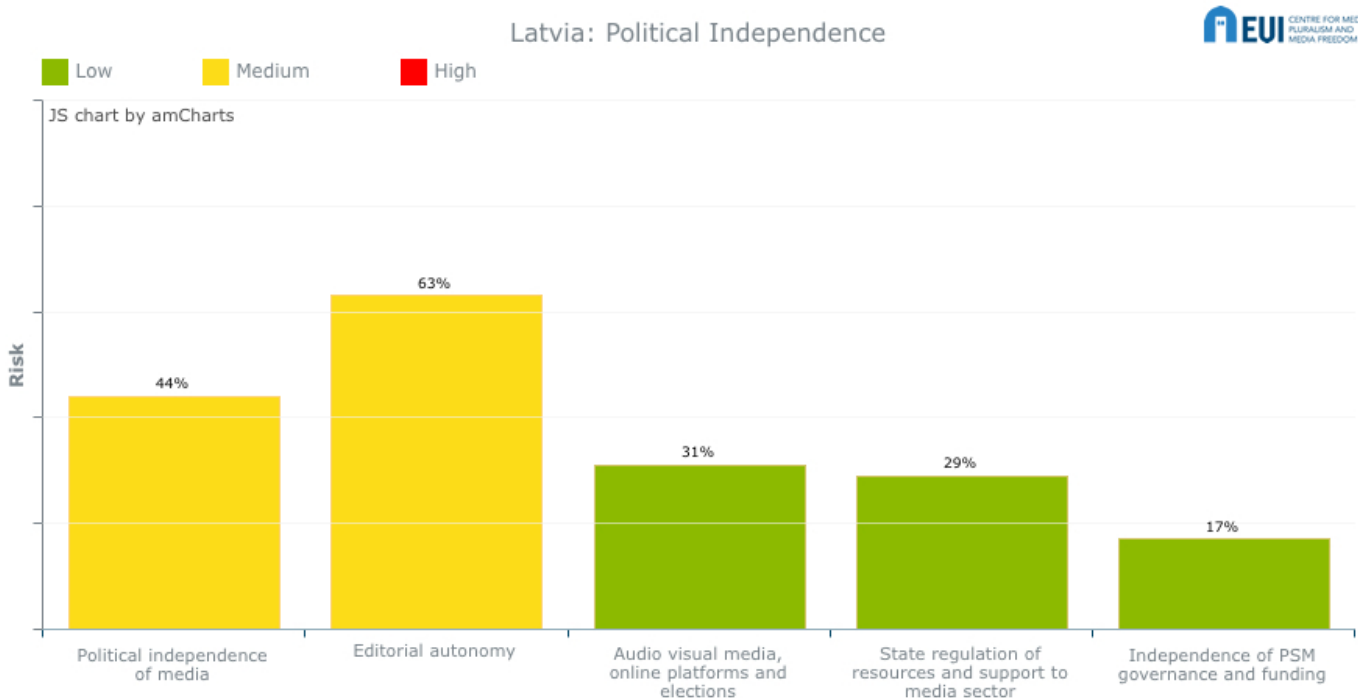
At the time of report writing, there were no data on whether the number of journalists decreased in 2021, nor data on whether the salaries of journalists changed. Also, there were no data about freelance journalists.

Commercial and owner influence over editorial content sub-domain data reflects a high risk (80%) situation. This is related to regulatory issues, for example, there is no any mechanisms granting social protection to journalists in the case of changes of ownership or editorial line of media companies in Latvia. There are no regulatory safeguards, including self-regulatory instruments, which seek to ensure that decisions regarding appointments and dismissals of editors-in-chief are not influenced by commercial interests. The same is true of other measures of journalist independence, there are no laws and / or self-regulatory measures to strengthen the obligation of journalists and / or media outlets not to be influenced by commercial interests. Although the codes of professional ethics of journalists' organizations clearly define that the profession of journalist is incompatible with operating in the advertising market, in some media journalists are involved in providing services to advertisers (Rožukalne, 2020, p.62). No specific regulation has been established for the operation of digital media. For advertorials, the *Advertising Law 1999* clearly defines that paid content and editorial content must be separated and clearly identified. In some cases, identification is approximate when reporting "paid cooperation" or "partnership material". In practice, the largest online media follow the general rules of responsible media and professional journalism.

In 2021, with declining commercial media revenues, commercial pressures on journalists and editors increased. The situation was further complicated by the growing influence of global platforms in the Latvian market. Therefore, the exit of public service media from the advertising market did not increase the revenue of commercial media (Re:Baltica, 2022).

3.3. Political Independence (37% - 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 the public service media. Furthermore, the area is concerned with the existence and effectiveness of (self)regulation in ensuring editorial independence and the availability of plural political information and viewpoints, in particular during electoral periods.



Two indicators in the Political Independence area score medium risk and three low risk.

Political independence of the media corresponds to a medium risk situation (37%). There is no law that regulates relations between media owners and parties, partisan groups, or politicians. Media ownership is regulated by universal *Commercial Law 2000*, and general media law e.g., *Law on Press and the other Mass Media 1991*. There is no regulation that prevents conflict of interests between media owners and ruling parties, politicians etc. In practice, however, there are no known cases of interest conflicts between media ownership and government office.

The level of political independence varies depending on the media segment. The only news agency LETA and the largest digital media are free from political influence. Historically, the owners of few radio channels and audiovisual media are indirectly linked to specific political forces. All major daily newspapers are indirectly owned and managed by politically affiliated persons.

