

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: Lithuania

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Research Project Report

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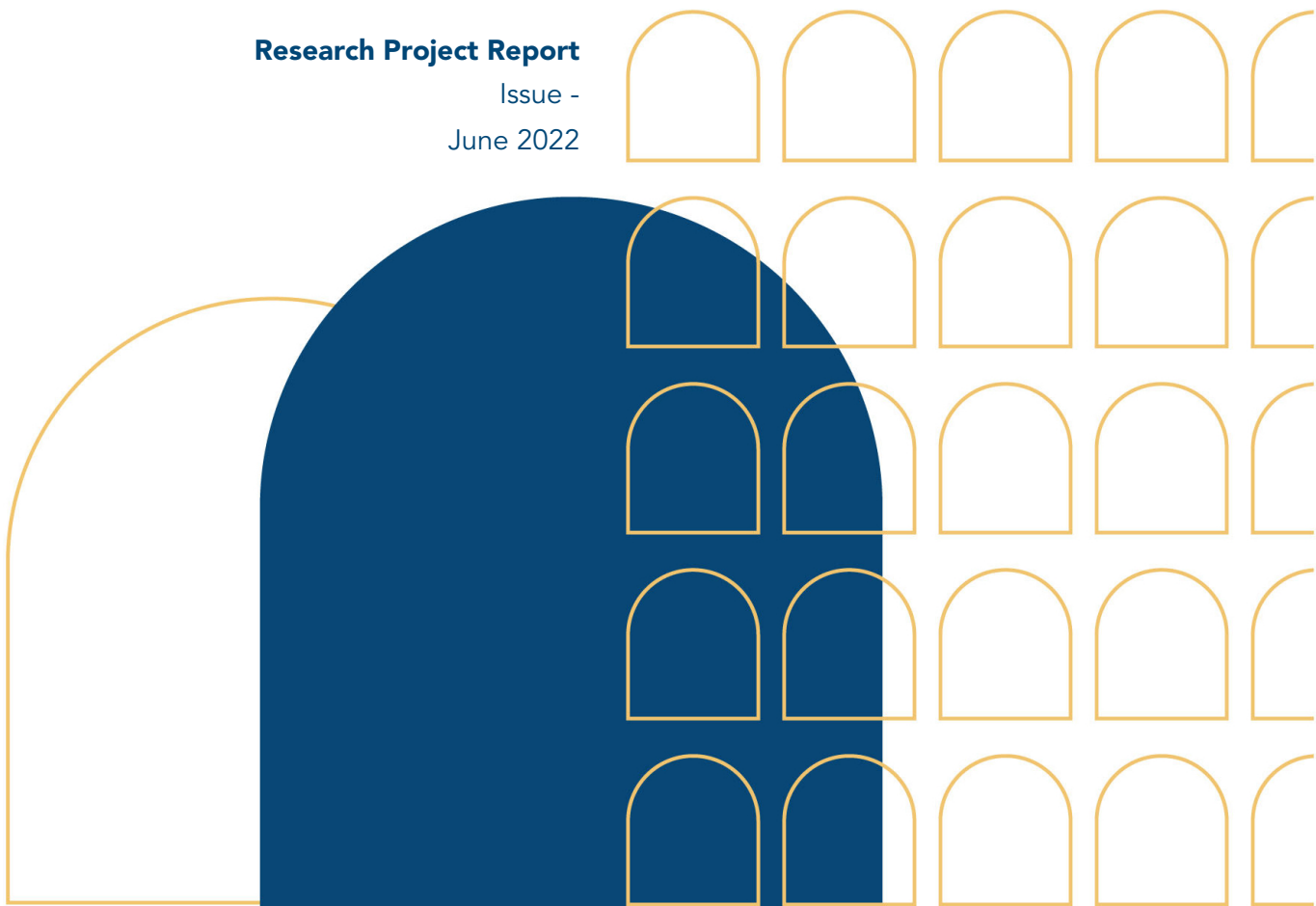


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1. About the project

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 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 Lithuania the CMPF partnered with Aukse Balcytiene, Prof. Kristina Juraite and Assoc. Prof Ignas Kalpokas (Vytautas Magnus University), Assoc. Prof. Deimantas Jastramskis (Vilnius 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 Annex 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

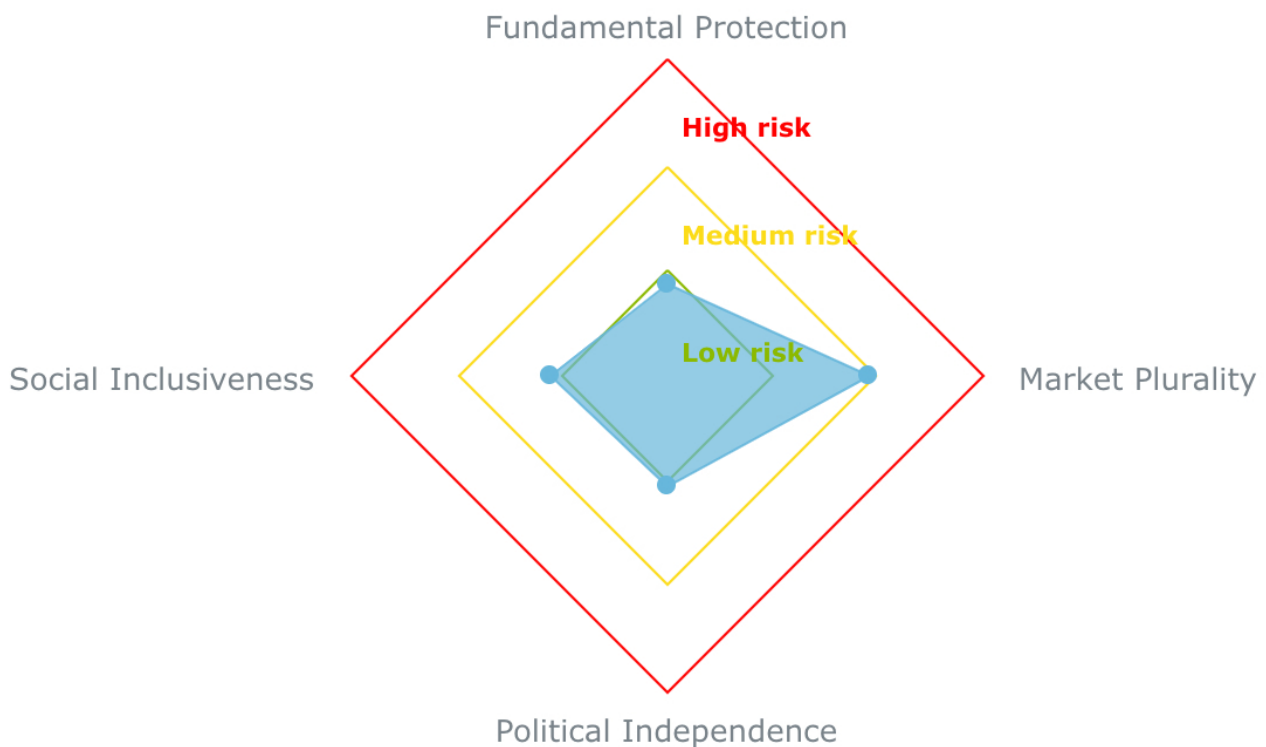
- **Population:** Lithuania (territory of 65 286 km²) is situated on the South-Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. According to the Lithuanian Statistical Office, Lithuania's population was 2.80 million people at the beginning of 2021. This is down from 3.043 million in 2011, 3.48 million in 2001, and 3.67 million in 1989. The demographic decline has been observed since the early 1990s due to different reasons, including low birth rate, mortality, and immense emigration. Only in the last couple of years, the net international migration has shifted to positive, meaning that more people are coming to live in Lithuania than leaving the country. Those who are arriving in Lithuania mainly include Belarusians, Ukrainians, and returning Lithuanian citizens (Statistics Lithuania, 2022). Vilnius is the only city in the country that has grown over the last decade. The capital's official population increased by 4% to 556,100, accounting for one-fifth of the country's total. Most of Lithuania's population resides in cities: over two-thirds, or 68.2%, of the Lithuanian population, live in urban areas, up from 66.7% ten years ago.^[1]
- **Minorities and languages:** The official language of the country is Lithuanian. Lithuania is an ethnically homogeneous country, with Polish and Russian-speaking populations being the biggest minorities (6,6% and 5,8% respectively of the total population). There are 154 nationalities living in Lithuania (Statistics Lithuania, 2022).
- **Membership in EU and NATO:** Lithuania has been a member of the European Union and NATO since 2004 and a member of the Eurozone as of 2015.
- **Economic situation.** Despite the continuing pandemic, Lithuania's economy was rapidly recovering and growing in 2021. The national GDP in 2021 was 55.4 billion euros. It increased by 5.1% from the year before. Employment was also growing in the country. According to the Bank of Lithuania, in 2021, the unemployment rate was 7.2% which is less than in the previous year (2020 it was 8.6%).^[3]
- **Political situation:** In the past few years, political polarisation has visibly intensified in Lithuania. The last national election of 2020 has brought a new generation of politicians, which is notable in terms of the age of the politicians, gender representations, and the declared political programme provisions of the coalition parties^[4] towards greater equality and individual liberty (e.g., same-sex partnerships, legalisation of soft drugs, etc.). 2021 was marked by both internal and external political challenges, including the pandemic management and anti-vaccination protests, the migration crisis, as well as increasing tensions with Belarus and China^[5].
- **Media market:** Lithuanian media operates in economically unsteady conditions that are determined by growing uncertainties^[6]. Two media sectors remain the strongest – that of TV and that of Internet-based media companies. Digitalisation and increased levels of disinformation and the spread of pandemic fake news, hate speech attacks on journalists, changed psychological situation in editorial offices add stress on newsrooms and worsens general working conditions of journalists. Nevertheless, despite the pandemic challenges, quite a few Lithuanian media businesses managed to gain profit in 2020-2021 due to the cost-cutting and innovative solutions aimed at maximising the audience (Baltic media Health Check 2020-2021).
- **Regulatory environment.** The lack of regulation of cross-media concentration and competition reported in previous MPM studies can be defined as an enduring factor leading towards greater

