

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: Poland

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Research Project Report

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1. About the project

1.1. Overview of the Project

The Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) is a research tool designed to identify potential risks to media pluralism in the Member States of the European Union and in candidate countries. This narrative report has been produced on the basis of the implementation of the MPM carried out in 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 Poland the CMPF partnered with Beata Klimkiewicz (Journalism, Media and Social Communication, Jagiellonian 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

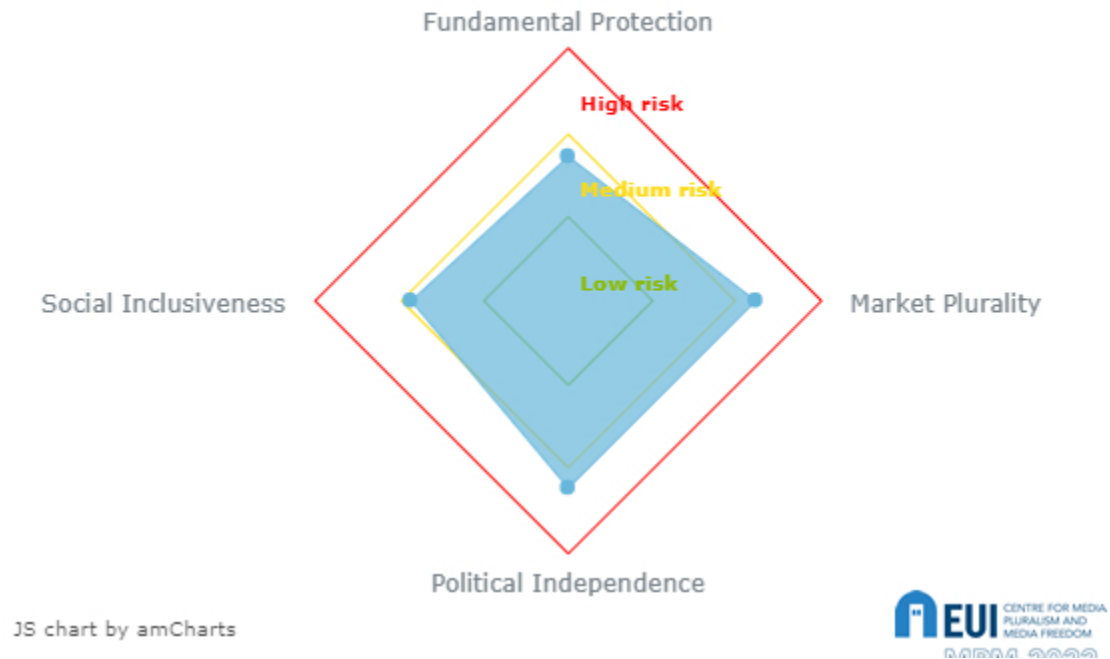
- **Population.** According to the census data conducted by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) in 2022, Poland's area of 312,685 square kilometers was inhabited by a population amounting to 38.18 million in January 2022 (GUS, 2022 A).
- **Languages.** The official language as recognized by the Polish Constitution is Polish (The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Article 27).
- **Minorities.** A relatively homogenous ethnic and linguistic structure of the population in the past has been recently impacted by waves of migration. The state officially recognises nine national minorities, four ethnic groups, and one community using the regional language (Kashubian) (The 2005 Act on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language). In addition, the Central Statistical Office (GUS) estimates that as of June 2020, Poland was inhabited by 2.106 million foreigners, among which the largest groups were Ukrainians (1.351 million) and Belarussians (105.41 thousand) and Germans (77 thousand) (GUS, 2020). Since the first month (24 February – 24 March 2022), the war against Ukraine has forced 2.237 million Ukrainian refugees to cross the Polish-Ukrainian border. According to available data, around 60 per cent of refugees stay in Poland, while the remaining part transit to other EU countries, Canada and US (Duszczuk, 2022).
- **Economic situation.** Until 2020, the Polish economy was marked by competitiveness and steady growth of GDP, averaging 4.2 per cent per annum between 1991 and 2020. In 2020, after the hit of the pandemic, the 2.5 per cent of GDP decrease was recorded by GUS. In 2021, the increase of real GDP reached 5.7 per cent (GUS, 2022B), but the optimistic estimates for 2022 have to be corrected as the Russian invasion of Ukraine and growing inflation poses new economic risks for 2022.
- **Political situation.** In 2021, no elections were held in Poland, and the next parliamentary election is scheduled for autumn 2023. The ongoing pandemic crisis was addressed with softer policies than in 2020, while a sense of socio-economic uncertainty significantly increased among the Poles. The European Commission has postponed Poland's first portion of funds from the EU's coronavirus recovery fund due to the judicial reform undermining rule of law. The government suggested it would abolish a newly established supreme court disciplinary chamber, but divisions within the governing coalition have prevented it from finalizing that commitment. The most significant problem affecting the political situation was growing inflation that reached in January 2022 8.6 per cent rate, the highest level in over 20 years (Szczerbiak, 2022).
- **Media market.** The Polish news media landscape remains composed of strong and concentrated TV networks, declining but still influential newspaper groups, growing news portals and start-ups offering journalistic commentary, investigations and analysis. After decreases in 2020, advertising revenues increased by 16.2 per cent in 2021, with the greatest rate in the internet (22 per cent) and radio sectors (14 per cent) (wirtualnemedi.pl, 2022). The lack of financial stability in the newspaper sector led to major ownership changes. At the end of 2020, Polska Press Group was acquired by the state-owned PKN Orlen oil company. At the end of 2021, Amsterdam-based Pluralis BV bought 40 per cent of the stake in Gremi Media, publishing leading quality daily Rzeczpospolita (The Republic), among other outlets. Pluralis was launched in November 2021 as a coalition of European media companies, foundations and investors with the aim of "supporting the plurality of news across Europe". It is controlled by a consortium of shareholders, including the King Baudouin Foundation, Mediahuis and

the Soros Economic Development Fund (Pluralis, 2022).

- **Regulatory environment.** 2021 was marked by two major media regulatory issues. In July 2021, a group of MPs from the governing Law and Justice party submitted a bill (also known as Lex TVN) on capital control measures preventing entities outside the EEA from holding a majority stake in broadcasters. The bill was widely criticised as an instrument of political pressure against TVN news services owned by US-based Discovery. In December 2021, the Sejm approved the bill, thus dismissing the earlier veto of the legislation by the Senate. Ultimately, however, the draft law was vetoed by President Andrzej Duda. Secondly, discussion on platform regulation, and in particular, content moderation, has continued throughout 2021 with a legislative proposal backed by the Ministry of Justice. The bill was promoted as an instrument to “protect freedom of expression in online social networks”, but a number of institutions and NGOs expressed their concerns about the politicisation of the Free Speech Council (a body to be created by the bill and equipped with sanctioning powers). The bill was resubmitted with a number of corrections at the beginning of 2022. Nevertheless, a group of stakeholders representing both the industry and human rights organisations signed a letter calling to stop the legislative works. Some experts even argued that the bill is incompatible with EU law (Kulik, 2022).
- **COVID-19.** The COVID-19 and policy responses to the pandemic continued to impact life and economic conditions, and also media debates. In 2021, Poland underwent third and fourth pandemic waves, with peaks in April 2021 and January 2022. The government proved to be more reluctant than in 2020 to reintroduce restrictions or measures used in other EU countries, such as compulsory vaccination for certain groups of the population. In January 2022, thirteen of the seventeen members of the Medical Council, which advised the government on the COVID-19 policy, resigned in protest against a lack of action in response to the pandemic. There has also been growing tolerance toward statements denying the threat of COVID-19 and the effectiveness of vaccines in some news media.
- **War in Ukraine.** The war in Ukraine has also impacted media environment in Poland. Since February and March 2022, many news media outlets, including leading news portals, news agency PAP and others, have launched news services in the Ukrainian language for Ukrainian refugees. Employing both Polish and Ukrainian journalists or students of journalism these services have offered useful space for communicative participation, exchanging experience, integration and advice on practical matters. For the reason 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 different areas.