There are only indirect or informal evidence of political control of leading audiovisual media. Since March 2020, the operation of the TV channel PBK (Pervij Baltijskij Kanal), which is controlled by the Russian government, has been limited because it is related to a person who is on the European Union's sanctions list (Andrey Kovalchuk). In October 2021, NEEMC decided to cancel PBK's broadcasting license (NEPLP, 2021). Regarding the political independence of the radio market, there are some small commercial national or regional radio channels that are indirectly linked to politically active owners. Largest newspaper outlets appeared to be controlled by political parties' representatives. Of the three dailies, *Latvijas Avīze* (The

Latvia Newspaper) in its print edition maintains a higher level of professional standards. Neatkarīgā (Independent), which is now issued as an online-only outlet, and Diena (the Day) openly support certain political interests. The largest newspaper publishing houses in Latvia - Mediju Nams (owner of daily Independent), Dienas Mediji (owner of daily Diena/ The Day), Publishing house "Latvian Media" (owner of daily "Latvian Newspaper"), Publishing House Vesti/News (owner of Russian language daily "Today"), local media "Ventas Balss" (Voice of Venta) - are indirectly owned and managed by politically affiliated persons. The largest digital native media, e.g. Delfi, Tvnet, Apollo.lv, jauns.lv, are operating without political control. The only media agency LETA is owned by Estonian media group Eesti Media Grupp; no evidence of political links among owners.

In the **Editorial autonomy** indicator, the situation in Latvia is assessed as medium risk (**63%**) level. The regulation of the media mentions editorial independence¹⁷, however, the norm is declarative, as it does not provide for any actions in case of violation of editorial independence. Media laws or self-regulatory measures do not guarantee autonomy when appointing and dismissing editors-in-chief. However, the degree to which the principle of editorial independence is understood and respected in specific media organisations varies. Reduced sources of media income, commercial interests have a greater impact on editorial decisions, political influence becomes less pronounced (Rožukalne, 2020).

The indicator on Audiovisual media, online platforms and elections is assessed as low risk (**31%**), which reflects the overall situation in various media segments. The requirement to ensure the impartiality and neutrality of news and information programs, to separate news from opinions, and the compliance of news and information content with the basic principles of professional ethics is set out in the *Electronic Mass Media Law 2010*, as well as in all self-regulatory acts. *Pre-election Campaign Law 2013* sets out the main principles of relations between the media and political parties during the pre-election period. PSM follow the principles of fair and balanced electoral campaigns coverage.

Generally largest and more professional commercial audiovisual media that provide news and analytical content provide neutral and diverse content before elections. "Some commercial media outlets tend to promote particular candidates in a way that may be closer to political PR than journalism. In some cases, the boosting of certain candidates may not stem from the lack of editorial independence, but lazy journalism and poor professional judgement, which pays disproportionate attention to eye-catching political stunts", as per media expert Jānis Buholcs.

The ability of parties to purchase advertisements in various media to ensure communication before the election is determined by the *Law on Financing of Political Parties 1995* and supervised by the Bureau of Prevention and Combating Corruption. All media organisations, including audiovisual media firms, have a duty before the election to provide their political advertising prices to the Bureau of Preventing and Combating Corruption. The equal opportunities and transparency of political advertising in online media during electoral campaign is stipulated by general pre-election campaigning regulation. The regulation notes that political advertising must be clearly identified and the funder of each single advertisement must be mentioned. Pre-election regulations require party pre-election campaign spending on online platforms to be identified in a transparent manner. Monitoring and investigation in cases of law violation is effective.

The State regulation of resources and support to media sector indicator scores low risk (29%). There are clear and transparent rules on the distribution of direct and indirect subsidies to the media, and during the pandemic, direct subsidies to media organisations increased, which were provided via the Media Support Fund programmes, offering 2.3 million euros to the media sector in the form of projects. The risk score is based on the lack of regulatory safeguards to ensure fair and transparent allocation of state advertising in the media. The Latvian media regulation does not define "state advertising", although state institutions and

companies with the share capital of which is partly owned by the State regularly place advertisements in the media.

Independence of PSM governance and funding was rated as low risk (17%).

