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MEDIA CAPTURE MONITORING REPORT

2026

Slovakia

Measuring compliance with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)

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MEDIA FREEDOM RAPID RESPONSE

An annual measure of media capture in the EU, and of how far Member States meet the standards the European Media Freedom Act sets against it.

The **Media Capture Monitoring Report** (MCMR) is produced by the International Press Institute (IPI) and the Media and Journalism Research Center (MJRC). Each country report assesses the four safeguards in the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) that bear most directly on media capture: the independence of public service media, the independence of media regulators, protection against the misuse of state funds to influence the media, and transparency of media ownership and safeguards for media pluralism.

The 2026 edition follows the EMFA's first year of full application, from 8 August 2025. Written by national experts and edited by MJRC and IPI, the reports are deliberately short: they track what has changed since the 2025 baseline assessment and identify the problems that remain.

The project is part of the **Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR)**, a Europe-wide mechanism which tracks, monitors and responds to violations of press and media freedom in EU Member States and Candidate Countries. It is co-funded by the European Commission.

This report covers developments up to October 2026.

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Media Capture Monitoring Report: Slovakia 2025

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MEDIA FREEDOM RAPID RESPONSE

SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

The 2025 report on media capture in Slovakia revealed multiple institutional capture and systemic risks. One year later, the consequences can be seen in reality for the media, journalists, the regulator and the media market. At the public broadcaster Slovak Television and Radio (STVR), whose board is appointed entirely by the government and its parliamentary majority, critical journalists have been fired and programmes stopped, and monitoring organisations have documented pro-government bias in its news. As a result, indirect government control over the public media in Slovakia has solidified over the past year, with clear effects on its programming. A constitutional challenge to STVR's governance is on hold while the EU Court of Justice interprets the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) independence requirements. The media regulator, the Council for Media Services, has also been reshaped by coalition appointments and a new chair. It dismissed its respected chief of staff and opened proceedings in only one of 15 cases of alleged bias at STVR. A plan to replace it with a centralised National Media Authority has been postponed. In conclusion, the country is now the EU Member State experiencing the most rapidly deteriorating media capture climate. These developments, and the lack of effective EMFA enforcement from the European Commission, are having damaging effects on media freedom and pluralism in Slovakia.

THE YEAR IN BRIEF

NOV 2025	Parliament amends the state advertising law, strengthening the regulator's oversight on paper. STVR halts an episode of its investigative programme Reporteri.
JAN 2026	SME columnist Peter Schutz is beaten in a shopping mall, shortly after coalition politicians attacked his commentary.
FEB 2026	The Constitutional Court refers a question on the independence of the public broadcaster STVR to the EU Court of Justice.
APR 2026	RSF, Transparency International Slovakia, Via Iuris and Memo 98 complain to the STVR Board and the regulator, documenting 15 cases of alleged bias.
JUL 2026	The regulator opens proceedings in only one of the 15 cases. The European Commission's Rule of Law Report criticises the missing state advertising register.
SEP 2026	The bill for a centralised National Media Authority is withdrawn. Michal Kovačič wins his case against TV Markíza at first instance.
OCT 2026	The regulator sanctions STVR for a lack of objectivity in a political debate.

01 From institutional to real-life capture

Only those areas with significant developments are covered below; the others remain relatively unchanged since the last report.

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

EMFA ART. 5

STVR Board: nominated by

- Ministry of Culture directly
- Ministry of Finance directly
- Governing majority through Parliament

Opposition or independent **None**

The most visible development over the last year is the deterioration of the quality of public service broadcasting. This comes after the previous institution, Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS), was dismantled and replaced with a new one, STVR, with financing completely dependent on political decisions and a new structure for appointing the management. In STVR's bodies, there is no space for opposition or independent experts: all members of its Board are nominees of the government, either directly (through the ministries of culture and finance) or through the governing majority in Parliament.

An important new development is that this structure of the STVR Board has been challenged[1] before the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic as clearly violating European regulation. In February 2026, the court announced that it was referring a preliminary question to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)[2] on the interpretation of the EMFA, especially on how to interpret the requirement of functional independence of public service media. As the CJEU is expected to provide an authoritative interpretation, it could lead to changes being required to align domestic legislation with EMFA rules. However, the court assessment prolongs the process and means that the ruling of the Slovak Constitutional Court will be postponed, and the decision will come only after the damage to the institution is already very serious.