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

Poland: Media Pluralism Risk Areas



The 2021 MPM measurement shows that in comparison with the previous year risks to media pluralism in Poland have grown in three measured areas including the area of Fundamental protection (from 41 to 57 per cent), Political independence (from 69 to 74 per cent) and Social inclusiveness (from 60 to 62 per cent), and stood at the same level in the area of Market plurality (74 per cent). Overall, the areas of Fundamental protection and Social inclusiveness stand for a medium risk, and areas of Market plurality and Political independence for a high risk.

Media regulatory authorities and bodies

The indicator on Independence and effectiveness of media regulatory authorities marked one of the highest - almost double - risk increases (from 38 to 60 per cent). The analysis showed that unnecessary regulatory procrastination of the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT) in the licence-granting procedure for TVN24 in 2021 and TVN 7 in 2022 generated a lack of fairness, impartiality and opaqueness in the regulatory treatment of the TVN Group. Also, KRRiT proved significantly lenient towards systematic partisanship and political bias of PSM, failing to offer ongoing monitoring of TVP's news coverage in accordance with its remit (Ananicz, 2021).

A high level of risk (83 per cent) continues to mark the indicator of the Independence of PSM governance and funding. In 2021, TVP demonstrated a further departure from journalistic professionalism in its news coverage of the crisis on the Polish-Belorussian border, the TVN/Discovery case and the coverage of activities of the oppositional leader Donald Tusk. Public perception of TVP's news bias and lack of trust has reached the highest level in the last 20 years (CBOS, 2021; 2019).

On August, 11th 2021 the Senate adopted the amendment to the Broadcasting Act (2021 Act Amending 1992 Broadcasting Act). The Act implements AVMS Directive 2018/1808 into Polish law. Most of the changes are in line with the Directive, however some of them reflect a slightly stricter approach in certain areas.

Transparency of media ownership and governmental interference

Particularly two forms of state interference in media market have further deepened risks to media pluralism in 2021. An asymmetric distribution of state-related advertising has continued to privilege media outlets sympathetic to the government. State-owned companies allocated significant advertising budgets to selected private media and also to PSM that have been already well recompensated for a low rate of license fee collection from the state budget. One of the biggest advertiser among the state-owned companies was PKN Orlen, the company that acquired Polska Press Group from German Verlagsgruppe Passau at the end of 2020. This second aspect of state intervention relates obviously to a significant share of state ownership in the Polish news media market. The Orlen's takeover of Polska Press has been swiftly approved by the competition authority UOKiK, but challenged by the Commissioner for Human Rights (see more on the case in: Klimkiewicz, 2022). In view of legal experts, the UOKiK's approval can be seen as a legislative omission that creates, from the perspective of market participants, a serious risk of violating the principle of legal certainty and accessibility (Banasiński and Rojszczak, 2021). Even more so, as the high risk scored by the indicator on Commercial and owner influence over editorial content (90 per cent) has shown. Throughout 2021, PKN Orlen replaced the company's management board, most of editors-in-chief of regional newspapers and spent by 34 per cent more in advertising (14.5 million of PLN) invested in its own press outlets in order to improve their economic situation (Kozielski, 2022).

In the beginning of 2021, the government proposed a highly controversial tax on advertising revenues of a large array of media companies, including news providers in TV, radio, print as well as online media sectors. The most media in Poland responded with unusual solidarity uniting in strike on 10 February 2021 with a slogan "Media without choice" (Media bez wyboru) (see more in: Klimkiewicz, 2021A and in 2021 MPM Country Report on Poland). After the massive wave of criticism, the proposal was abandoned.

Framework for journalists' protection

In 2021, newsrooms further faced legal uncertainties stemming from a dilution of judiciary independence by controversial judicial reform, pending since 2015. Journalists had to deal with new defamation cases, lawsuits, warning letters or SLAPP cases. In March 2021, Andrzej Poczobut, Poland's Gazeta Wyborcza correspondent in Belarus and Polish minority activist there, was arrested in Belarus (Łukaszewski, 2021). This incident has demonstrated that the safety of journalists has no boundaries. Since September 2021, a Lukashenka regime in Belarus facilitated crossings of tens of thousands of migrants and refugees, mainly from the Middle East, Asia and Africa through the Belarus/Poland's border. Polish authorities responded to a quickly growing humanitarian crisis with regulations restricting access to the border area, including also journalists and media organisations. In consequence, the news media haven't been able to report officially on the activities of the Polish Border Guard Control and particularly, the use of the controversial practice of pushbacks - sending those who have crossed the border back into Belarus (Wądolowska, 2022).

As regards the area of social inclusiveness, pandemic and post-pandemic transformations of usage of digital media services have not resulted in decreasing risk for the indicator on media literacy (71 per cent). Media literacy has not been incorporated into formal curriculum and major gaps in this area are still being filled mostly by NGOs and volunteers (spider's web, 2021).

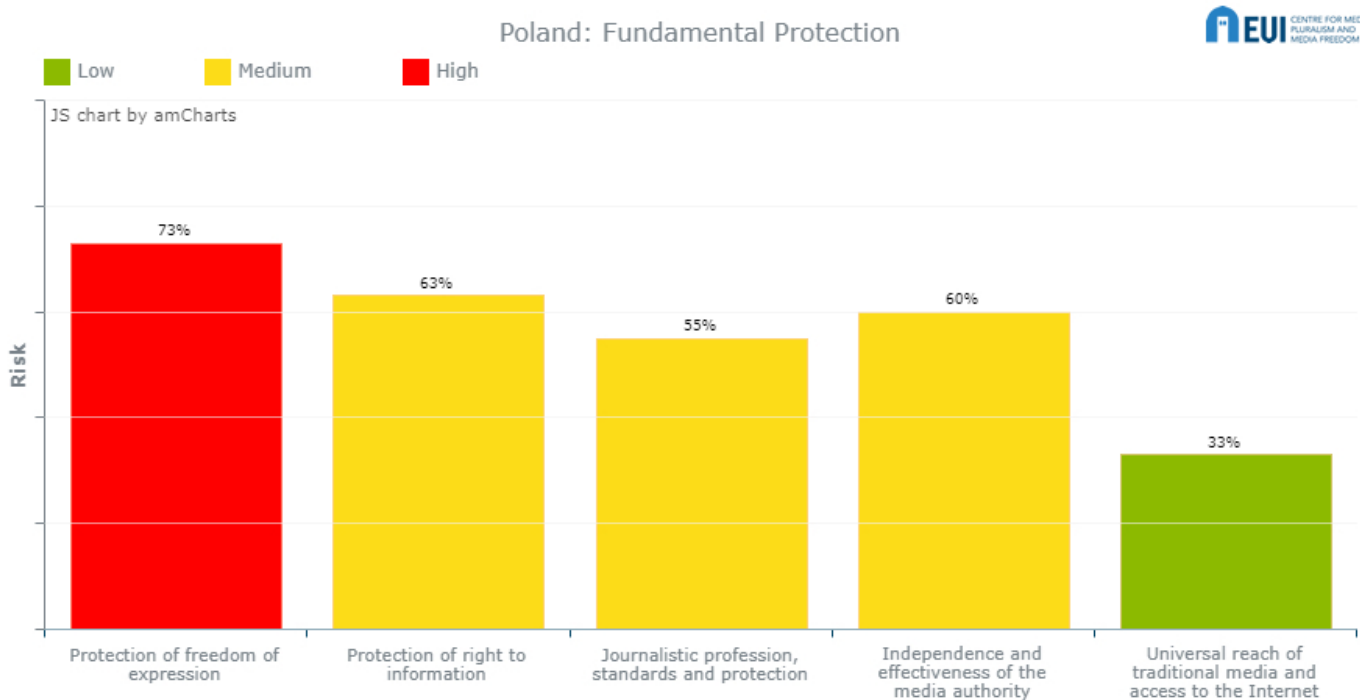
War in Ukraine

The war in Ukraine hit a media market in Poland with a shock similar to that in the first waves of the

pandemic – postponed advertising spending in some sectors translated in decreased rates of advertising revenues (Wirtualna Polska, 2022). At the same time, an increased need for information and the largest population of Ukrainian refugees in Europe created new opportunities for news providers. Many of them started to offer various news services in Ukrainian language prepared by the Ukrainian staff or translated. These include Ukrayina news portal by gazeta.pl (<https://ukrayina.pl>), Ukraina news portal by onet (<https://ukraina.onet.pl/>), news service Vpolshchi.pl by Wirtualna Polska (<https://vpolshchi.pl/>) and many others. These services create not only information spaces responding practically to communication needs of refugees, but they have important symbolic role to play putting forth such values as recognition, visibility, participation.