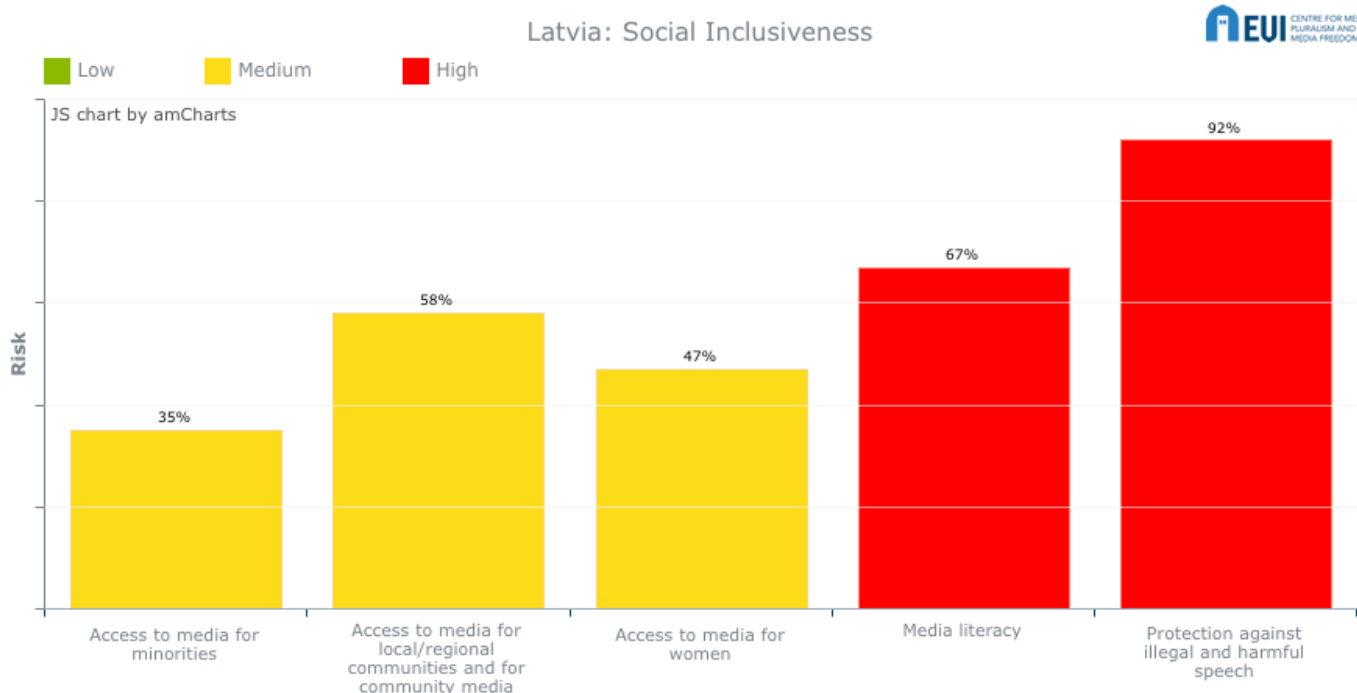
This is due to the changes in the PSM regulation that took place in 2021, which came into force, and which guarantees independence from government or other political influence. There is currently a transition process during which the new PSM boards will be appointed by brand new PSM Council according to the new *Law on Public Electronic Mass Media and Administration 2021*. There are no signs of political influence, as the new PSM council has no links with politicians or political organisations. The Council consists of three members, who are approved by the Parliament, but selection process is not dependent of political decision. One of three Council members is nominated for approval by the President; one by Council for the Implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation between Non-Governmental Organisations and the Cabinet of Ministers; and one by Parliament. The members of the PSM Board are selected by a commission, which includes representatives of PSM Council, media NGOs, media experts and researchers, with PSM staff participating as observers.

The Public Electronic Mass Media Council is an independent, autonomous authority, which represents the public interests in the field of public electronic mass media. The Council is a shareholder in public service media. The PSM board shall implement the administrative management of the public electronic mass medium. The political independence of the council and the board is guaranteed by the law on *Public Electronic Mass Media and Administration*, and the process of approving the council and the board is not determined by politicians elected by parliament.

However, the new PSM law has not solved the problem of PSM financing, which is still determined by politicians elected by the parliament, voting on the annual state budget.

3.4. Social Inclusiveness (60% - 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. Finally, it also includes new challenges arising from the uses of digital technologies, which are linked to the Protection against illegal and harmful speech.



Access to media for minorities is rated as medium risk (35%). This is determined by two circumstances: firstly, there is no defined minority in Latvia, and secondly, international documents, media policy documents and the PSM regulation provide regulation measures on content dedicated to minorities. For instance, historical ethnic minorities (Russians, Belorussians, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, Roma people) are mentioned in "Fourth Report submitted by Latvia. Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities - received on 27 October 2021".

Using this document and media laws, ethnic minorities are counted as legally recognised minorities in this research. But cultural and language minorities (e.g. Latgalian and Livonian), which are mentioned in media laws as specific audiences or sexual minorities are not treated as legally recognised minorities. Ethnic minorities (Latgalian speakers, Russians and Russian speaking people) have access to PSM airtime, but there is no diversity neither quality content. Also, cultural minorities have access to PSM channels and the situation is gradually improving with access of people with hearing impairment.

Considering minorities access to commercial media there are many programmes in Russian on private TV and on radio channels. These media provide mostly entertainment e.g., music, films and shows. Generally, there is a lack of quality journalism in minority languages in Latvia in the content provided by commercial media firms. Regarding health minorities, such as people with disabilities, access to commercial TV and radio channels, there are only a few examples of accessible content. To ensure content accessibility for people with disabilities in commercial TV and radio, changes have been made to the *Electronic Mass Media Law 2010 (Section 24.1)*^[8], which entered into force at the end of 2020. In practice, although NEEMC

developed guidelines (NEPLP, 2022) on access of media content for various minorities, no change have been observed yet. From 2017 to 2021, the number of programmes for people with hearing impairment increased (films, shows, documentaries) in the PSM programming. The situation regarding the content adapted for blind people is better than for people with hearing impairment. There are many series and films available with audio description e.g. "voice over", because, in Latvia, there is tradition to translate international audio-visual products.

Access to media for local / regional communities and for community media is assessed as medium risk (58%). Local and regional media receive direct and indirect state subsidies, but with declining advertising during the pandemic and increasing competition from global platforms, the existing subsidies are insufficient. PSM provides coverage of local events using content created by regional media correspondents. Public radio has regional correspondents in the four major regions in Latvia. Regarding community media, their status is not defined in Latvian media legislation.

Access to media for women is rated as medium risk (47%). The assessment is related to the fact that the Latvian PSM has not developed a gender equality policy. Most of the PSM board members in 2021 are women. All PSM chief executives are women, while the majority of commercial TV and radio companies are managed by men. Assessing the situation with media editors-in-chief then it is balanced: 50% of editors are women, 50% - men. Regarding PSM content, women are proportionally represented in news. However, a recent research project (Zitmane, 2018, p. 449) identified that men dominate at discussion programmes, while female participants tend to represent social care workers and teachers, for example. In 2021, there are no new research data to describe this situation.