concentration and growing rivalry among media outlets, also increasing commercial and owner influence over editorial content, as well as the lack of transparency of media ownership (Jastramskis, et al., 2017, 2021). In January 2021, Lithuania transposed the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) into the national laws, namely the Law on the Provision of Public Information^[7], the Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information and the Code of Administrative Offenses. To comply with the new obligations under AVMSD, the national legislation adopted relevant measures addressed to video-sharing platforms to ensure a more protected, equitable, and more diverse audiovisual landscape. The Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania is primarily responsible for regulating and monitoring the audiovisual sector in Lithuania, including video-sharing platforms^[8].

- **COVID-19:** The global pandemic significantly altered both media functioning and media use. Media consumption has been rising, especially online news portals and social networks, becoming primary sources for information. In 2021, the share of households with Internet access reached 87% and the number of regular Internet users reached 88%^[9]. Despite the growing demand for reliable news, public confidence in the news media has been challenged, as the number of people who trust the information provided by the Lithuanian media reduced from 56% in 2020 to 44% in 2021^[10]. Research also shows the lack of media literacy and fact-checking skills among the general population (only 11% of the population verified information found on online news sites or social media)^[11]. Demand for professional information has been growing, but at the same time, the media business has been confronted with a new set of economic and safety-related challenges. Cyber and disinformation attacks against the media and journalists doing fact-checking have been growing in scale, becoming bolder and more sophisticated.
- **War in Ukraine:** In Lithuania, information disruptions and influx of disinformation have been constant since the 1990s, signaling that the Russian State and the Kremlin propaganda machine has never let the Baltic countries out of its informational space (Denisenko, 2018, Kersanskas, 2021). From the year of Crimea annexation in 2014, the Kremlin disinformation in Lithuania has been mounting. Attacks against Lithuania's own version of history (the restoration of the Independence in 1990, the national resistance and fight for freedom in the second half of the 20th c. in the times of Lithuania's occupation by Soviets) claims that Lithuania is a 'failed state' that is being occupied by NATO and the EU, are among the most common profanities transferred by the Russian State media as well as social networks (Denisenko, 2018). Responding to the influx of disinformation and misinformation, the top leading news media have strategically strengthened their fact-checking units to battle information attacks. In Lithuania, two newsrooms (Delfi.lt and 15min.lt) are members of the International Fact-checkers Network (IFCN), debinking fake narratives also in the Russian language (Delfi.lt). The number of publicly initiated as well as projects' and government supported initiatives to fight disinformation and build civic resilience has been growing in the past years and became also internationally visible^[12] after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. On the basis of propaganda and instigations to war, the Media Authority (Radio and Television Commission) has been regularly suspending broadcasts by some of the Russian State media channels. As reactions to the Russian invasion in Ukraine in February 2022, the news media (LRT, Delfi.lt) have straightaway reorganised their operations by hiring even more journalists to report in the Russian language for minorities in Lithuania as well as those Russian language users outside the country, whereas the Media Authority responded by shutting the re-broadcasting of the Kremlin propaganda TV channels and websites^[13].

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

Lithuania: Media Pluralism Risk Areas



JS chart by amCharts



Lithuania does not score high risk in any of the assessed areas. The spider chart depicts the dominant risks of medium degree identified in the areas of Market Plularity (64%, last year – 70%), Political Independence (35%, last year – 34%), and Social Inclusiveness (37%, last year – 43%).

With 29% of risk **Fundamental Protection** remains of low risk assessment (last year it was ranked within the same range 28%). In general, the media regulatory framework in Lithuania follows a liberal perspective. The rights of freedom of expression, right to information are explicitly defined in the Constitution. Though there are several areas that are unregulated: Lithuanian legislation does not have definition of minority, which problematises the access (which this year shows 52% of risk) and workings of minority media. Media ownership though is regulated with well-defined indications of who cannot be an owner of the media, its ownership transparency assurance mechanisms are not without flaws.

Heightened risks within the area of **Market Plularity** reveal some trends of enduring character. Among these trends are such deviations as political influence, and insufficiencies in the assurance of media ownership transparency mechanisms. **Transparency of media ownership** indicator scores within medium range of risks (25%) - which is a general sign of improvement; still, the issue of developing means to assuring media ownership transparency remains unresolved. Also, there exists a somewhat incongruity in relation to media types: audio-visual media matters (broadcast licensing, media ownership changes) are observed by the designated media authority (Radio and TV Commission), whereas print media and Internet outlets' media ownership transparency questions are addressed by the designated institution (Ministry of Culture) indicated by law. The requirement to annually report on print and Internet media ownership changes

is listed in the law (the Law on Provision of Information to the Public); this requirement, however, is fulfilled only partially since no mechanism exists to penalise those media groups which ignore such an obligation. As a result, there is a lack of comprehensive data on media owners, which MPM measurement identifies as a persistent risk factor in terms of two anticipated outcomes – that of development of sustainable media policy, and that of media democratic performance. Weak media policy also leads to media ownership concentration into the hands of fewer owners (also on the national level). This year **News media concentration** stretches to 94% of risk.