3.1. Fundamental Protection (57% - medium risk)

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



The highest risk in this area manifests in the indicator on **Protection of freedom of expression** (73 per cent).

Several problematic developments contributed to this score. In July, and then again in December 2021, the Sejm attempted to pass the bill, also known as Lex TVN (2021 Bill on Amendment of the 1992 Broadcasting Act), that aimed to prevent entities from outside the EEA to hold a majority stake in broadcasters. The proposing MPs justified their proposal by a necessity to eliminate “a legal loophole”. In their view the fact that Article 35, para 3 of the 1992 Broadcasting Act allows to own broadcasters through subsidiary companies established in the EEA by entities from outside the EEA, is incompatible with an intention to limit foreign (non-EEA) ownership. Interestingly, the only major broadcaster that could have been affected by the proposed bill, is the TVN Group, owned by the US-based giant conglomerate Discovery through a Dutch-registered subsidiary company (Polish Television Holding), thus meeting existing rules on foreign ownership. The bill has been widely criticized and seen as an instrument of political pressure against TVN Group for its political criticism. The draft law was ultimately vetoed by President Andrzej Duda in December 2021, however TVN Group had to face regulatory pressure from KRRiT on grounds of postponing license-granting procedures for two of the group’s leading channels. The consequences of the pending overhaul of the judicial system and judicial appointments under political control continue to exert a chilling effect on journalists. Increasingly biased and manipulative PSM’s performance results in a polarising and often

inaccurate coverage of political issues, particularly Poland-EU relations, humanitarian crisis at the Polish-Belorussian border, LGBT rights, vaccination and other anti-COVID-19 policies. The recent takeover of Polska Press group by a state-owned oil company PKN Orlen completed in early 2021, resulted in an editorial revamping of local and regional newsrooms (Zaremba, 2021). The criminalisation of defamation continues to affect the daily work of journalists. Not only the offence of defamation is still penalised, but the highly disputed and overtly criticised Article 212 of the Criminal Code (The 1997 Criminal Code) is being permanently used to silence a journalistic critique and investigation. In 2021, Ewa Siedlecka, the journalist of Polityka weekly, was convicted for “defamation” on the basis of her investigative reporting concerning judges of the Disciplinary Chamber of the Supreme Court (Jałoszewski, 2021).

A relatively high - 63 per cent – score for the indicator on **Protection of the right to information** mainly stems from two issues. In September 2021, a blackout on media reporting from an area on the Polish-Belorussian border was imposed in response to a humanitarian crisis caused by increased crossings of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The amendment of the Act of 12 October 1990 on the Protection of the State Border passed in November 2021, further extended the obligation of journalists to apply for special permission by the local Border Guard command (The 1990 Act on the Protection of the State Border), thus actually limiting access to information in a restricted area. The right to information is explicitly recognized in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Article 61) and it is protected by the Act on Access to Public Information (Article 2 allows anyone to demand access to public information). Secondly, the First President of the Supreme Court submitted an application to Poland’s Constitutional Tribunal requesting that several essential provisions of the 2001 Act on Access to Public Information be ruled inconsistent with the respective articles of the Polish Constitution. So far, the Constitutional Tribunal has postponed the hearing, but the Commissioner for Human Rights reacted to the initiative with concern and objection (rpo.gov, 2021A, 2021B). In October 2021, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy endorsed a Draft Act on the protection of persons who report breaches of law (The Governmental Centre for Legislation, 2021). The 2021 Draft Act aims to transpose the EU Directive on Whistleblowing (EU Directive 2019/1937).

The risk under the indicator on **Journalistic profession, standards and protection** increased from 36 to 55 per cent. No journalists were killed or arbitrarily imprisoned in 2021, albeit newsroom workers had to face new pressures. A blackout on reporting that was introduced with the state of emergency on the Polish-Belorussian border led to repeated detention and even arrest of single reporters and crews (Council of Europe, 2021). Recently, there has been a visible increase in law-suits or warning letters addressing journalists and newsrooms in order to postpone or stop critical reporting concerning companies or public institutions. The examples of strategic law-suits against public participation (SLAPPs) in 2021 include the defamation case against Ewa Siedlecka from Polityka and a smear campaign against Jacek Harłukowicz from Gazeta Wyborcza (wirtualnemedi, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified some problems with social security and working conditions, particularly in the case of the press sector, which recorded further losses in revenues in 2021 (wirtualnemedi, 2022).

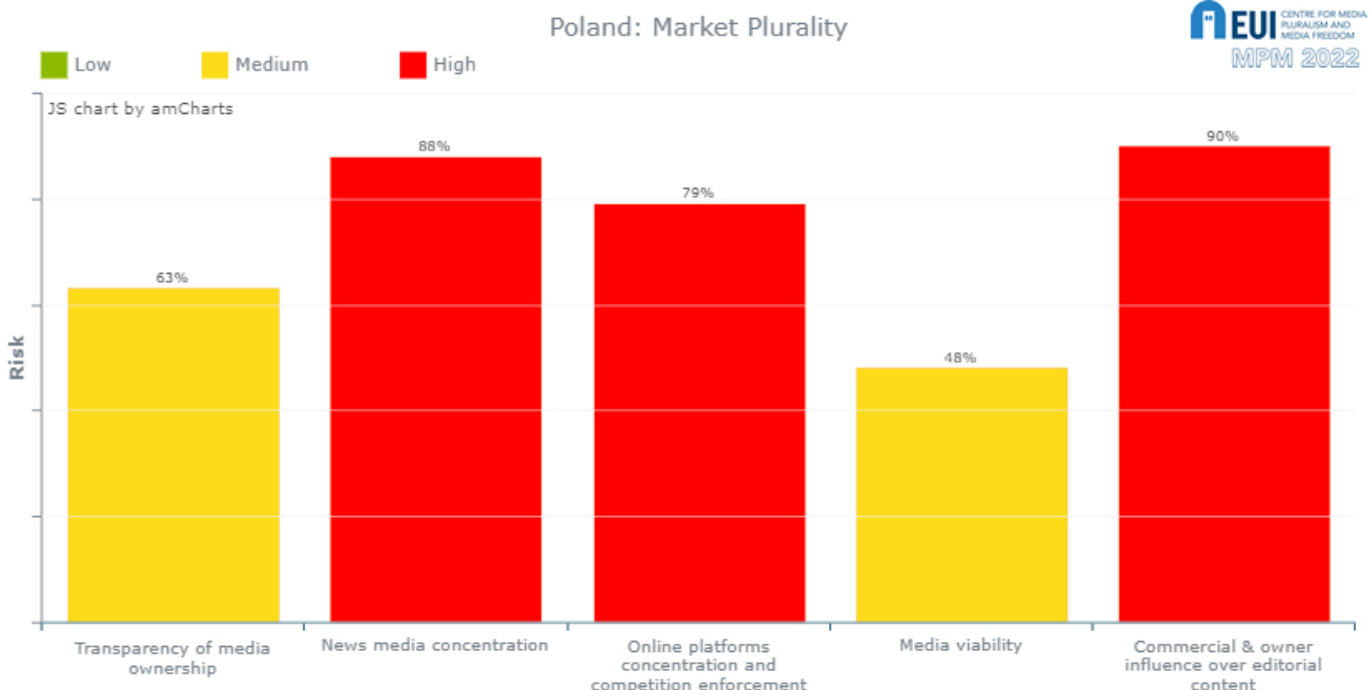
The indicator on **Independence and effectiveness of media regulatory authority** marked a nearly double increase standing for 60 per cent. KRRiT’s appointment procedures and competences are governed by the Constitution (Article 214) and the 1992 Broadcasting Act (particularly Article 7). In practice, however, these procedures do not ensure effective limitation of political influence. In 2021, KRRiT’s policy raised widespread concerns, also at the international level, for regulatory procrastination leading to the postponed decisions on licences for TVN 24 (the procedure took 18 months) and TVN 7 (the procedure took 14 months) (Ananicz, 2021; European Parliament, 2021). Moreover, KRRiT has not conducted monitoring of electoral campaigns in 2019 and 2020 and failed to make PSM accountable for its news coverage. While