Media literacy is rated as high risk (67%). Media literacy is an essential part of media politics but there is no strong media literacy policy developed. Analysis of media literacy content in the Latvian media shows that journalists associate media literacy with exposing Russian disinformation, paying less attention to the other aspects of media literacy. While 43% of the population have acquired basic digital skills, 42% of population has low overall digital skills (LF, 2021, pp.117 -118).

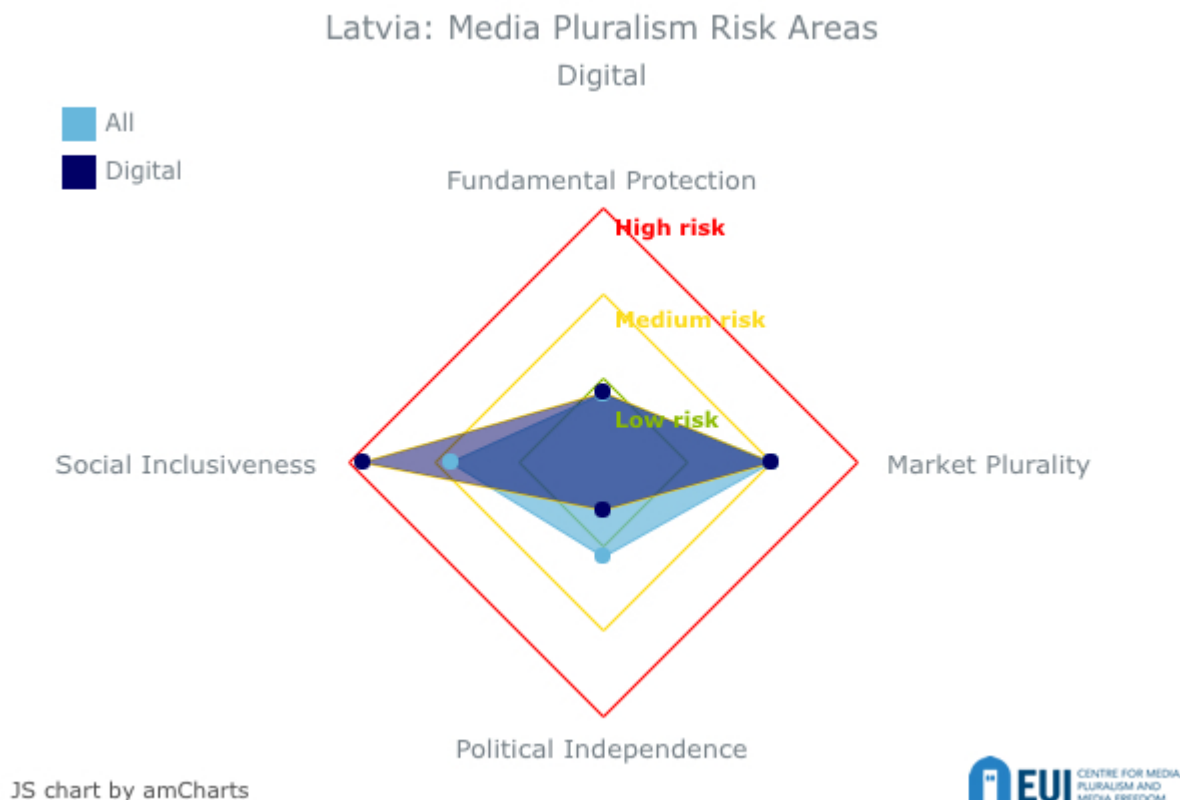
The Latvian education reform project Skola2030 (Skola 2030, 2021) envisages that media literacy is mainly applied to digital skills. The content of media literacy education does not include a sufficient level of knowledge about journalism and the role of the media in democracy (Rožukalne, Skulte and Stakle, 2020, p. 204). The largest audience of media literacy is reached through projects funded by the Media Support Fund, and media literacy content created by professional journalists can be found in PSM and commercial media.

Protection against illegal and harmful speech is rated as high risk (92%). During the pandemic Latvian society experienced a large increase in disinformation, and the professional media tried to combat the effects of disinformation. Disinformation is present mostly within the content of social media platforms. But there are actors (doctors, lawyers, other professionals) who express disinformation filled messages and appeared as opinion leaders in professional media content as well. Besides, several influential political organisations and Members of Parliament used disinformation as a basis for their political communication during the pandemic.

In this context, protection against disinformation is insufficient. There is a lack of regulatory measures to tackle online, and media disseminated disinformation. While there is an active discussion about preventing the impact of disinformation, no regulatory measures against disinformation were implemented in 2021. There is no civil initiatives either. However, there are many media focusing on non-governmental initiatives and a special category of funding provided by the Media Support Fund supports media projects tackling disinformation (MAF, 2021). Unfortunately, individual activists (journalists, doctors, scientists,

academia members), who try to oppose or explain disinformation publicly tend to face regular harassment and even threats in digital and non-digital environment. The police do not prosecute the perpetrators until real damage is done. About 16% to 30% of the population believe in various disinformation narratives (Rožukalne, Murinska, and Tīfentāle, 2021, p. 76), and about one fifth does not recognise disinformation. Regarding protection against hate speech, there is a well-developed legal framework, but there is no specific regulation aiming at online hate speech. There is a huge problem observed with hate speech and verbal harassment expressed towards women (politicians, journalists, authorities, activists, artists etc) in social media in Latvia (Repečkaite, Dreijere and Laine, 2021; Leta, 2022).

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



The situation of the digital environment in Latvia in the field of Fundamental protection and Market plurality coincides with the offline environment. In the field of political independence in the digital environment, assessments include a lower risk situation, while in the field of social inclusiveness, the situation in the digital environment represents a high level of risk.