The STVR Board elected a new general director, Martina Flašíková, the daughter of a late political strategist for the ruling Smer party and a close government ally, in May 2025 in a closed-door vote. Journalists and members of the public were excluded from the election process, despite constitutional guarantees of public access to such hearings. Under Flašíková's leadership, critical journalists were fired, and several programmes were terminated, which led more employees to leave the institution. As a consequence, the effects on editorial independence and the quality of news became apparent as early as autumn 2025.

An NGO monitoring media in Slovakia, Memo 98, published the results of their content analysis of STVR news coverage[3], concluding that political news coverage was dominated by governmental and coalition views and arguments, while opposition voices and context were frequently missing. It provided empirical evidence of problems with impartiality and pluralism in STVR's output.

1. Aktuality. (2024, October 9). Ústavnosť zákona o Slovenskej televízii posúdia na Ústavnom súde. [Constitutional compliance of the STVR Act will be judged at the Constitutional court.] www.aktuality.sk/clanok/ly29Mlr/ustavnost-zakona-o-slovenskej-televizii-a-rozhlase-posudia-na-ustavnom-sude/
2. Official Journal of the European Union. (2026, June 29). C/2026/3288. Request for a preliminary ruling from the Ústavný súd Slovenskej republiky (Slovakia) lodged on 20 February 2026. eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202603288
3. Mračka, M. (2025, December 19). Politickému spravodajstvu dominovala vláda a koalícia, opozícia a kontext často chýbali. STVR s mnohými mediálnymi prešľapmi. [Political news dominated by the government and coalition, context and opposition often missing. STVR with several breaches.] MEMO 98. www.memo98.sk/sk/clanok/spravodajstvu-dominovala-vlada-a-koalicia-opozicia-a-kontext-casto-chybali-stvr-s-mnohymi-medialnymi-preslapmi

Complaint on STVR bias

1

OF 15 DOCUMENTED CASES

taken up by the regulator in July 2026. It called eight others "problematic" but below the threshold for review.

Moreover, other monitoring institutions, both domestic and international, have concluded that STVR is biased. In April 2026, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Transparency International Slovakia and the justice-oriented NGO Via Iuris, together with Memo 98, formally addressed a complaint to the STVR Board and to the regulator, the Council for Media Services. They claimed that STVR is violating Slovak law,[4] requiring impartiality and objectivity in broadcasting, as well as the EMFA. They supplied the regulator with several empirical studies on the broadcaster's bias, mostly from Transparency International Slovakia, and documented 15 cases of STVR allegedly breaching the law.

In July 2026, the regulator started formal proceedings in only one of these cases, dismissing the rest. The Council for Media Services admitted[5] that eight other cases were "problematic" but "not reaching threshold" for review.

The organisations published a statement in which they criticised this decision and referred to the Council's own lawyers, who had advised the Council members that at least two of the cases against STVR documented potentially illegal conduct.

The STVR Board discussed the complaints but did not issue any formal statement. One of its members, David Lindtner (at the same time an adviser to the Prime Minister), commented that the complaining organisations were political activists. RSF and the others later received a letter[6] from the STVR Board backing the STVR management.

In autumn 2026, the Council for Media Services decided on a different complaint, sanctioning STVR for non-objectivity in a case of a political debate, where a journalist in the studio sided with the pro-governmental views, even when the ratio of pro-governmental vs. oppositional guests of a discussion was 3:1.[7]

There were more cases documenting how the capture manifested itself in practice: an episode of STVR's investigative programme Reporteri was stopped[8]; the vice-president of the STVR Board repeatedly put pressure on the institution's HR policy[9]; and there were repeated layoffs[10] of critical journalists[11], including several union members[12] who had protested against the political capture of the institution. Together with financing tied to political decisions, a politically captured STVR Board, and an Ethics Committee that includes controversial and pro-government[13] figures, some with pro-Russian ties,[14] this creates an alarming