the regulator has occasionally initiated an administrative action concerning PSM, it hasn't had a practical effect on journalistic performance. Most importantly, there is a need for greater and direct transparency of KRRiT's activities, particularly decision-making during its regular sessions, as transcripts are not fully and automatically disclosed to the public.

A risk level measured by the indicator on **Universal reach of traditional media and access to the internet** reached 33 per cent, and represents the only indicator with low risk in all areas measured. While the share of top4 internet service providers (ISPs) providing access to fixed-lined internet reached 55 per cent in 2020, the share of top4 operators providing access to mobile internet reached a high level of concentration (84 per cent) (UKE, 2021).

3.2. Market Plurality (74% - high 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.



Overall, the **Market Plurality** area detects the high risk (74 per cent), while the risk for digital indicators reaches the upper level of a medium risk band (64 per cent).

The indicator on **Transparency of media ownership** scored 63 per cent. In general, the news media sector is not regulated by sector specific provisions on transparency. The public bodies are relatively well-informed about news media ownership, while the public has quite limited access to relevant ownership or financial

data. The National Court Register (KRS) does not automatically provide information about ultimate or controlling owners. The Central Register of Beneficial Owners (CRBO) on the other hand, requires from users additional information in order to display data on ultimate owners. At the same time, transparency requirements were used for exercising political pressure – in 2021 KRRiT was postponing its decision on licence allocation to TVN24 until the very last moment, claiming that the ownership situation of the TVN Group is not transparent enough and not fully compatible with the requirements of Article 35 of the 1992 Broadcasting Act (1992 Broadcasting Act, see also: KRRiT, 2021A). The 2021 Act Amending 1992 Broadcasting Act (Ustawa o zmianie ustawy o radiofonii i telewizji) adopted on 11 August 2021 introduced new rules on media ownership transparency under the Article 14a. These will require from broadcasters, VOD providers and providers of video-sharing platforms to make available information on partners and shareholders of their companies to the public. It is not clear yet, how the law will be implemented in practice and whether the public will enjoy unrestricted access to information about ultimate media owners.

The indicator on **News media concentration** showed one of the highest risks among all of the indicators amounting to 88 per cent. Market and audience shares of the 4 top owners have been relatively high in Poland, particularly in the audiovisual sector (88 per cent for shares in revenue and 81.8 per cent for shares in audience in 2019) (KRRiT, 2021C). At the same time, recent regulatory decisions demonstrated insufficient remedy to that situation. In Poland, news media are generally regulated as other segments of the industry by general competition law. Yet, as observed by legal experts, public authorities (including CA and MRA) may not be “relieved” by a weakness of the existing legislation to observe the norms and values that underlie constitutional regulations and EU law (Banasiński and Rojszczak, 2021). Moreover, two recent cases of media concentrations (PKN Orlen/Polska Press and Agora/ Eurozet), processed by the national competition authority (UOKiK), show that available remedies are not consistently used. In the case of PKN Orlen’s takeover of Polska Press, the transaction was approved by UOKiK even though, the outcome of concentration resulted in dominance of regional news market by a state-owned company with a significantly strong position and high share in audience market (UOKiK, 2021A; see also: Klimkiewicz, 2022). On the other hand, the lack of approval in regard to Agora’s takeover of Eurozet, the owner of Radio Zet, shows in the views of legal experts, overtly restrictive interpretation of competition rules that lack appropriate justification (UOKiK, 2021B; Bolecki and Jelska, 2021). In addition, lack of publicly available data displaying actual shares of companies, particularly in revenue markets, and thus also limited transparency of evidence grounding regulatory decisions, contributes to strengthening risk in this area.

The indicator on **Online platforms concentration and competition enforcement** detected a high risk at the level of 79 percent. Current competition law does not provide specific rules for the media sector that could include consideration of gatekeeping role of digital platforms or news media dependency on platforms. While leading platforms (particularly Google and Facebook) occupy a significant position in online advertising market, the public lacks access to more focused data that could ensure transparency and enable adequate calculation of shares in relevant markets (see e.g. data provided by IAB - iab.pl, 2021). Polish news users seem to access news online equally directly and via social networks, but more younger the user is, there is more likely, the access is side-door (ibims.pl, 2021).

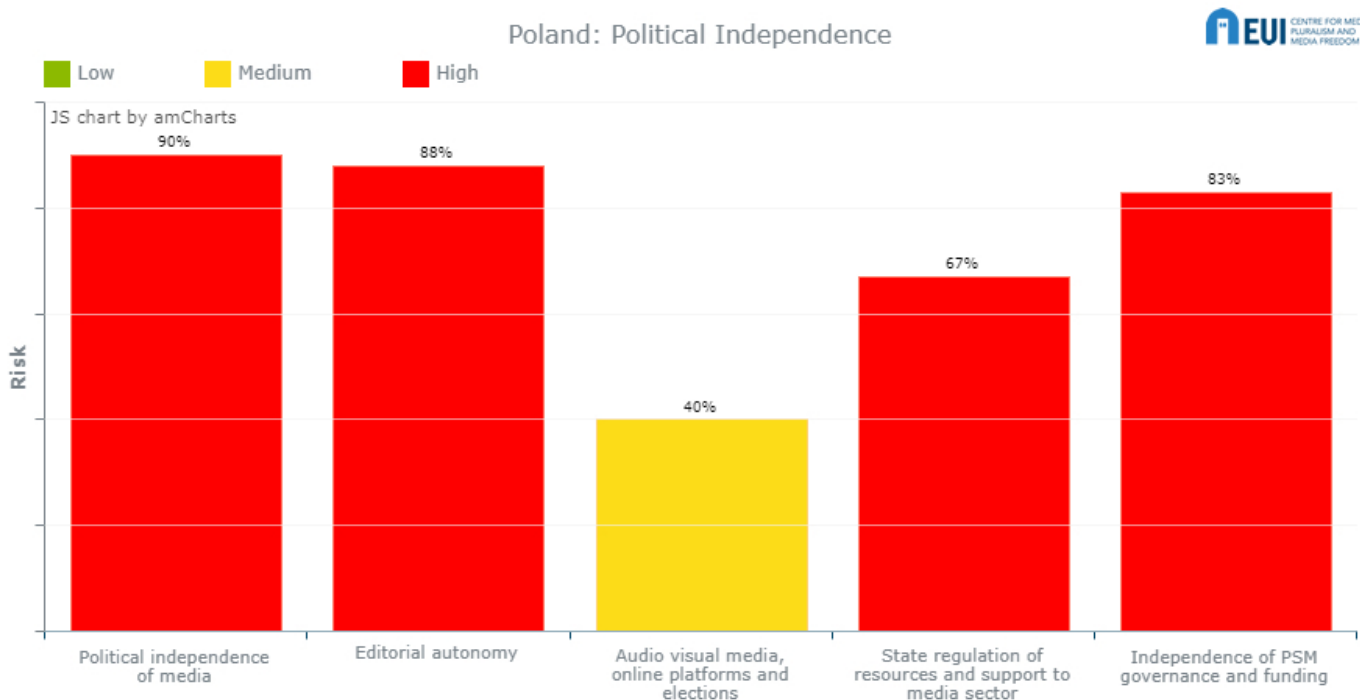
The indicator on **Media viability** scored 48 per cent denoting a medium risk. Recovery from the first waves of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in financial stabilization particularly of online media and radio sectors. In total, advertising revenues increased by 16.2 per cent in 2021 with the greatest rate in the internet (22 per cent) and radio sectors (14 per cent), remained stable in the TV sector and decreased in press (wirtualnemedi.pl, 2022). The direct support from state for the private media sector has remained minimal and no media specific measures were introduced to mitigate the economic impact from COVID-19. Since