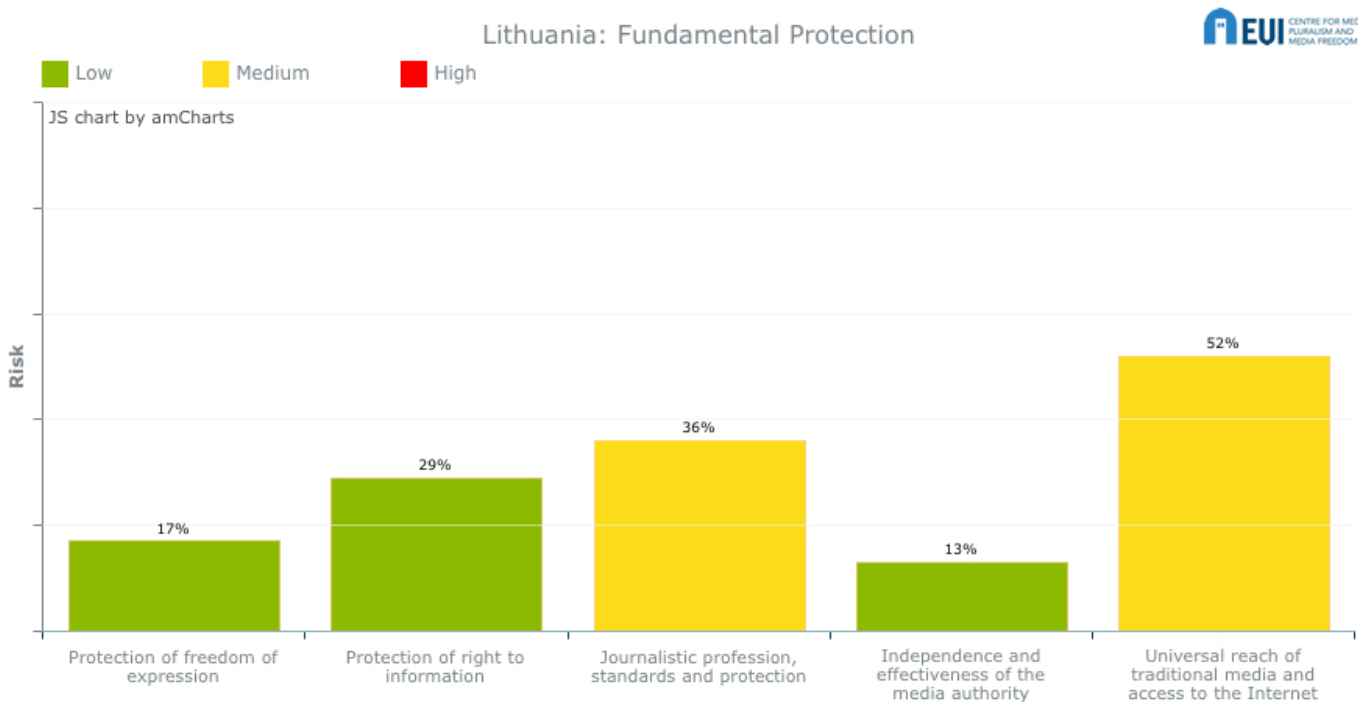
In general, all risk indicators for the area of **Political Independence** remained stable compared to MPM2021. The biggest risks linked to **Political independence** remain for the local municipal media. The national media is relatively free from political risks, however political influence is possible through the funding of political advertising and publicity services. It is however important to highlight that **Editorial autonomy** (75% of risk this year) is associated with a high risk level because of registered cases of **Political influence**^[14], which are correlated with loopholes in media ownership transparency assurance efficiency.

In the current assessment period, as well as in the previous year, a heightened attention was brought to COVID-19 as an influential determinant of changes in media environment both in terms of economic and social effects. Risk in the **Social Inclusiveness** area is of medium range, which signals a decrease from the last year's also medium risk assessment (from 43% to 37%). This result is due to the changes in the indicator of **Protection against illegal and harmful speech** where the risk dropped from 35% (2020) to 17% (2021). In general, the influx of disinformation, proliferations of hate speech and growth of instigations to conflict are noted as symptoms and factors of changing information order. Proliferation of hate speech, information attacks against journalists, influx of fake narratives have been intensifying and countermeasures to address these flaws were initiated by the media groups and the State. Media responded by strategically strengthening fact-checking and debunking operations. Different stakeholders (government, national security, media, academic institutions, NGOs, civil society) also play an active role in raising civic resilience and public alertness to fake narratives, instigations to conflict, influx of hate speech^[16]. From the side of steps made by the State, Lithuania appears at the forefront advancing efforts to counter disinformation, and many decisions are brought as examples of good practice and exemplary cases of policy making^[15].

3.1. Fundamental Protection (29% - 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.

Fundamental Protection remains a medium-risk area, scored at 29%. Compared to the previous report, the situation of Fundamental Protection in Lithuania has remained stable, with no or minor changes occurring in most categories.



The largest improvement can be observed in terms of **Protection of Freedom of Expression**, whereby the risk score decreased from 25% to 17%. The change is primarily associated with the change of government. Whereas during the previous government's tenure, there were several but highly publicised attempts by government officials to obstruct the publication of material critical of the government, no such attempts were observed last year. As in the previous year, some risks remain with regards to transparency of content takedown procedures. Also, the high risk remains with regards to defamation, which still carries the possibility of imprisonment.^[17] Overall, it is encouraging that, after an increase of risk in the previous year, the most recent data point towards an improvement of the situation.^[18]

As to **Protection of the Right to Information**, there has been no change in the risk score, which has remained at 29%. There is some risk associated with the effectiveness of remedies when the right to information is unlawfully violated. Likewise, authorities continued to occasionally restrict access to information without good reason, even though the subject matter has changed. In the previous year, such information primarily pertained to the arrival of migrants from Belarus. The year before, it was mostly the

internal workings of the government. Among matters of high risk, whistleblower protection has remained an issue, with very limited protective measures being in place as of 2021. It is notable that Lithuania has already transposed the EU Whistleblowing Directive into national law, with the new legislation coming into force in 2022.^[19]

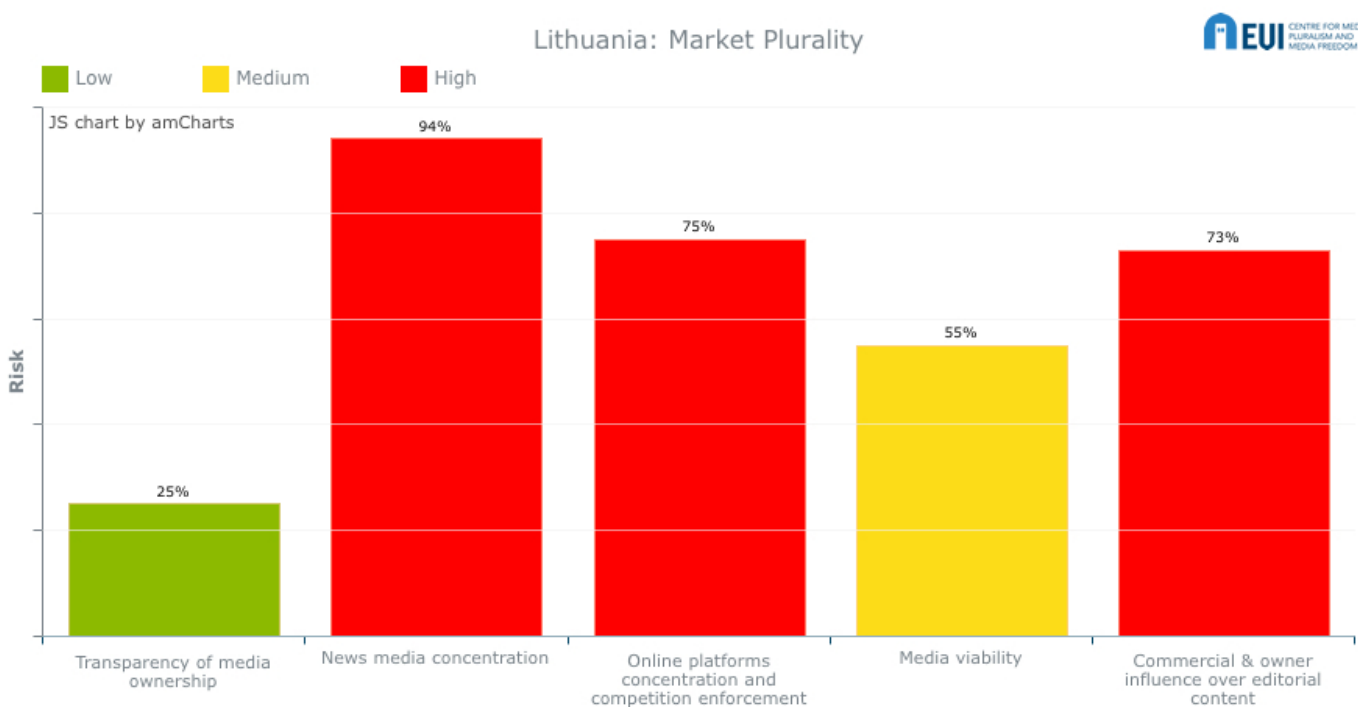
In the indicator **Journalistic Profession, Standards, and Protection**, there was a marginal decrease of risk – from 36% to 40%. For this indicator, COVID-related risks were mainly replaced by a growing hostility towards journalists on behalf of Lithuania's anti-vaccine, anti-LGBTQI+ movement, including threats and other forms of harassment, as well as abuse, particularly by the data protection authority, of GDPR provisions to the effect of limiting the ability of journalists to effectively carry out their work. Among the other main points of concern remain job insecurity and lack of social protection faced by journalists, as well as a lack of effective anti-SLAPP legislation. The improvement is largely attributable to the increased effectiveness of professional associations. The police has also demonstrated efficiency in responding to threats against journalists. Hence, after a massive increase of risk in the previous year, such signs of improvement are certainly welcome.