Fundamental Protection

There is no specific regulation in Latvia for guarantees for **freedom of expression (FoE) online**. The basic regulation governing FoE in the offline environment applies to the digital one as well.

Journalists are targets of online threats and hate speech on a regular basis. They are particularly vulnerable to such attacks if they produce content on controversial issues in society. There is a medium risk situation in Latvia regarding the protection of the **Journalistic profession, standards and protection** in the digital environment. The situation is particularly difficult for women journalists, who are regularly receiving verbal attacks and threats in the digital environment.

Latvia has a low-risk situation in the field of **Journalism and data protection**, as the law establishes obligations that fully comply with Articles 8 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet is rated as low risk (27%). Latvia has fast, good quality internet. Ninety-eight per cent of the population is covered by signals from all public TV and radio channels, 92% is covered by broadband, 88% have broadband subscriptions. **Net neutrality** implementation creates a low-risk situation in Latvia. Net neutrality and transparency of services principle is implemented not only on law or regulation documents but in legal documents that regulate the rights and duties of internet service providers (ISPs).

Market Plurality

In Latvia, the universal regulation of market concentration applies to digital news media. The regulation of Commercial Law will eventually be put in force only in the case of merger of online media companies. The statutory concentration limits apply if the market share of the media company exceeds 40%. However, regulation is not able to influence the trends of digital media concentration, **Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement** create a high-risk situation in Latvia. It is also affected by the impact of global platforms, which reduce the amount of advertising investment available to national media organisations. There is a lack of accurate data on the distribution of advertising media between digital media and global platforms. According to the Advertising Association, the most recent in this area by 2020, about 50% of advertising investment is in global platforms.

Transparency of media ownership. There is no separate regulation of the digital media environment in Latvia, such aspects as **Disclosure of media ownership of digital news media** and **Transparency of ultimate ownership of digital news media** are regulated in line with the general regulation. Information on digital media owners must be reported to public authorities, basic data is available free of charge, but there is no requirement to provide information on owners and beneficial owners publicly.

News media concentration. Regarding horizontal concentration (digital native) in Latvia, data are available on the level of concentration of the digital native media audience, but no financial data is available on the market share, which would allow an accurate assessment of the level of horizontal concentration. The audience share of the Top 4 online news media is 54%.

Regarding cross-media concentration there is no established specific thresholds and/or other limitations of media regulation that are based on objective criteria (e.g. number of licences, audience share, circulation, distribution of share capital or voting rights, turnover/revenue, etc.) in order to prevent a high degree of cross-media concentration of ownership. In case of mergers of digital media companies, the Competition Council is responsible for decisions that prevent market concentration. There is no specific legal regulation for cross-media concentration and no data are available on cross-media concentration.

Media viability. The share of Internet advertising in Latvia makes up 25% of the advertising market. In 2021, the digital media advertising market remained at the previous year's level. The Latvian media has found alternative sources of income, but during the pandemic the opportunities to use it (for example, to organise conferences or cultural tourism projects) decreased. Digital media offers the following paid services - streaming of various events, conferencing in the digital environment, creation of digital content. Considering direct State subsidies, the Media Support Fund has a dedicated programme to support the quality journalism content creation of digital media.

Commercial & owner influence over editorial content. The same laws, and/or self-regulatory measures and safeguards apply to journalistic work in online news media. In practice, the level of self-regulation depends on the particular media organisation and its (if it exists) code of professional ethics. Largest and more professional online media outlets (Delfi, Tvnet) follow the general principles of professional journalism, including, avoidance of commercial influence.

Regarding disguised advertising, there is a general *Advertising law* that prohibits hidden advertising in any media platform. In practice, largest online media follow the general standards of responsible media and professional journalism, but there are many other online media that actively publish various forms of disguised advertising online.

In 2020 and 2021, with declining commercial media revenues, commercial pressures on journalists and editors increased. The situation was further complicated for digital media by the growing influence of global platforms in the Latvian market.

In 2020, interviews with editors and journalists of various media organizations (national, local, print, TV and radio, online) identify that media owners' commercial interests are the main factor that limit editorial independence and cause self-censorship. Digital media is constantly looking for new formats to engage advertisers. Professional media clearly distinguish between editorial content and paid content.

Political Independence

Political independence of media. Political control over native digital media outlets is generally low. The largest digital native media, e.g. Delfi, Tvnet, Apollo.lv, jauns.lv, are operating without political control.

Audio visual media, online platforms and elections. There is a regulation that aims to ensure transparency of political advertising on online platforms during electoral campaign. The updated pre-election communication regulation defined by Pre-Election Campaign Law includes rules for online electoral campaigns.

Regarding the the rules for political parties, candidates and lists competing in elections to report on campaign spending on online platforms Bureau of Prevention and Combating of Corruption collect the all data and monitors situation. Monitoring and investigation in cases of law violation are effective.

Political parties are not transparent in identification of spending and techniques used in social media political campaigns. There is a lack of information on techniques used in social networking platforms.

According to available information, the Data State Inspectorate followed the guidance of European Commission on the implementation of GDPR in electoral context. The duty of this institution before election was to supervise data usage. Inspectorate regularly informed on its activities and rights of citizens during election campaign.

Independence of PSM governance and funding. The new law on Public Service Electronic Media and Administration provides key principles on funding that adequately covers the online public service missions of the PSM without distorting competition with private media actors. The law provides for PSM cooperation with commercial media. PSM content is also available to minorities and people with disabilities in the digital environment. The PSM portal has a separate section for content suitable for people with hearing impairments.

Social Inclusiveness

PSM content is also available to minorities and people with disabilities in the digital environment. The PSM portal has a separate section for content suitable for people with hearing impairments.