February 24 2022 amid the war against Ukraine a new wave of uncertainty hit the media market in Poland. In March 2022, the advertising revenues for the TV sector again decreased by 3 per cent (Kurdupski, 2022). The industry seems to be challenged again with a shock similar to that in the first waves of the pandemic (Wirtualna Polska, 2022). The viability of the media sector is obviously linked to the condition of the whole economy and the war has caused disruption for many sectors. At the same time, the need for information has affected an increase in a number of users of original news (Wirtualna Polska, 2022). Also, presence of the largest population of Ukrainian refugees in Europe has constituted new opportunities for news publishers who started to offer news services in the Ukrainian language.

In 2021, the risk measured by the indicator on **Commercial and owner influence over editorial content** increased by one third (from 60 to 90 per cent). Relevant legal measures in place (mainly 1984 Press Law Act) lack explicit provisions prohibiting influence of owners or commercial entities on newsrooms' editorial performance. Takeover of Polska Press by Orlen in December 2020 was followed with vast revamping of newsrooms – most editors-in-chief were replaced or moved to other positions. Orlen's commercial pressure has reached beyond the Polska Press group. The term “media orlenisation” (orlenizacja mediów) has been coined to express wider Orlen's influence on media content and agenda setting. On 17th January 2022, the front covers of most of the largest Polish daily newspapers as well as the dozens of regional newspaper published by Orlen featured an advertorial interview with Daniel Obajtek, Orlen's CEO. Publications were illustrated with the same photograph of the Orlen CEO and mostly presented the reasons for or benefits of the merger between the Orlen and the Lotos oil companies. A journalist Jakub Krupa, commented this coverage on his twitter account: “That's what happens when the industry struggles for money and is ready to sell everything” (Wiech, 2022). Watchdog and monitoring functions of the Orlen newsrooms have also been hampered. For instance, in 2021, the journalists in the local and regional newsrooms were instructed how to write about the Lex TVN case, LGBT+. The expression “wolne media” (free media – a slogan used in protests in defence of media independence) has been forbidden (wyborcza.pl, 2021). In current media industry circumstances, stronger commercial influence comes also from State-owned advertisers (see: Kowalski, 2022; Dąbrowska-Cydzik, 2022). Pressure from lawyers and legal firms representing various companies and public officials has also increased in newsrooms, furthermore journalists and publishers have reported growing threats from lawsuits and accusations (Towarzysto Dziennikarskie, 2021A).

3.3. Political Independence (74% - high 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.



In the area of **Political independence**, the level of risk for media pluralism has increased from 69 to 74 per cent, while digital indicators in this area score medium risk at the level of 34 per cent.

A high score of the indicator on **Political independence of media** (90 per cent) reflects both regulatory conditions and practice. Relevant regulatory safeguards limiting political control over media outlets in Poland (e.g. limits on control of media by politicians) are missing. So are the rules on conflict of interests between owners of media and the ruling parties, partisan groups or politicians. As regards practice, last year brought several new developments that mark high political influence. First, regulatory problems and political pressure concerning the TVN/Discovery (both Lex TVN and unjustified postponing of licence-granting procedures by KRRiT for TVN24 and TVN 7) not only led to further weakening of a remaining segment of independent media, but also generated a chilling effect on journalists and media owners (see: Krzyżanek, 2021; Civil Liberties Union for Europe, 2022). Second, economic difficulties, amplified by COVID-19, led to ownership changes. Some of these resulted in increased political control (e.g. takeover of Polska Press by state-owned PKN Orlen), other outlets have sought for investors abroad in order to secure editorial independence (e.g. Rzeczpospolita /Gremi Media sharing ownership with the Pluralis Group) (Pluralis, 2022). These ownership changes have demonstrated that the goal of “media repolonisation” promoted by the government as a positive solution to high percentage of foreign owners on Polish media market, in fact leads to exerting pressure on foreign companies to sell their shares and stakes in media businesses to state-owned companies or Polish owners more sympathetic to the ruling party or the government (more on

“repolonisation” see e.g. in: Klimkiewicz, 2021B). Third, media critical to the government experienced sharper forms of pressure such as denial of advertising from state-owned companies, regulatory sanctions, defamation or libel cases concerning public figures, other legal actions, and SLAPPs (Wójcik, 2021; Towarzystwo Dziennikarskie, 2021A).

Similarly, the indicator on **Editorial autonomy** shows a high risk, reaching 88 per cent. Not only effective legal safeguards guaranteeing editorial autonomy are missing in Poland, there is also no agreement within the journalistic community which organization and code of conduct would play a principal role when editorial autonomy comes under threat. For example, when the public authorities barred media and journalists from entering the border areas with Belarus to report on Belarus/Poland’s humanitarian border crisis, since September 2021, many associations and newsrooms protested against the decision under the “Let the Media in!” campaign. Some of them, however, remained silent, supporting the government (OKO.press, 2021; Towarzystwo Dziennikarskie, 2021B). The perception of political bias in the news media is widespread and growing in recent years (see: CBOS, 2021; CBOSa, 2019: 16). Insufficient impartiality guidelines and political influences contribute to a growing polarization of journalistic narratives that are shaped, in some cases, by political directives. After an editorial revamping of Polska Press by PKN Orlen, the local and regional newsrooms were instructed how to write about ‘sensitive topics’ such as the TVN/Discovery case or LGBT+ issues (Cylka, 2021).

The indicator on **Audiovisual media, online platforms and elections** shows a medium risk staying almost at the same level as in the last year - at 40 per cent. The existing rules concerning PSM’s news performance are formulated in a very general way both in the 1992 Broadcasting Act and the PSM charters (TVP, 2020; PR, 2020) and do not contain practical requirements of quality, accurate and impartial reporting. In contrary, electoral rules are quite detailed and specified (The 2011 Election Code). Neither of these however, prevent PSM from increasingly biased portrayal of political actors due to a lack of effective monitoring by relevant bodies (particularly KRRiT). In 2021, there were no elections held in Poland.