In terms of **Independence and Effectiveness of the Media Authority**, risk, while remaining low, has increased from 8% to 13%. Some risks that have remained in place from previous years involve the lack of transparency with regards to media authority's appointments and the implementation of its sanctions. The increase in risk, meanwhile, is accounted for by a deterioration of the authority's independence with regards to both growing political tension and polarisation and several potentially political appointments. It should be noted that nearly half of the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission is appointed by politicians (the President and the Parliament); moreover several of the most recent appointees, both political and ostensibly non-political, are (or, as recently as the year before, were) active in party politics, e.g. standing in elections. It can be noted that results in this category have remained relatively stable over the past several years.

Finally, the most concerning change has taken place in terms of **Universal Reach of Traditional Media and Access to the Internet** – an increase of risk from 40% to 52%. While access to PSM is nearly universal, Internet connectivity remains an issue. Variables of concern remain lack of broadband access and relatively limited connectivity in general. While there has been little to no progress in this area, Lithuania appears to be further lagging behind other European countries, which is a major point of concern given the normalisation of digital life in the post-pandemic world.

3.2. Market Plurality (64% - 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.



Market Plurality area score fluctuates on edge between medium and high risk, decreasing from 70% (MPM2021) to 64%. Three of five indicators are classified as high-risk, one as medium-risk, and one as low-risk.

The indicator on **Transparency of media ownership** generates the lowest risk in the Market Plurality area (low risk, 25%). The decisive factor in the relatively low overall level of risk is that the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public (2021) contains specific provisions requiring the disclosure of ownership details in the news media sectors. The law also contains a provision requiring the disclosure of information on the ultimate owners of news media as well. It is the main reason why the level of risk has decreased from medium to low (from 56 to 25% compared to last year). However, disclosure of news media ownership is effectively provided to public bodies and the public only partially. The ownership of the final beneficiaries of the media organisations is disclosed partially as well. Therefore, implementing of the provisions of the law on media transparency poses a medium risk.

The risk level of **News media concentration** is very high (94%). It is the highest level of risk in the Market

Plurality area. The increase in the risk level from 77% was due to additional data on revenue concentration in the Lithuanian media markets. Particularly high concentration was measured in the radio sector. The results of the academic study show a tendency that the revenue concentration in the Lithuanian media markets is usually higher than the concentration of the audience market (Jastramskis, Plepytė-Davidavičienė, 2021). The high level of media concentration is because there is no special regulation of ownership and market concentration in the media sector in Lithuania.

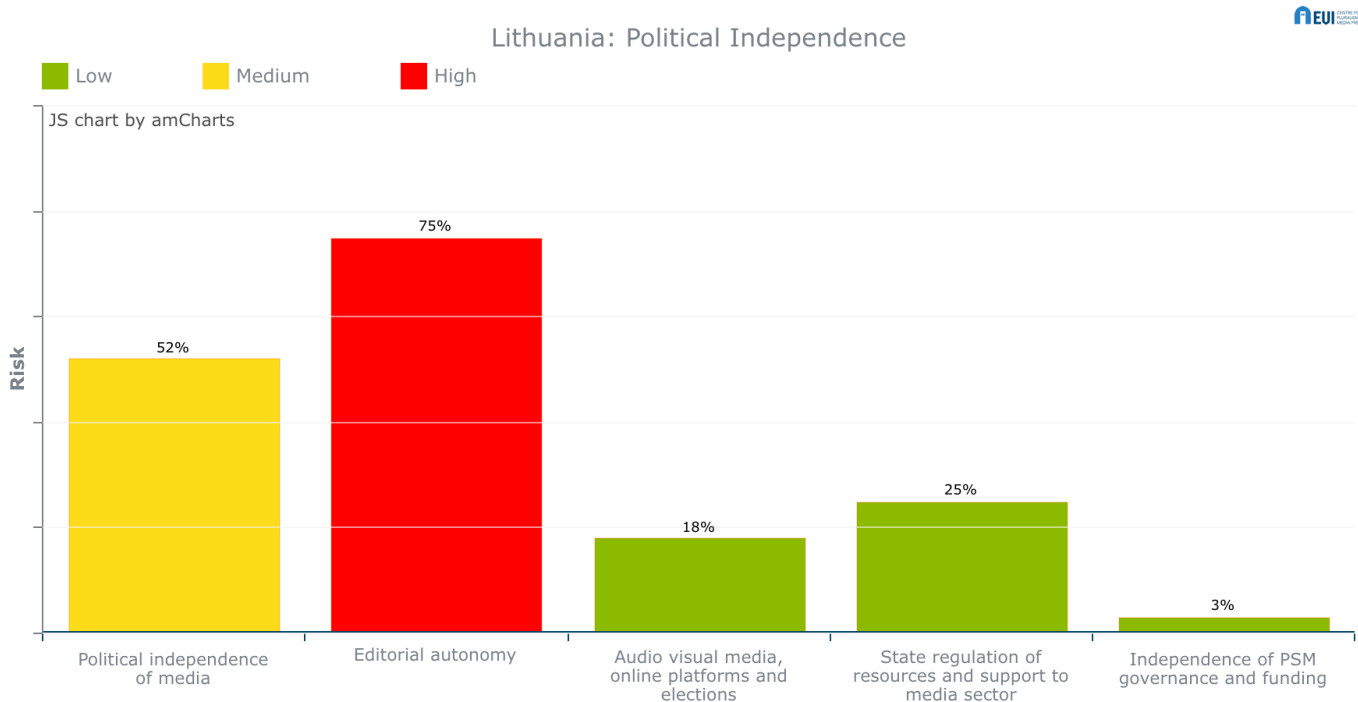
Quite a high level of risk (75%) is also generated by the **Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement** indicator, substantially unchanged from last year (79%). It is determined by the large share of global corporations in the Lithuanian online advertising market and the lack of specific competition rules regarding various media sectors. It is also important that there are no financial agreements in Lithuania between digital intermediaries and news media producers to remunerate the publishers for using copyright-protected content or, more generally, to contribute to their financing.

Media viability risk indicator decreased from 67 to 55% (medium risk) over the year. It was mainly due to the expected growth of the Internet and television advertising markets and increased public service media funding (16,2% compared to 2020). The radio advertising market was not expected to grow and decline in the newspaper advertising market was projected throughout 2021. Audiovisual media and the Internet media were the two sectors where revenues have grown; whereas radio and newspaper advertising revenues performed worse. As a result, a medium risk assessment is scored. When assessing the number of employees and salaries of media organisations, different layers of the industry should be analysed - national and local media. In the leading national media organisations, several new jobs were created in 2021, and the average salary in 2021 was about 10% higher than in 2020. Meanwhile, many local media organisations have reduced staff numbers, and salaries have remained significantly unchanged.

The risk of **Commercial and owner influence over editorial content** remains high (73%), as it was last year (70%). Existing academic works, analysis of NGOs, and media coverage of informal commercial editorial deals show that in some organisations the dependence of editorial content on commercial influence is systemic, in others more dependent on economic circumstances and preferences of personal values. There are also editorial offices that keep journalistic independence intact. However, when discussing the risks in the entire media field, the situation is closer to a high level of risk (Juknevičiūtė et al., 2020; Lašas, 2019; Lankauskas, 2018).

3.3. Political Independence (35% - 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.



Political Independence area score remains stable at the medium risk level (35%) compared to the MPM2021 (34%). Three of five indicators are classified as low-risk, one as medium-risk, and one as high-risk. The values of the two indicators remained the same as the previous year, and the other three indicators did not change significantly.