Media literacy

Digital competencies. The percentage of population that has basic or above basic overall digital skills is 43% (Eurostat, 2019). This is higher than EU average level. However, the percentage of population that has

low overall digital skills (42%) is far above the EU average level. These data show both the digital divide in society, which characterises the differences between generations, and supplement the data that 58% of Latvians are interested in media literacy (NEPLP, 2020).

Pandemic related disinformation is widespread in the digital environment. More than half (54%) of the respondents have encountered misleading information, yet the proportion of respondents who cannot assess it (one in five) or have not encountered it (one in four) is significant (Rožukalne, Kleinberga and Tīfentāle, 2021). There are many media-focused or education-focused programmes devoted to tackle disinformation in Latvia, for instance, media literacy initiatives, fact-checking and news deconstruction. These are categories of programmes supported by the Media Support Foundation. Public Media have regular programmes on disinformation. One of the strongest players in this field is Investigative Journalist Centre RE:Baltica and their project RE:Check. However, there is no regulation aimed at limiting disinformation in the digital environment. The impact of disinformation can be seen in the results of public opinion polls. About 16% to 30% of the population believe in various disinformation narratives, about one-fifth does not recognise disinformation (Rožukalne, Kleinberga and Tīfentāle, 2021).

Protection against hate speech on social media can be described as a high-risk situation. There is well-developed legal framework to fight hate speech, but there is no specific regulation aimed at targeting online hate speech. Besides, there are several court cases related to online hate speech and persecution (Repečkaite, D, Dreijere, V. and Laine, M, 2021; Leta, 2021). However, there are many barriers (e.g., lack of instruments, long investigation process, long court hearing processes) that make complicated countering online hate speech in Latvia.

Latvia lacks data on hate and harassment attacks in the digital environment. Fragmented information in the news media shows that the number of these attacks is increasing and women are more often affected. Journalists have reported regular attacks (Repečkaite, D, Dreijere, V. and Laine, M, 2021).

5. Conclusions

The evaluation of the MPM areas shows both a low risk situation (Fundamental protection - 27%) and a medium risk situation (Political independence - 37%; Market plurality - 66%, Social inclusiveness - 60%).

By evaluating the **Fundamental Protection** area in 2021, it can be concluded that stability in FoE regulation and access to information remained. The level of independence of the PSM was strengthened by the approval of the Law on Public Electronic Media and Administration. As a result, a new PSM Council has been set up, with a higher level of independence guaranteed by law than ever before.

However, indicators of Journalistic profession, standards, and protection show a medium-risk situation, as the level of social protection for journalists remains low, but the labour market in journalism has been volatile during the pandemic.

Recommendations

- **To the State, media professionals, and civic society organisations:**
 - **by establishing a new media authority, the Public Electronic Media Council (PEMC), support the prepared project for change in the funding model of the PSM, making it independent from political decisions;**
 - **create media regulatory measures to prevent disinformation not only in electronic media but in a content provided of representatives of all media segments;**
 - **develop a whistle-blowers' reporting system that guarantees the safety of whistle-blowers' and promotes positive change (e.g., reduced tolerance for corruption);**
 - **support civic society organisations' awareness-raising activities about new whistle-blowers' protection legislation**

Three of the **Market Plurality** indicators show a high-risk status. This situation is determined by the high overall level of media concentration and especially the increase in the concentration of digital media.

The second, even more important issue is the impact of global platforms on the Latvian media market. The country has not initiated any digital platforms taxation schemes to reduce unfair competition and create support mechanisms for national media. The effects of declining advertising investment have been partially offset by State support for media provided by the Media Support Fund.

Commercial and owner influence over editorial content reflects a high risk situation. This is related to regulatory issues, for example, there is no mechanisms granting social protection to journalists in the case of changes of ownership or editorial line of media companies in Latvia. Even more there are no regulatory safeguards, including self-regulatory instruments, which seek to ensure that decisions regarding appointments and dismissals of editors-in-chief are not influenced by commercial interests.

Recommendations

- **To the State and other stakeholders (commercial media organisations, media civil society organisations, academia)**

- **to create detailed tax schemes for global platforms, using part of income to develop national media support mechanisms, and participate in ongoing preparation of EU level taxation schemes for global platforms.**
- **to address the issue of high ownership concentration in the media sector with more effective and updated rules**
- **to increase direct state support for quality media**
- **improve regulation to protect the editorial independence of journalists in the case of a change of media ownership**

Political Independence of the media corresponds to a medium risk situation (37%).

In Latvia media regulation is very liberal, there is no regulation that sets limits to the direct and indirect control of media by party, partisan group or politicians. The regulation of editorial independence is declarative, as there are no instruments to comply with this principle defined in the law in cases of violation of editorial independence.

Recommendations

- **To the State (media policy developers etc.)**
 - **complement the media regulation with regulatory safeguards that prevent conflicts of interest between owners of media and the ruling parties, partisan groups or politicians;**
- **To the civil society (including journalists' organisations and academia representatives)**
 - **to develop measures to protect editorial independence (e.g. editorial councils at media company level, to facilitate the agreement between the owners/top managers and the editors regarding editorial independence).**

The Social Inclusiveness area data shows a medium level of risk (60%). This is due, firstly, to insufficient regulation to prevent hate speech and harassment in the online environment, and secondly, knowledge of media literacy is not fully integrated into all levels of education.

In Latvia, women make up the majority of journalists, and many women hold senior positions at PSM. However, there is still no gender equality policy established in the Latvian PSM organisations.

In general, minorities have access to the media, but in reality the policy of access to media for minorities and people with disabilities is not sustainable.