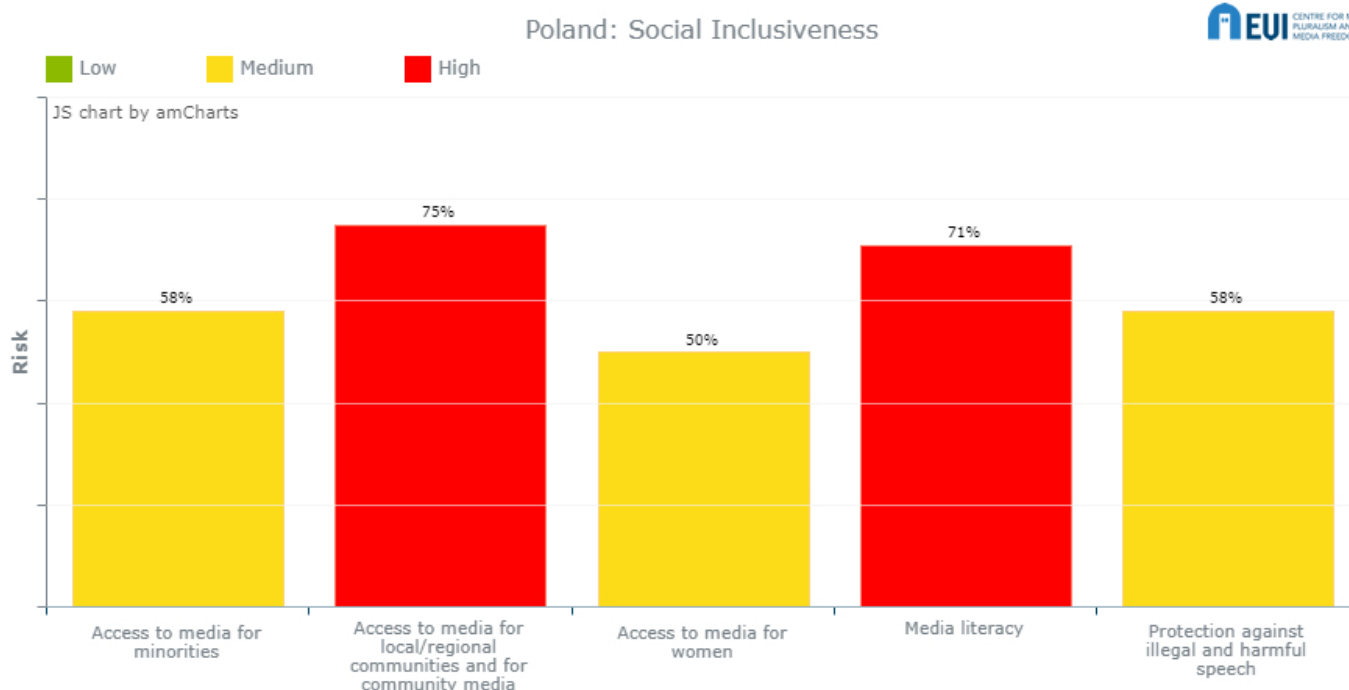
The indicator on **State regulation of resources and support to media sector** marked a major increase from 38 to 67 per cent. In terms of spectrum allocation policies, the last year saw a high increase of the risk mainly due to regulatory procrastination of KRRiT that unnecessarily postponed the procedure of renewing the broadcasting license for TVN24 and TVN 7. Systematic support schemes for the news media are generally missing in Poland. At the same time, many forms of state support including grants, loans or state advertising, are asymmetrically and non-transparently distributed to selected media outlets. In 2021, state-owned companies spent 1.2 billion PLN (27.5 million EUR) (7.6 per cent more than in the previous year) and the government and central administration spent 536 million PLN (almost 40 per cent more than in the previous year) for advertising (Kowalski, 2022). The biggest beneficiaries among press titles included government-sympathetic rightwing weeklies Sieci (40 per cent of its income consisted from state advertising), Gazeta Polska (42 per cent) and Do Rzeczy (21 per cent). On the other hand, more critical media such as Gazeta Wyborcza, Tok radio and Tygodnik Powszechny received no advertising from state sources (Dąbrowska-Cydzik, 2022). It should be also added that a lack of transparency and public access to relevant data exacerbates risks identified by this indicator. As Tadeusz Kowalski observes “Data on actual advertising costs are not available for the entire market and in most cases are based on estimates” (Kowalski, 2022).

The indicator on the **Independence of PSM governance and funding** remained unchanged at the level of 83 per cent and continues to show one of the highest risks. A highly partisan PSM performance is the product of PSM governance. PSM appointment procedures achieved a high level of political control

between 2016 – 2021. The current PSM management, and TVP in particular, supports growing political partisanship, justifying it by the need to “reinstate pluralism in the Polish public debate” (Karnowski Jacek and Karnowski Michał, 2019). Since 2016, both TVP and PR have received growing amounts of “compensation for uncollected licence-fees” from the state budget. While the portion of licence fees remains almost unchanged or even decreasing over the years, the portion of compensation from the state budget increases steadily. In 2022 TVP will receive 1.75 billion of PLN from the state budget and PR with regional branches 245 million PLN (businessinsider.com.pl, 2022). In 2021, TVP received also 314 million PLN from advertising by state owned companies which composed 6.5 per cent of its total revenues. At the same time, TVP is being itself a state-related advertiser, spending 49 million PLN on advertising in 2021 (Dąbrowska-Cydzik, 2022). This mode of PSM funding does not only make PSM funding less transparent and more complicated for the public to interpret (amounts of “compensation” from the state budget are usually included in a category of “licence-fee funding”), but makes PSM more dependent on government decisions about adequate funding.

3.4. Social Inclusiveness (62% - 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 **Social Inclusiveness** area scores, similarly as in the last year, a medium risk (62 per cent) with a significantly higher risk for digital indicators (78 per cent).

The indicator on **Access to media for minorities** scored a slightly higher risk than in 2020 – 58 per cent. Officially recognized minorities in Poland enjoy legally guaranteed access to airtime on PSM channels. In practice, however, a share of programmes produced in minority languages in the TVP has remained fairly marginal, it has significantly decreased between 2015 – 2019 and then slightly increased in 2020 (KRRiT, 2021). Both international organisations and Polish representatives of minorities observe that time allocated

for minority programming in PSM does not reflect communication needs of these communities which are significantly higher (Coe, Advisory Committee on FCNM, 2020; Sejm RP, 2021). Non recognized minorities do not enjoy the same guarantees as officially recognized minorities. Some media including onet.pl; Polityka, Gazeta Wyborcza, gazeta.pl or TOK.fm, Tygodnik Powszechny pay frequently attention to various migrant groups and their problems. Most of these media were also important sources of reporting about humanitarian crisis on the 2021 Polish-Belorussian border since September 2021. On the other hand, TVP as the public broadcaster, particularly obliged to cater for social cohesion and integration of all communities, has not only offered insufficient content promoting multicultural dialogue, but repeatedly provided reporting with discriminatory and xenophobic accents (see e.g. rp.pl, 2021). During the Polish-Belorussian border crisis, TVP (alongside with right wing media) constructed a narrative in which asylum-seekers were portrayed as a threat, and often agents (not victims) in Lukashenko's migration tactics. Media response to and coverage of a recent war against Ukraine brings a supportive image of Ukrainian refugees in Poland with many organisations starting services in Ukrainian language. Only a very marginal portion of the media reflecting far right offers critical accounts.

The indicator on **Access to media for local/regional communities and for community media** increased to a high risk – 75 per cent. While there are legal safeguards guaranteeing local media access to audiovisual platforms (The Article 26(6) of the 1992 Broadcasting Act), the share of regionally or locally oriented programming on TV or radio audience market is relatively small. So is the share of local programming in PSM and TVP in particular (KRRiT, 2021). A higher risk for the most local/regional media market resulted also from a takeover of Polska Press group by PKN Orlen leading to almost monopolistic consolidation of local and regional news sector. As Orlen has been one of the greatest state-related advertisers supporting other media (mostly rightwing press and PSM) with large portions of advertising expenditures, such ownership structure creates a significant advantage on advertising market, that projects to further weaknesses of an already vulnerable local media market. Community media are not legally recognized as a third sector in Poland, some of these operate as 'social broadcasters' (as set by the Article 4(10) of 1992 Broadcasting Act), but their independence is not recognized as a legal condition. One of the most influential representatives of this sector continues to be Radio Maryja network (mainly Radio Maryja and TV Trwam), heavily supporting the governing coalition and benefiting from various streams of public funds (Oko.press, 2020A).