The indicator **Political independence of media** shows the medium level of risk (52%), almost the same as in the previous year (54%). Some Lithuanian political parties develop influence on the local media content through their members or protégé persons in the ownership structures (or management staff) of media companies in many Lithuanian municipalities (Jastramskis, 2015; Ramonaitė, Vaiginytė, 2020). Main private national media organisations do not have direct links to political control, but, like private local media, operate in a field of commercial-political risks, where public procurement and other financial sources of political origin can potentially weaken the media's independence from politicians.

Editorial autonomy is the most problematic indicator in this area, showing a high level of risk (75%). Last year it was similar - 71%. Editorial content is not independent of political influence in news media organisations whose ownership structures involve politically involved persons. Local media organisations are most at risk. Studies show that newsrooms often provide biased coverage toward their advertisers (Jastramskis, 2015; Lašas, 2019).

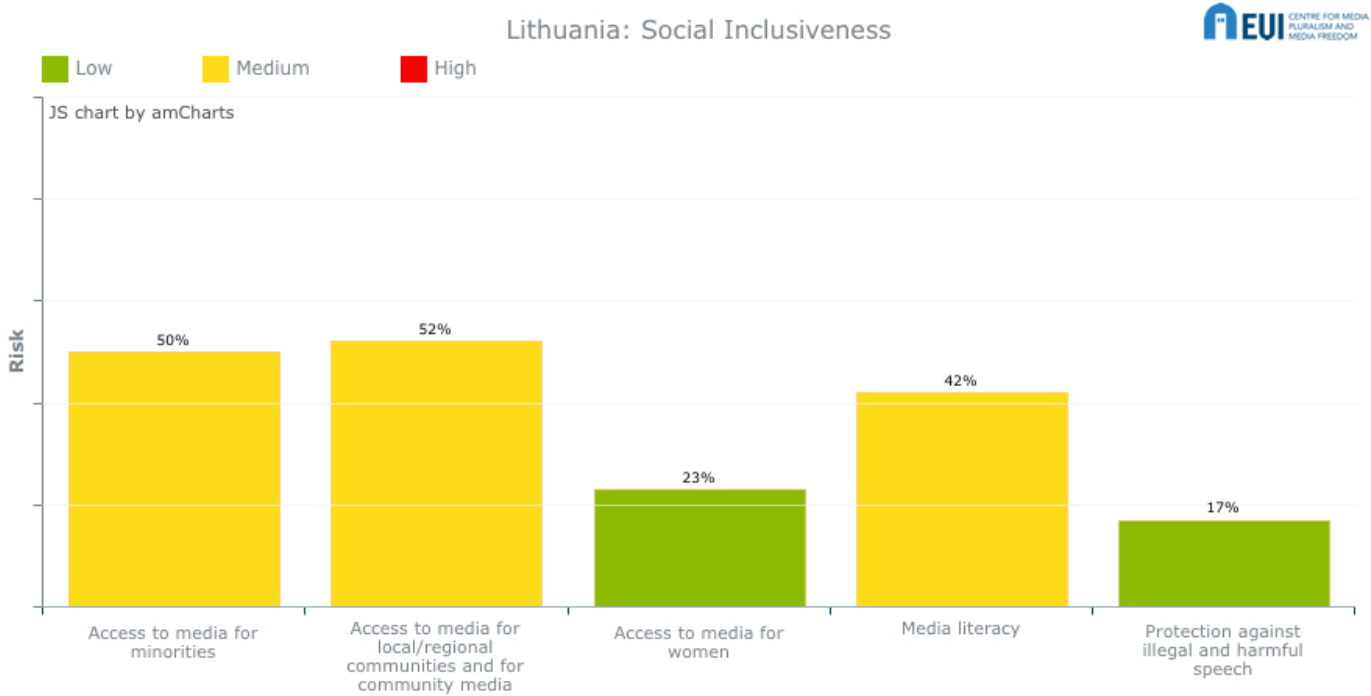
The PSM, mainstream private audio-visual media, and content on online platforms contribute to diversity in political coverage. The indicator on **Audio-visual media, online platforms and elections** scored a low risk (18%) without substantially generating any change (previous score 17%). According to the Law on the Lithuanian National Radio and Television (2021), the PSM provides time to candidates for political positions during electoral campaigns, applying the principle of equality. The Law prohibits political advertising on the PSM channels from 2021. Most private media organisations provide equal conditions for all political forces during election campaigns to introduce audiences to various political views. However, other private media outlets are selective towards certain politicians, declaring this in individual cases. Political advertising ordered on private media channels, and online platforms can give more financially capable political groups coverage advantage.

The **State regulation of resources and support to the media sector** indicator remained at the same score (25%) and showed low risk. The direct and indirect State subsidies are distributed to media outlets fairly and transparently. However, the distribution of State advertising to media organisations is not always fair and transparent. Unclear schemes for distributing State publicity money through communication agencies to the media outlets create conditions for corruption (Aušra, 2019). The transparent procedure was also lacking in allocating public funds to inform the public about the COVID-19 pandemic (Jačiasuskas, 2020; Lrt.lt, 2021).

The indicator on **Independence of PSM governance and funding** remained at the same score and generated the lowest risk (3%) within the Political Independence area. The funding model of the PSM enables financial independence from the political institutions. It was also confirmed by the Lithuanian Constitutional Court. The independence of PSM governance is formally guaranteed by the appointment procedure of the PSM council.

3.4. Social Inclusiveness (37% - 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.



The area of Social Inclusiveness in Lithuania scores medium risk at 37%. In comparison to the previous years, the risk level has declined from 43% in 2020 and 49% in 2019. The main factors contributing to the lowering of the risk level include the Access to media for women and the Protection against illegal and harmful content, both scores significantly improved in 2021.

One of the indicators for Social Inclusiveness, which remains of highest concern in relation to media pluralism, is the lack of **Access to media for local/regional communities and for community media**. This indicator is ranked as medium risk at 52% (50% reported last year). Though a policy to support local and regional media exists and functions in the country, it is not substantial and sufficient to guarantee local/regional viability. For years, experts have been pointing out that local/regional media in Lithuania is going through difficult times due to economic difficulties: there is no system to guarantee independence and stability of regional media. The close links between regional media and local politics has been described as a problem of enduring character (Jastramskis, 2015; Mažylė, 2020). The state provides limited support to local/regional and community media through subsidies granted on a competitive basis by the Media Support Foundation. Such funding was increased in 2021.^[20] However, the financial support (if received) remains inadequate to guarantee media autonomy and sustainability over a longer period. In 2021, the Ministry of Culture and Media Council has initiated discussions on the reorganisation of the Media Support Foundation.

Another indicator **Access to media for minorities** also appears to be of moderate risk (risk level at 50%,

the same score reported last year). In Lithuania, the main media law articulates the rights of ethnic minorities to the media in their national languages (Article 34.2), while the law on public service media (Article 5.9-10) specifies that the ethnic minorities and people with disabilities have access to airtime on PSM channels (both, TV and radio).^[21] Besides, the State supports ethnic minority media projects through the media support scheme, i.e., its different programmes for press, online and regional media. However, there is no legal requirement and no specific programme for minority media funding. Over the recent years, questions linked to media use by ethnic minority groups have often been raised in relation to disinformation and propaganda narratives (also linked with COVID-19 and vaccination). These groups are active users of Russian-speaking sources, which most often come from the Russian State media and online sources in the Russian language (Vaišnys et als., 2017). The policy on access to media content for people with disabilities is in the developing stage. In 2020, the National Development Plan for 2021-2030 was adopted by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to address the main needs of the disabled people, including their information and communication needs. Public service media has been legally obliged to adapt its programmes for people with visual and hearing impairment and therefore is the most advanced in terms of providing access to information services to people with disabilities.^[22]