Recommendations

- **To the media policy makers, PSM organisations and civic society**
 - **improve the framework for the effective prevention of hate speech and harassment in the online environment;**

- **establish a media literacy policy that includes media literacy education at all levels of education.**
- **envisage the development of a gender equality policy in the new PSM strategy.**
- **the PSM strategy should include a proportion of sustainable content for minority audiences, while continuing to assess its fragmentation.**
- **electronic media policy and further strategy should include clear requirements for commercial media to offer content accessible to people with disabilities.**

6. Notes

- [1] Electronic Communication Law: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/96611-electronic-communications-law>
- [2] Criminal Law: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/88966-criminal-law>
- [3] Freedom of Information Law: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/50601-freedom-of-information-law>
- [4] The Whistleblowing Law: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/329680-trauksmes-celsanas-likums>
- [5] Law on Public Electronic Mass Media and Administration Thereof:
<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/319096-law-on-public-electronic-mass-media-and-administration-thereof>
- [6] Law of Competition 2001: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/54890-competition-law>
- [7] Law on Press and the other Mass Media 1991: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/64879-on-the-press-and-other-mass-media>
- [8] Electronic Mass Media Law: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/214039-electronic-mass-media-law>

7. References

References:

- Altenberga, J. (2022) 'Pret Kremļa propagandu' [Against Kremlin propaganda], *IR*, 24 March, p.28.
- Auzāns, G., (2021) 'Re: Baltica editor: During the Covid-19 pandemic, journalists work is getting more complicated', *Ism.lv*, 12 May [online]. Available at: <https://www.ism.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/rebaltica-redaktore-covid-19-pandemijas-laika-zurnalistiem-gruti-stradat.a404179/> (Accessed: 15 December 2021)
- Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) (2022) *Statistical Yearbook of Latvia 2021* [online]. Available at: https://admin.stat.gov.lv/system/files/publication/2022-02/Nr_01_Latvijas_statistikas_gadagramata_2021_Statistical%20Yearbook%20of%20Latvia_%2821_00%29_LV_EN.pdf. (Accessed: 17 March 2021)
- EJO (2022). '[Evolving journalistic approaches that are helping to tell the story of the war in Ukraine](https://en.ejo.ch/specialist-journalism/snapshot-analysis-evolving-journalistic-approaches-in-europe-that-are-helping-to-tell-the-story-of-the-war-in-ukraine)' [online], EJO, 15 March. Available at: <https://en.ejo.ch/specialist-journalism/snapshot-analysis-evolving-journalistic-approaches-in-europe-that-are-helping-to-tell-the-story-of-the-war-in-ukraine> (Accessed: 31 March 2022)
- Ekonomikas ministrija (EM) (2021) 'Latvijas Ekonomikas attīstības pārskats' [Overview of Latvian economic situation][online]. Available at: <https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/latvijas-ekonomikas-attistibas-parskats> (Accessed: 15 December 2021)
- Latvijas Fakti (LF) (2021) *Pētījums par Latvijas iedzīvotāju medijpratību un mediju lietošanas paradumiem* [Study on media literacy and media usage patterns of Latvian population] [online]. Available at: https://www.nepypadome.lv/lv/assets/documents/Petijumi/Petijums_par_Latvijas_iedzivotaju_medijpratibu_un_mediju_satura_lietošanas_paradumiem_2021.pdf (Accessed: 15 March 2022)
- Leta (2022) 'Par Ingas Sprinģes vajāšanu reāls cietumsods piespriests Jānim Sondaram' [Jānis Sondars has been sentenced to real imprisonment for persecuting journalist Inga Sprinģe], *Santa*, 11 March [online]. Available at: <https://www.santa.lv/raksts/privatadzive/par-ingas-springes-vajasanu-reals-cietumsods-piespriests-janim-sondaram-48510/> (Accessed: 11 March 2022)
- LRA (2022) 'Latvijas reklāmas tirgus apkopojuma dati 2021' [Data on Latvian media advertising market 2021][online]. Available at: <https://www.lra.lv/lv/statistika/latvijas-mediju-reklamas-tirgus-apkopoju-ma-dati/> (Accessed: 25 March 2022)
- LSM (2021) '«Delnas» direktore: Trauksmes celšanas sistēmas strādā minimāli' [The head of the NGO "Delna" believes that alert systems work minimally], *LSM*, 13 December [online]. Available at: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/delnas-direktore-trauksmes-celsanas-sistemas-strada-minimali.a434280/> (Accessed 31 March 2022).
- LŽA (2021) 'LŽA paziņojums par politiskā spiediena nepieļaujamību pret medijiem' [LAJ statement on the inadmissibility of political pressure on the media], 24 November [online]. Available at: <http://www.latvijaszurnalisti.lv/jaunakais-ieraksts/2021/11/24/lza-pazinojums-par-politiska-spiediena-nepielaujamilibu-pret-medijiem/> (Accessed: 15 December 2021)
- MAF (2021) 'Mediju Atbalsta fonds' [Media Support Fund], *SIF* [online]. Available at: https://www.sif.gov.lv/lv/mediju-atbalsta-fonds?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F (Accessed: 19 March 2022)
- NEPLP (2021) 'NEPLP anulē apraides atļauju programmai "Pirmais Baltijas Kanāls Latvija"' [NEEEMC revokes the broadcasting license for the program "First Baltic Channel Latvia"], *NEPLP*, 21 October [online]. Available at: <https://www.nepypadome.lv/lv/sakums/padome/padomes-sedes/sedes-sadalas/neplp-anule-apraides-atlauju-programmai-pirmais-baltijas-kanals-latvija.html> (Accessed: 17 March 2022)
- NEPLP (2022a) 'NEPLP izstrādātās vadlīnijas palīdzēs medijiem efektīvāk nodrošināt prasības par satura pieejamības veicināšanu' [The guidelines developed by NEPLP will help the media to meet the requirements for promoting the availability of content more effectively], *NEPLP* [online]. Available at: <https://www.nepypadome.lv/lv/sakums/padome/padomes-sedes/sedes-sadalas/vadlinijas-palidzes-medijiem-efektivak-nodrosinat-prasibas-par-satura-pieejamibas-veicinasanu.html> (Accessed: 20 March 2022)
- NEPLP (2022b) 'NEPLP saistībā ar apdraudējumu valsts drošībai ierobežo 71 tīmekļvietni Latvijā' [NEEMC