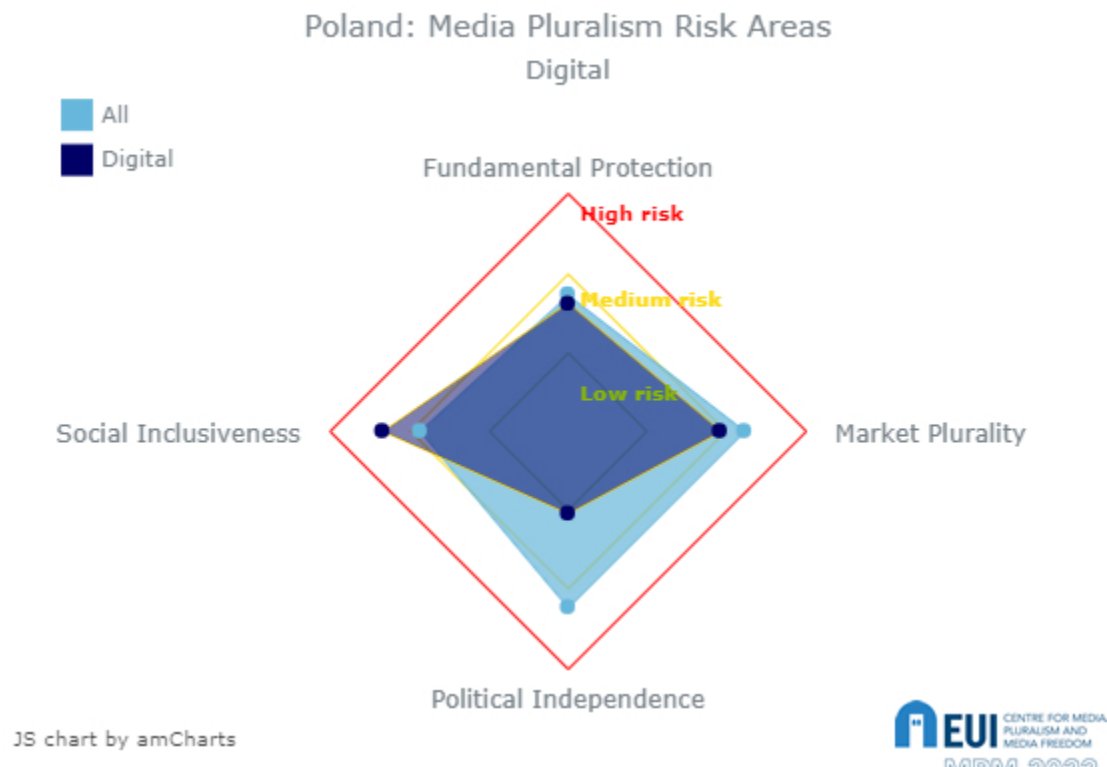
The indicator on **Access to media for women** shows improvement in comparison with the last year reaching the medium risk level – 50 per cent. While the share of women increased among executives and management boards of both PSM and private TV companies, a comprehensive gender equality policy (other than general employment guidelines) is missing in PSM. Relevant institutions (e.g. KRRiT) do not provide regulatory monitoring of women's representation in media coverage, but available fragmented data show that female experts do not occupy equal positions with male experts in commenting informative and political programmes. While media images of women become more complex and less one-sided, also with growing roles of social media, harmful stereotypes are still in place (e.g. Centrum Praw Kobiet, 2021; wirtualnemedi.pl, 2021B).

The indicator for **Media literacy** identified a high risk – 71 per cent. Media literacy activities seem to play an increasing role in Poland, but still remain fragmented, not well co-ordinated and there is lack of central and systematic approach that would result in practical and effective outcomes. This situation has lasted for many years, and no substantial changes in this regard were brought after three pandemic waves of online education in 2020 and 2021. In 2021, KRRiT organized a series of meetings concerning media literacy with various stakeholders (KRRiT, 2022). Yet as observed by the professional portal wirtualnemedi.pl, much of

these initiatives mainly aimed at addressing the problem of disinformation, fake news, hate speech and online aggression all being largely linked to hybrid attacks on national security (wirtualnemedi.pl, 2021C). At the same time, the needs of teenagers and children seem to be immense (NASK, 2021). Pandemic and post-pandemic transformations of digital environment found no resonance in current curricula and major gaps are still being filled mostly by NGOs and volunteers (spider's web, 2021).

Finally, the indicator on **Protection against illegal and harmful speech** detected a medium risk at 58 per cent. Both accidental and systematic disinformation campaigns pose a serious problem in Poland. As regards hate speech, the protective scope of legal measures addressing hate speech, does not encompass all protected characteristics recognized under international human rights and explicitly sexual orientation, gender equality, age and disability (see e.g. Articles 196, 256 and 257 of the 1997 Criminal Code).

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



In the case of Poland overall, digital sub-indicators tend to mark lower risk scores than the general scores in all of the areas with the exception of the area of social inclusiveness.

Fundamental Protection

In the **Fundamental Protection** area, the results for digital sub-indicators stand for 54 per cent (medium risk) in comparison with 57 per cent for the whole domain.

In October 2021, after several months of “policy silence”, the draft law on freedom of speech in online social networks (Ministry of Justice, 2021) was added to the government’s legislative agenda, and in January 2022, the bill was resubmitted with many corrections. A number of NGOs and institutions, including the Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed their concerns about the “regulatory” and “sanctioning” body that is designed in the bill. Highly politicized appointment procedures for members of a Free Speech Council would result in the absence of necessary safeguards for independence and regulatory impartiality. Another problematic feature of the bill is a data retention obligation for online services. Such an obligation creates a huge risk of a rapid increase of the number of requests which would enable the police and secret services to access the data without the need to send a separate request in each case (EDRI, 2021). The group of stakeholders signed a letter calling to stop the legislative works. Some experts even argued that the bill is incompatible with EU law (Kulik, 2022).

Current legal measures in force do not provide adequate **Protection for whistleblowers** in Poland. In October 2021, a Draft Act on the protection of persons who report breaches of the law (The Governmental Centre for Legislation, 2021) opened for public consultation. The 2021 Draft Act aims at transposing the EU Directive on Whistleblowing (EU Directive 2019/1937).

Market Plurality

In the **Market Plurality** area, digital sub-indicators score a lower level of the risk (64 per cent) than the whole area (74 per cent).

One of the greatest risks under this area continues to be the lack of publicly available data displaying actual shares of digital natives, online news providers as well as platforms in audience and revenue markets. So far, no financial agreements between digital intermediaries and news media producers have been signed, to remunerate the publishers for the use of copyright-protected content, but meetings and negotiations were pending in 2021 (iwp, 2021) in order to discuss the state of implementation of the Directive UE/2019/790 in Poland (mainly with reference to Article 15 of the Directive). Poland has not introduced a specific form of taxation for digital platforms generally, but since July 2020, video-on-demand (VOD) platforms operating in Poland have been covered by the Shield 3.0 Anti-Crisis Act. Under the Act VOD platforms are required to pay an additional levy of 1.5 percent of the revenues obtained from subscription payments or advertising revenues (depending on which revenue is higher) to the Polish Film Institute (PISF) (Ey.com.2020).

In terms of **Media viability**, the Polish Economic Institute describing media business models after the pandemic observed that news portals have been affected by the social media sharing a relatively large amount of paid content for free. A dynamic development of crowdfunding, in the view of the Institute, may lead to even a greater popularity of sites/services with popular influencers, youtubers or single journalists rather than news portals (Polski Instytut Ekonomiczny, 2021).

Political Independence

In the area of **Political Independence**, digital sub-indicators display a significantly lower risk (36 per cent) than is the case of the score for the overall area (74 per cent).

The digital sub-indicators on **Specific codes of conduct concerning the use of social media** show that such codes, eventually targeting the whole journalistic environment, are absent in Poland. Some media organisations set internal guidelines for journalists employed in their newsrooms. For example, the Code of Conduct of the news portal OKO.press refers generally to journalistic work, but some principles can be applied to social media. For example, para III (2) states: “ It is unacceptable to share and publish false information insulting other persons or organisations in public (including social media)” (OKO.press, 2021B).

Campaign spending on online platforms is not explicitly regulated by the 2011 Election Code. As regards labelling of political and issue-based advertising there is no clear and aggregated information from platforms about such practices, but some information (e.g. on practices that platforms use to identify political advertises) can be extracted from the platform reports to the Commission concerning the implementation of the Code of Practice on Disinformation.