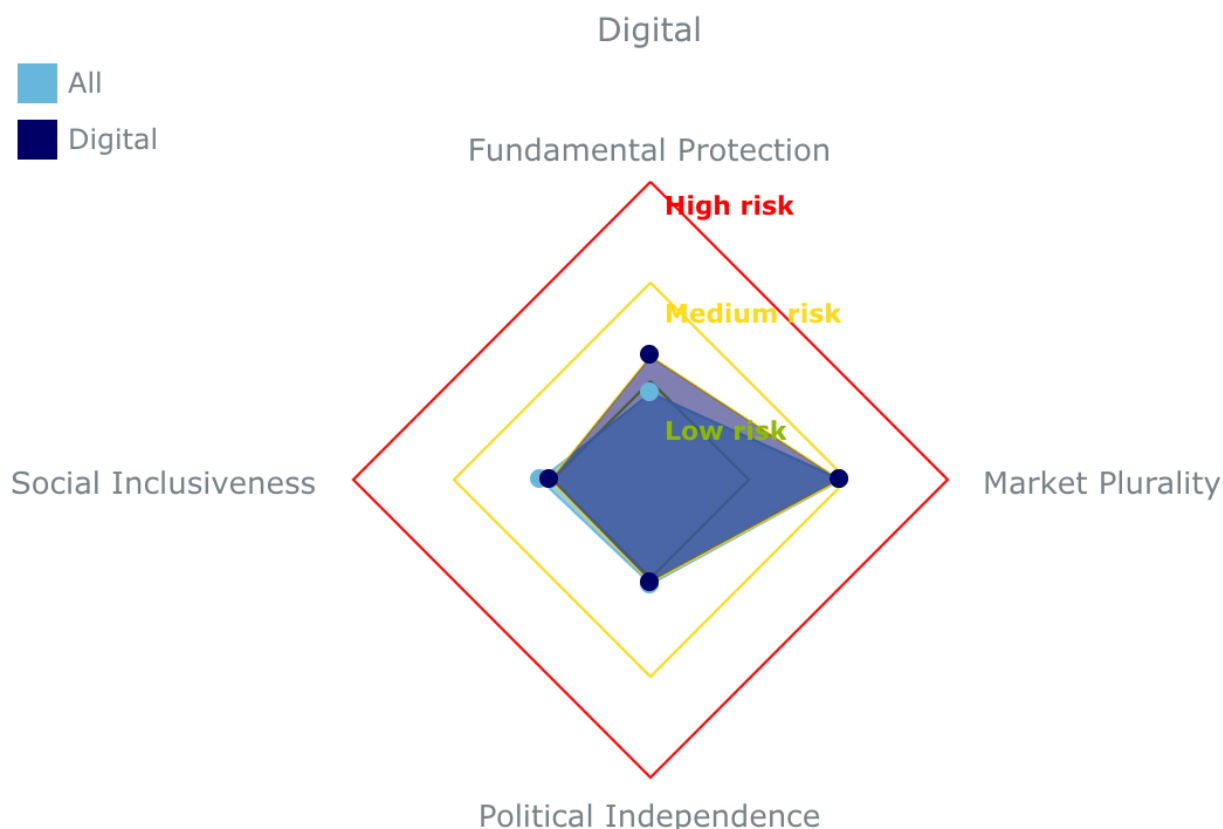
The risk in relation to **Media literacy** is of moderate concern (risk level at 42%, the same as a year before). A high number of different media literacy initiatives are continuously conducted in the country, targeting various age groups and social status; still, as revealed with risk assessments, the situation with media literacy is not improving. Though different activities were initiated, integrating know-how by academia, NGOs, schools, and, especially, libraries, there remains a question of how to ensure sustainability of such initiatives. While media literacy activities and media education have gained both in terms of scale and scope, these however cannot be defined as turning into a subject of 'life-long learning status' in the country. Even though the initiatives (monitoring projects, teaching modules, and research projects) carried out within the broad area of media literacy are indeed varied, the absence of a focused (digital) media literacy policy with clear strategic goals and identified actors/stakeholders and resources remains the biggest obstacle to achieving better results in this area. Especially now, in the face of the intensification of disinformation and the growing threats for national security, a focused policy with well-defined steps in media literacy area is particularly important.

Low level of risk (23%, last year - 33%) has been identified for the **Access to media for women**. Lithuania is among the countries with the highest representation of women in media management positions (the average in leading news media is 50% of women working in management - editors, news editors, producers - positions). However, there is no explicit media-related policy on gender equality. The main regulatory framework on non-discrimination and equal opportunities (the Law on Equal Opportunities, Article 5) is usually applied. Most recent research show the number of female experts quoted is significantly lower: female experts in the popular national media accounted for only a third of all expert sources quoted^[23]. In 2020, the monitoring study carried out by the Lithuanian Journalism Centre in the framework of the Experts Media Training project showed the lack of diversity of experts. It included monitoring of selected media programmes and published content, as well as surveys of media representatives and experts. The initiative also provided media training for female experts. The project also created a virtual community of journalists and experts, aiming at helping journalists to find insights of less frequently heard experts. There have been also other public initiatives launched recently to improve the visibility of women experts in the media discourse. One of these is run by Global Lithuanian Leaders and Swedbank, which aim to create open online database of women professionals^[25]. The platform will facilitate access to all the expertise women professionals can offer, make their voices heard, and help to more accurately represent the real view of the current professional market in Lithuania, as well as encourage female experts to be more prominent.

Protection against illegal and harmful speech is the indicator with the lowest score of risk to media pluralism (risk score of 17%, last year – 35%). The change is instigated by some focused steps by different stakeholders in modifications in regulation as well as a variety of public initiatives applied. In 2021, the Ministry of Justice modified the list of criteria for hate crimes in response to EC recommendations. The government approved the amendments to the Criminal Code, which allow for more effective measures combating homophobia, racism, xenophobia or religious intolerance and preventing hostility and violence through the criminal law. The Seimas will have to approve these proposals for amendments to the Criminal Code^[26]. The Ministry of Justice also intends to initiate a broader discussion on the limits of hate speech, freedom of expression and criticism, and the practical application of the current legal framework and the needs for new updates in order to combat hate speech more effectively^[27]. The Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics is responsible for the matters of the Internet content: it monitors public information space against discrimination of different types in online environment, addresses public reports/complaints, captures cases of hate speech, collaborates with the media, passes incitement to hate law enforcement. In 2020, 1546 cases of hate speech were reported - almost twice as many as in 2019. Responding to the influx of lies and disinformation, Internet media groups closed their commenting sections. On the other hand, the number of people fighting hate and lies has increased. Lithuania has over 4000 of citizen volunteers ('elves') fighting online disinformation in social networks. Another example of initiatives aimed to respond to violations in cyberspace is a Virtual Patrol implemented by the Lithuanian Police since April 2021.

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

Lithuania: Media Pluralism Risk Areas



JS chart by amCharts



Analysis of digital environment pluralism indicators shows similar trends as in the conventional news media environment. The area of Market Plularity generates the highest ranking among all other areas of risk.

Fundamental Protection

Freedom of expression is guaranteed in the main media law (the Law on Provision of Information to the Public), which covers all media ^[28] and in the Constitution. Internet media outlets adhere to legislative rulings in the same manner as the traditional media outlets. The Internet media outlets abide by the Code of Ethics, i.e., a self-regulatory instrument. Analogous requirements apply in the area of digital ownership transparency. In the same manner, as for the ownership transparency in the traditional media sector, improvements are needed in this area, and one important amendment would be for all media owners to declare their interests – this call has been voiced as a recommendation also in all earlier MPM assessments.

Journalists are turning into a target in online communications. There is a significant risk to both women and men in the journalistic profession. There is no data about women journalists being targeted statistically more frequently, though. As far as there are more prominent women journalists than men, women journalists could be at a greater cumulative risk of being targeted. There are frequent and growing threats against journalists online due to the growing radicalisation of Lithuania's anti-vaccination, anti-LGBTQI protest movement. That involves attacks on blogs, social media channels, and groups, in comments under journalists' social media posts, and through direct messages.

The legislation and regulation regarding digital media (impartiality, neutrality) are up to date. The Directive

(EU) 2016/680 was transposed into Lithuanian legislation, and the new law on personal data protection was adopted and is in force since 2018^[29]. However, a recent decision of the High Court of Lithuania to charge investigative journalists who had uncovered a potential corruption scheme with GDPR violation for publishing the names of the individuals involved sheds doubt on the effectiveness of such protection. The responsibility for ensuring transparency, impartiality, and neutrality falls within the Connections Regulation Authority. There is also an opportunity for anyone to register complaints via the Authority's website.