restricts 71 websites in Latvia due to threats to national security], *NEPLP* [online], 17 March. Available at: <https://www.neplpadome.lv/lv/sakums/padome/padomes-sedes/sedes-sadalas/neplp-saistiba-ar-apdraudejumu-valsts-drosibai-ierobezo-71-timeklvietni-latvija.html> (Accessed: 20 March 2022)

Re:Baltica (2022) 'BOUNCING BACK: Recovery and way forward', *Baltic Media Health Check 2020 - 2021*, ISBN 978-9984-822-66-2.

Repečkaite, D, Dreijere, V. and Laine, M, (2021) "‘Lasīsi izsistos zobus ar laužtiem pirkstiem’". Kāpēc Baltijā nevedas ar interneta agresijas apkarošanu?' ["You will collect broken teeth with broken fingers". Why the Baltic is not leading the fight against Internet aggression?], *Re:Baltica*, September 15 [online]. Available at: <https://rebaltica.lv/2021/09/lasisi-izsistos-zobus-ar-lauztiem-pirkstiem-kapec-baltija-nevedas-ar-interneta-agresijas-apkarosanu/> (Accessed: 15 December 2021)

Rožukalne, A. (2020) 'Self-censorship in Latvian journalism: A research note', *European Journal of Communication*, 35(1), pp. 60–64. doi: [10.1177/0267323119897799](https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323119897799).

Rožukalne, A., Skulte, I. and Stakle, A. (2020). 'Media education in the common interest: Public perceptions of media literacy policy in Latvia'. *Central European Journal of Communication*, 13(2/26), 202-229. [https://doi.org/10.19195/1899-5101.13.2\(26\).4s](https://doi.org/10.19195/1899-5101.13.2(26).4s)

Rožukalne, A., Murinska, S. and Tīfentāle, A, (2021) 'Is Covid-19 an “Ordinary Flu” That Benefits Politicians? Perception of Pandemic Disinformation in Latvia'. *Communication Today*, Vol. 12(2), pp. 68-83. Skola 2030 [online]. Available at: <https://www.skola2030.lv/lv>, <https://www.skola2030.lv/lv> (Accessed: 15 March 2022)

Zitmane, M. (2018) 'Dzimte Latvijas medijos' [Gender in Latvian Media] in Zelče, V. (ed). *Latvijas media daudzveidība* [Diversity of Latvian Media]. Rīga, LU, pp.440 - 465.

Legal Acts:

Constitutional Law 1922: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/57980-the-constitution-of-the-republic-of-latvia>

Law on Press and the other Mass Media 1991: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/64879-on-the-press-and-other-mass-media>

Law on Financing of Political Parties 1995: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/36189-law-on-financing-of-political-organisations-parties>

Law on Freedom of Information 1998: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/50601-freedom-of-information-law>

Advertising Law 1999: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/163-advertising-law>

Commercial Law 2000: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/5490-commercial-law>

Law of Competition 2001: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/54890-konkurences-likums>

Electronic Communications Law 2004: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/96611-electronic-communications-law>

Electronic Mass Media Law 2010: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/214039-electronic-mass-media-law>

Pre-election Campaign Law 2013: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/253543-pre-election-campaign-law>

Law on the Public Service Media and Administration Thereof 2021: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/319096-law-on-public-electronic-mass-media-and-administration-thereof>

Whistleblowing Law 2021: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/329680-trauksmes-celsanas-likums>

ANNEXE I. COUNTRY TEAM

First name	Last name	Position	Institution	MPM2022 CT Leader
<i>Anda</i>	<i>Rozukalne</i>		<i>Riga Stradins University</i>	X

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 that make up the MPM2022. Consulting the point of view of recognized experts was aimed at maximizing the objectivity of the replies given to variables whose evaluation could be considered as being 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>Arta</i>	<i>Giga</i>	<i>Chair of the Board</i>	<i>Association of Latvian Journalists</i>
<i>Andris</i>	<i>Kenins</i>	<i>Director</i>	<i>Latvian Broadcasting Media Association</i>
<i>Janis</i>	<i>Palkavnieks</i>	<i>Spokesperson of the social media platform draugiem.lv and the company group</i>	<i>Social media Draugiem (For Friends)</i>
<i>Aurelija</i>	<i>Druviete</i>	<i>Council member</i>	<i>National Electronic Media Council</i>
<i>Guntars</i>	<i>Klavinskis</i>	<i>Chair of the Board</i>	<i>Association of Latvian Press Publishers</i>
<i>Janis</i>	<i>Buholcs</i>	<i>associate professor</i>	<i>Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences</i>
<i>Janis</i>	<i>Lielpeteris</i>	<i>Chair of the Board, represents media consumers interests</i>	<i>Council of Media Ethics of Latvia</i>

Research Project Report

Issue -

June 2022

doi:10.2870/765448

ISBN:978-92-9466-291-0

QM-07-22-557-EN-N



Publications Office
of the European Union