Finally, **Online public service media** are not specifically mentioned in the 1992 Broadcasting Act, however the amended 1992 Broadcasting Act in the Article 21a(2) refers to the Charters of Tasks of TV and Polish Radio, which list a number of “multimedia services” such as TVP’s portal or VoD services as part of the PSM remit (TVP, 2020; PR, 2020).

Social Inclusiveness

In the area of **Social Inclusiveness**, digital sub-indicators detect a highest risk among all of the areas reaching 78 per cent. Also, the distinct difference between the overall value (62 per cent) and digital sub-indicators (78 per cent) for this area shows that greatest ‘digital’ threats to media pluralism are associated with digital dimension of social inclusiveness – in this case particularly protection against disinformation and protection against hate speech on social media.

Regarding **Protection against disinformation**, there has been a growing awareness of risks and threats stemming from increasing disinformation campaigns in Poland. Yet the policy and regulatory measures

against disinformation remain fairly fragmented. So far, legal measures pertain mainly to requirements of journalistic accuracy and reliability (e.g. as contained in the Article 6(1) and Article 12(1)1 in the 1984 Press Law Act). Other facilitating measures are being applied by the platform themselves. In 2021 for example, Meta removed dozens of Facebook and Instagram accounts that attempted to accuse Poland for causing a humanitarian crisis at the Belarus/Poland's border as some of these, were in view of Washington Post, tied to the Belarusian KGB (washingtonpost.com, 2021). Another widely debated case was removal of a Polish far-right political party Confederation (Konfederacja) account from Facebook due to repeated violations of the community and content standards relating to COVID-19 disinformation (notesfrompoland.com, 2021). Many NGOs offer useful factchecking tools (see e.g. Głowacka, 2020), but there are also examples of initiatives where 'fact-checking' instruments are politically manipulated and abused (see e.g. TVP, 2022). Finally, the government and public institutions take some ad hoc policy actions targeting publicly important problems such as disinformation under the pandemic, electoral campaigns or very recently the war against Ukraine. In February 2022, KRRiT went ahead of EU to swiftly delete a number of Russian channels (including RT, RT Documentary, RTR Planeta, Soyuz TV and Rossiya 24) from the register of permitted TV services in Poland, distributed by cable networks, satellite or internet platforms (broadbandtvnews.com, 2022).

Concerning **Protection against hate speech**, legal safeguards are generally based on constitutional provisions (only general anti-discrimination rules), 1997 Criminal Code and 1992 Broadcasting Act. In general, some efforts to remove hate speech were successful recently, but a vast scale of the problem – especially when disseminated online or on social media prevents from more systematic and effective counteractions (see e.g. hrw.org, 2021 as concerns hate speech against women).

5. Conclusions

In 2021, risks to media pluralism increased in three measured areas and stood at the same level in the area of **Market Plurality**. In the areas of **Fundamental Protection** (57 per cent) and **Social Inclusiveness** (62 per cent), MPM scored a medium risk level, while in the areas of **Political Independence** (74 per cent) and **Market Plurality** (74 per cent) a high-risk level.

The volatile impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the structural conditions of news media and journalism in Poland. While the media industry started to economically recover with significant increases in advertising revenues in certain sectors, some new legal initiatives (Lex TVN, Bill on Freedom of Speech in Online Social Media), developments in media governance and regulation (KRRiT's role in postponing of licence-granting procedure for TVN24 and TVN7, lack of effective monitoring of PSM performance), state interference (lack of transparency and asymmetric distribution of state advertising, increased state ownership without guarantees of editorial independence) and growing legal, political and commercial pressure continue to exacerbate risks to media pluralism in Poland. These contribute to growing vulnerabilities of the news media already facing structural challenges of dependency on platforms and changing habits of news consumption, especially among younger users. At the same time, social needs for information produced by the quality and trustable journalism have significantly increased with the pandemic, intensified disinformation campaigns, and war against Ukraine.

Many risks detected in the area of **Fundamental Protection** generate systemic implications for media pluralism. These include an ongoing crisis of harmful judicial reform, politically motivated regulatory performance and a visible increase in attacks, abuses of power and legal actions addressing journalists and newsrooms.

These risks may be mitigated by:

- **strengthening of judicial independence to ensure an enabling environment for freedom of expression and legal certainty for journalists and the media industry,**
- **guaranteeing effective independence, transparency and accountability of media regulatory authority (KRRiT), competition authority (UOKiK), National Media Council (RMN) and telecom authority (UKE) as an absolute priority to avoid political and other undue influence on policymaking, preferential or discriminative treatment of media actors or services,**
- **building a common front among newsrooms and journalists to effectively respond to unjustified criminalization of defamation, threats and legal actions against journalists to strengthen professional resilience and limit the chilling-effect on freedom of expression.**

The high risk in the **Market Plurality** area can be addressed by:

- **setting high standards (including clear conflict-of-interest rules) and effective mechanisms for transparency of media ownership, state advertising and other forms of financial involvement of the state in news media operations (higher standards should apply to state-related ownership and owners, including PSM),**
- **setting editorial policies and rules for state-owned news media that would effectively prevent confluence of commercial and political influence,**

- **improving and ensuring an open and inclusive public’s access to the most up-date news market data (such as advertising revenues) and data resulting from platforms’ content management policies,**
- **development of such tax policies that will not put additional financial burdens on media providing original news content, but rather support them,**
- **establishing effective rules that would limit concentration of media and digital power (not only related to ownership) and better reflect specific features of digital media markets, including a ‘gatekeeper’ function of platforms, and the role of state’s involvement in news media business.**

In the area of **Political Independence**, a high risk is generated by lack of political independence and growing partisanship of PSM’s, insufficient transparency and asymmetric distribution of state support, including advertising, and other forms of political pressure. A possible response to these risks may focus on:

- **improving a PSM governance model so that it is free from political influence from government or political parties,**
- **setting high standards of PSM remit including detailed rules on impartiality, accuracy and quality as well as effective monitoring of PSM performance by relevant regulators,**
- **developing effective rules for fair and transparent distribution of state support and state advertising for the news media, including digital natives and online providers,**
- **relating state or public support for the news media with the concept of “original news content” or “quality journalism”,**
- **developing better self-regulatory and widely respected standards concerning conflict-of-interest rules between political actors and news media.**

In the area of **Social Inclusiveness**, particular concern may be raised with regard to insufficient protection against hate speech, growing threat of disinformation, insufficient inclusiveness of minorities and weak and fragmented national policy on media literacy. These risks may be addressed by

- **adopting a broader scope of measures addressing “hate speech” that would encompass all protected characteristics recognized under international human rights,**
- **supporting news media initiatives that target both legally recognized and non-recognized minorities, including Ukrainian refugees, foreseeing also forms of employment for minority journalists,**
- **developing more systematic approach to media literacy (including formal curriculum) completed by regular monitoring of media consumption and users’ digital skills and competences,**
- **legal and policy recognition of non-profit community media while respecting their independent status.**

Finally, times of greatest turbulence and geopolitical uncertainties necessitate a more firm defense of pro-democratic functions of the news media and a model of journalism based on respect for human rights. More than ever, there is an urgent need to preserve a sound and open space for a pluralistic public debate nurtured by accurate information and high-quality analysis.

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ANNEXE I. COUNTRY TEAM

First name	Last name	Position	Institution	MPM2022 CT Leader
<i>Beata</i>	<i>Klimkiewicz</i>	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Journalism, Media and Social Communication, Jagiellonian 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>Alicja</i>	<i>Jaskiernia</i>	<i>University Professor - Academic</i>	<i>University of Warsaw, Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies</i>
<i>Andrzej</i>	<i>Krajewski</i>	<i>Representative of a journalistic organisation</i>	<i>Towarzystwo Dziennikarskie (Society of Journalists)</i>
<i>Jolanta</i>	<i>Hajdasz</i>	<i>Director of CMWP; Vice-Chair of SDP</i>	<i>Press Freedom Monitoring Centre (CMWP) , Polish Journalists' Association (SDP)</i>

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