Market Plurality

The national law contains specific provisions requiring the disclosure of ownership details (and ultimate owners) in the news media (digital as well) sectors. However, transparency of ultimate ownership of digital news media (like other news media) is only partial. The concentration of digital news media audiences and revenue is high. The audience concentration of online news websites is the highest among all news media sectors compared to the television, radio, and newspaper audience (Jastramskis, Plepytė-Davidavičienė, 2021). The revenue concentration in the online market (news media and online platforms) is high, but audience concentration in the same sector is medium. There are no limitations on the cross-media concentration of ownership in Lithuania. The high degree of concentration in the digital advertising market cannot be prevented without specific competition rules regarding this media sector.

The Lithuanian internet advertising market was expected to grow by 8.3% in 2021 (Kantar, 2021). Subscribing to digital news content for some internet media organisations provides additional revenue. The minimal funding of the Press, Radio, and Television Support Foundation does little to support national online media, which find it difficult to compete in the advertising market with global players (Facebook, Google, Youtube, etc.).

Lithuanian online media performs publicity functions in various projects initiated by other entities, publishes partners' content and is active in content marketing. The leading Lithuanian news websites have even established positions for journalists of content projects (Delfi.lt) and journalists of content marketing (15min.lt), which are incompatible with the essence of independent journalism. In addition, in practice, there is a certain balance between the commercial influence of advertisers and the audience's trust, where part of the audience does not notice or critically evaluate the specific commercial influence on the media content.

Political Independence

Some local websites are controlled directly by politicians or their family members. Main national websites do not have direct links to political control but, like all other media, operate in a field of commercial-political risks, where public procurement and other financial sources of political origin have the potential to weaken the independence of the media from politicians.

Code of Ethics of two leading commercial websites (Delfi.lt, 15min.lt) and PSM company LRT provide that journalists must apply its norms in social networks as well. The Code of Ethics in providing information to the public of Lithuania (2016) requires that a journalist who violates the Code of Ethics in his/her social network profile must publish the respective decision of the Ethics Commission for Public Information in the same media.

There is no special regulation regarding political advertising in online news media during the electoral campaign. Internet news media are subject to the same requirements (as other media types) that aims to ensure equal opportunities and transparency of political advertising. The Central Electoral Commission has adopted a decision on dissemination of political advertising during the political campaign, which sets out the

requirements for marking political advertising on online platforms (VRK, 2018). Political campaigners publicly declare the cost of their election campaigns (including advertising on online platforms). However, the Central Electoral Commission acknowledged that it could not control all such expenditures (Delfi.lt, 2020).

The Law on the Lithuanian National Radio and Television (2021) states that the funds allocated from the State budget for the activities of the LRT website are indicated in a separate programme. The increase in LRT funding in recent years has made it possible to provide adequate funding to the LRT website. It allowed the LRT website to create more competitive environment for the audience's attention in the online media market (the LRT portal has not participated in the advertising market since July 2019). It has stimulated competition in the online news field but has not distorted the online advertising market. The activity of LRT in the competition for the audience has led the representatives of commercial online media to appeal the LRT financing procedure to the European Commission in 2020 (BNS, 2020). The European Commission has not yet adopted its verdict on this issue.

In the **Social Inclusiveness** area, there are two sub-indicators that measure digital risks: Protection against hate speech and Protection against disinformation. A bit over half of the population of Lithuania (56%) have at least basic digital skills. Hate speech is prevalent online. The situation is changing little: as reported by the institution of the Inspector of Journalists' Ethics - the institution that performs online content monitoring - it receives over 3000 reports/complaints per day ^[30].

As to disinformation, different stakeholders are involved to counter it, such as news media and fact-checkers, and also varied civic initiatives (NGOs involved in civic resilience and media awareness raising). Several media are involved in direct actions to counter disinformation with fact-checking – among these are PSM as well as commercial newsrooms. Two of the commercial media newsrooms (Delfi.lt and 15min.lt) are members of the IFCN (International fact-checkers network). There is a new initiative DIGIRES (digires.lt), which is partially funded through the European Commission funding scheme ^[31] and is working in close collaboration with EDMO (European Digital Media Observatory), and was created to sustain efforts of collaborative partnerships building among different stakeholders (academic/research, media, also public organisations) for digital resilience in the times of disinfodemic. With the Russian invasion and war in Ukraine, and an influx of war disinformation, DIGIRES began to work more with and on the subject of war-linked narratives and geared its efforts towards debunking, training in fact-checking. Lithuania also is exceptional in this respect (in terms of initiating efforts and partnerships to combat disinformation) as over 4000 volunteers (called 'elves') are involved in actions to counter disinformation on social networks ^[33]. Already since 2014 (the Russian invasion in Ukraine) the influx of disinformation and misinformation has been accelerating acquiring almost a massive scope. According to the Lithuanian Military StratCom, for example, in November 2021 alone, over 400 cases of misleading information and strategic attempts to deceive have been registered ^[32]. Still, despite the fact that the overall situation might be defined as 'being under control', strategically managed system guaranteeing various safeguards (legal/regulatory means, academic research, civic initiatives) is indispensable.

5. Conclusions

The Media Pluralism Monitor discloses some of the enduring tendencies in the Lithuanian media environment. Several indicators within the areas of Market Plurality and Political Independence have scored particularly high revealing risks of the lasting character, such as media concentration (indicators of News media concentration, which scores 94%, and Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement, 75% of risk), and political/business parallelism (indicators of Commercial and Owner influence over editorial content, which shows 73% of risk, and Editorial autonomy, 75% of risk).

Fundamental Protection

Lithuania enjoys a favourable environment in terms of fundamental protection. Certain shifts in risk assessments are revealed; however, they do not reach a critical (high-risk) point. In some areas, these risks have been even slightly minimised, like in the area of Journalistic standards, profession, and protection. The biggest change is observed in the indicator for Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet (from 40% to 52% of risk). As in the previous year's assessment, the highest risks identified mostly related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of the viability of media outlets' business models.

- **Responding to the rapidly changing information environment (especially, in relation to the influx of war propaganda), we call media policy to focus on engagement and development of collaborative partnerships among the various stakeholders (public organisations and civic groups, media, government/State institutions, academic/research units) to strategically address the development and adequate implementation of different types of measures (financial mechanisms to support media organisations and fact-checking, provision of focused digital media literacy to professionals and audience groups, etc.) against (dis)information.**

Market Plurality

The law, which sets standards for the transparency of media organisations, needs to be implemented more effectively. Given the high and substantially unregulated concentration of the media revenue market, it is vital to strengthen further the role of PSM, which has the potential to reduce audience concentration in the television, radio and internet markets and develop content diversity. Media viability can be enhanced by increasing direct subsidies to private media without compromising its independence.

- **We call media policy agenda setters to assess the legal possibilities to reach financial agreements between digital intermediaries and news media producers to remunerate the publishers for using copyright-protected content and contributing to their financing.**

Political Independence

It is vitally significant to eliminate the corrupt dependence of the media on politicians.

- **We call media policy decision-makers to establish transparent rules for State and municipal publicity funding and devote more resources to developing independent journalistic content than to political advertising (publicity service).**

Social Inclusiveness

In this area two broad issues appear of heightened significance – that of media literacy, and that of support to minority/community/regional media.

No change has been registered in relation to making media literacy a whole-of-society's programme. Though different types of media literacy initiatives are present and responding to the needs of various groups (professionals, children, seniors, minority groups), to be more effective these require a varied needs-focused, and long-term public policy-level coordination. Lithuania comprises a significant number of highly qualified actors (stake-holders in academia, libraries, fact-checking organizations, national-security and cyber-security units, civic education projects, etc.) involved in short-term media education and civic resilience actions. A more radical shift from 'media literacy' to 'digital media education' is required. Understanding of the digital infrastructures is essential to resisting and combatting disinformation, instigations to conflict, etc., hence digital media literacy needs to be foreseen not as a shield to protect citizens (a reactive approach) from information disorders.

- **We recommend to address these issues jointly between all the stakeholders and various state bodies/institutions (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, StratCom of the Lithuanian Armed Forces) to implement and realise such a shift as proactive and formalised system of lifelong education. Such a shift is vital, especially in the times of the manifold threats to European democracy (such as instigations to conflicts and war in Ukraine).**
- **We call to joint actions between the Ministries (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports) for integrating digital media literacy competencies based on public service values into school curriculum for all ages and across content areas.**
- **Media policy needs to be developed to identify measures (regulatory, self-regulatory, and co-regulatory) to combat disinformation and to support various interventions (fact-checking, media education) to reduce the spread of disruptive content (disinformation).**

Strengthening community media in the regions has been an issue of ongoing concern in the same manner as questions linked with minority media. Lithuania does not have legally recognised minority groups. PSM and commercial media aim at the largest minority groups (Polish, Russian), whereas smaller minority groups remain underserved. Until now, despite recommendations, no concrete steps were taken to ensure the transparency or secure mechanisms for viable financial support to regional media.

- **We recommend that these questions need to be jointly addressed by stake-holder groups and the Ministry of Culture, initiating legislative actions to ensure robust schemes to support different types of (minority, community, regional) media.**

6. Notes

- [1] <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1569011/census-shows-lithuania-s-population-shrink-to-2-8m>.
- [2] <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1569011/census-shows-lithuania-s-population-shrink-to-2-8m>
- [3] https://www.lb.lt/en/media/force_download/?url=/uploads/documents/files/musu-veikla/ekonomikos-analize-prognozes/Economic_outlook_2021_09.pdf.
- [4] The current political Coalition comprises three parties all with the spectrum of Conservative/Liberal standings: the Homeland Union/Christian Democrats, the Liberal Movement, and the Freedom Party.
- [5] <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1575944/farewell-to-2021-lithuania-s-year-in-review>.
- [6] These are linked with increased platform influence on small media business operations (Donauskaite, 2022), enduring political-media parallelisms especially in the regional media, and unsteady state support to community/minority media programs.
- [7] Member State: Lithuania. Synopsis of national legislation with AVMS Directive. The EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive and its transposition into national law – a comparative study of the 27 Member States. Available at: www.medialaw.lu
- [8] <https://www.rtk.lt/en/news/the-amendments-of-the-revised-amsd-transposed>.
- [9] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Digital_economy_and_society_statistics_-_households_and_individuals.
- [10] <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/apklausa-per-metus-labiausiai-sumazejo-gyventoju-pasitikėjimas-ziniasklaida.d?id=88992313>.
- [11] <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1568227/lithuanians-least-prone-to-verifying-online-information-eurostat>.
- [12] <https://time.com/6155060/lithuania-russia-fighting-disinformation-ukraine/>.
- [13] BNS (2022). Dėl dezinformacijos, karo kurstymo bei propagandos stabdomas televizijos programos „Mir“ platinimas bei blokuojamos 57 interneto svetainės (<https://sc.bns.lt/view/item/418435>).
- [14] The question of editorial autonomy is particularly critical in the regional media. Confronted with local political pressures, regional media journalists are left only with self-regulation, which appears too vulnerable mechanism to withstand inside/outside influences.
- [15] In 2020, the Lithuanian Parliament approved the Description of the Procedure (StratKom aprašas, 2020) for strategic communication in the field of national security by identifying institutions responsible for monitoring and assessment of information threats, planning of strategic communication campaigns.
- [16] Few examples are such initiatives as Civic resilience initiative (CRI, <https://cri.lt>), EU-funded project DIGIRES - Baltic research foundation for digital resilience (<https://digires.lt/en, LC-01682259>).
- [17] Article 154 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania: <https://www.infolex.lt/ta/66150:str154> (text in Lithuanian only)
- [18] Freedom of expression is guaranteed, most prominently, in 1) the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania (<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActPrint/lt?jfwid=32ocqr7x&documentId=TAIS.400592&category=TAD>); 2) the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public (<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/2865241206f511e687e0fbad81d55a7c?jfwid=bkaxlcc0>); 3) the Law on the Protection of Personal Data (<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/ef70b5d2f14811e78f3dc265493430ae>); 4) the Law on the Right to Receive Information from State and Municipal Institutions and Agencies (<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.440732>); 5) the Law on Official Secrets and State Secrets (<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/992192e2f50711e79a1bc86190c2f01a?jfwid=>)

- [19] The main Access to Information law in Lithuania is the Law on the Right to Obtain Information from State and Municipal Institutions and Agencies (<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.440732>). The Law transposing the Directive to national law is the Law on whistleblower protection (<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/en/legalAct/93ad110067e411eca9ac839120d251c4>); official text is currently available in Lithuanian only.
- [20] Media Support Foundation: <https://srtfondas.lt/news/118/84/Paskirstyta-parama-SRTRF-remiamiems-projektams>
- [21] Republic of Lithuania Law on the Provision of Information to the Public: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/7f522eb294e711eaa51db668f0092944> Republic of Lithuania Law on the National Radio and Television (LRT): <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/7f522eb294e711eaa51db668f0092944>
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- [23] <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1295910/tyrimas-parode-kad-vyrai-ekspertai-dominuoja-lietuvos-ziniasklaidoje-tik-kas-trecia-izvalga-buvo-moters>.
- [24] <https://www.15min.lt/gyvenimas/naujiena/santykiai/startuoja-pirmoji-eksperciu-platforma-siekiama-kad-viesojoje-erdveje-pagausetu-moteru-eksperciu-komentaru-1024-1462200>.
- [25] <https://www.15min.lt/gyvenimas/naujiena/santykiai/startuoja-pirmoji-eksperciu-platforma-siekiama-kad-viesojoje-erdveje-pagausetu-moteru-eksperciu-komentaru-1024-1462200>.
- [26] <https://tm.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/lietuva-atliepdama-ek-raginumus-praples-neapykantos-nusikaltimu-kriteriju-sarasa>.
- [27] https://vrm.lrv.lt/uploads/vrm/documents/files/LT_versija/Viesasis_saugumas/Darbo_grupes_veiklos_planas.pdf
- [28] The Law on the Provision of Information to the Public indicates to the definition of 'information society media', which "means the media by which public information is disseminated in the course of provision of information society services": <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/13fd4df178a711e99ceae2890faa4193?jfwid=2r1mevn1>.
- [29] More information on the process of legal adoption: <https://hrmi.lt/en/lithuania-adopts-new-law-on-legal-protection-of-personal-data>. The Law on Legal Protection of Personal Data: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/952a77b0709011e8a76a9c274644efa9>.
- [30] <https://www.delfi.lt/partnerio-turinys/naujienos/nesantaikos-kalba-pavojus-kiekvienam.d?id=80333637>.
- [31] The Call (Connect/2020/5464403) aims at specific research projects on disinformation: it refers to the "need for projects focussing on emerging digital media vulnerabilities and disinformation campaigns, which are of special relevance within the territory and/or linguistic area in which they will operate". DIGIRES Contract number LC-01682259.
- [32] <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/isaugo-dezinformacijos-srautas-dominuoja-neteiseta-migracija-pastebima-aktyvi-neigiama-kinijos-komunikacija-56-1613346>.
- [33] <https://time.com/6155060/lithuania-russia-fighting-disinformation-ukraine/>.

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ANNEXE I. COUNTRY TEAM

First name	Last name	Position	Institution	MPM2022 CT Leader
<i>Aukse</i>	<i>Balcytiene</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Vytautas Magnus University</i>	X
<i>Deimantas</i>	<i>Jastramskis</i>	<i>Project partner</i>	<i>Vilnius University</i>	
<i>Kristina</i>	<i>Juraite</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Vytautas Magnus University</i>	
<i>Ignas</i>	<i>Kalpokas</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Vytautas Magnus University</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 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>Deividas</i>	<i>Velkas</i>	<i>Representative of media regulator</i>	<i>Ministry of Culture, Republic of Lithuania</i>
<i>Irmina</i>	<i>Matonytė</i>	<i>Professor, media/politics analyst</i>	<i>Military Academy of Lithuania</i>
<i>Vaiva</i>	<i>Radikaitė-Žukienė</i>	<i>Representative of a broadcaster organisation</i>	<i>Lithuanian Cable Television Association</i>
<i>Džina</i>	<i>Donauskaitė</i>	<i>Director, represents non-governmental sector</i>	<i>Lithuanian Journalism Centre</i>
<i>Virginijus</i>	<i>Valentinavičius</i>	<i>Media analyst and commentator</i>	<i>Mykolas Riomeris University</i>
<i>Audronė</i>	<i>Nugaraitė</i>	<i>Representative of journalists' association</i>	<i>Lithuanian Journalists Union</i>

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