4. Godársky, I. (2026, April 27). Is the public STVRs news impartial? Memo 98 and partners complain to the media regulator. memo98.sk/article/via-iuris-memo98-transparency-international-rsf-file-complaint-over-lack-of-impartiality-and-pluralism-in-public-broadcasters-tv-news-coverage
5. MEMO 98. (2026, August 6). Podnet voči spravodajstvu STVR: Vyhýbavé rozhodnutie mediálneho regulátora, ignorancia Rady STVR. [Complaint against the STVR news: Evasive decision of the media regulator, ignorance of the STVR Board.] memo98.sk/sk/clanok/podnet-voci-tv-spravodajstvu-stvr-vyhybave-rozhodnutie-medialneho-regulatora-ignorancia-rady-stvr
6. Ibid.
7. Council for Media Services. (2026, October 6). Press Release. rpms.sk/sites/default/files/2026-10/TS_Zasadala_Rada_pre_medialne_sluzby_7_10_2026.pdf
8. Council of Europe. (2025, November 18). STVR Halts Reportéri Investigation and Suspends Programme. fom.coe.int/en/alerte/detail/107643237
9. Osvaldová, L. Struhárik, F. (2026, March 24). Nie USA, ale SŠA, Machala chce pokutovať redaktorov spravodajstva za chyby v slovenčine. [Not USA, but SŠA. Machala wants to punish news reporters for language mistakes.] dennikn.sk/5220713/nie-usa-ale-ssa-machala-chce-pokutovat-redaktorov-spravodajstva-za-chyby-v-slovencine/
10. Praus, L. (2026, September 19). Prepúšťanie v STVR pokračuje, konajú už aj štátni kontrolóri. [Layoffs at STVR continue, and state auditors are now taking action.] SME. www.sme.sk/domov/c/v-stvr-pokracuje-prepustanie-teraz-uz-potichu-vypoved-dostala-aj-dalsia-clenka-odboroveho-zvazu
11. International Press Institute (IPI). (2026). Slovakia: Bill on media regulatory and public service media. ipi.media/slovakia-bill-on-media-regulatory-and-psm/
12. Council of Europe, Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists. (2026). Alert concerning STVR. fom.coe.int/en/alerte/detail/107643977
13. Denník N. (2025, May 27). Eduard Chmelár sa stal členom Etickej komisie Rady STVR, navrhol ho do nej David Lindnter. [Eduard Chmelar is a member of the Ethical Committee of the STVR Board. He was nominated by David Lindtner.] dennikn.sk/minuta/4661626/
14. Denník N. (2026, January 27). Rada STVR zvolila do etickej komisie verjnoprávneho média Miloša Zverinu. [Miloš Zverina elected as a member of the Ethical Committee of STVR]. dennikn.sk/minuta/5101465/

picture of political interference and influence on public broadcasting in Slovakia, and an example of media capture. This is reflected in STVR's decreasing trustworthiness[15], as shown in several[16] reports. Prominent TV creators, including an award-winning director and well-known actors, announced a boycott of STVR[17] and its productions. As a result, STVR currently represents a political communication tool in the hands of pro-government interests, rather than an independent institution required by the EMFA. As one of the most serious attacks on independent public broadcasting in the EU, this requires strong action from the European Commission to enforce EMFA rules.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

AVMSD ART. 30

Another important development is the debate around the media regulator, the Council for Media Services. The governing coalition has effectively captured the regulator by appointing new members, several of them controversial figures, some with non-transparent political connections. The members of the Council elected a new head of the institution, Michal Dzurjanin, who is known for the political capture of the public service broadcaster RTVS under the previous Smer-led government in 2017. Following this appointment, the chief of staff at the Council, Martin Dorociak, was fired, despite his good reputation and professionalism, and the impartiality of the staff's output. One of the Council members, the former journalist Adam Valček, published a dissenting opinion[18] explaining that the dismissal of Dorociak could have been illegal and based on a pretext. In September 2026, a new chief of staff was elected, with no previous experience in the field of media law. The Council's reserved approach to the complaint by RSF and others against STVR, described above, could be a consequence of this capture. Memo 98[19] characterised it as evidence of a worrying weakness in independent oversight.

Capturing the regulator creates a loop in the mechanism of media capture. The government captured STVR as an institution, its editorial output changed, and the government then captured the regulator whose role is to oversee and judge the balance of that editorial content. This is even more worrying given that the private TV market is also captured through various oligarchic and political connections of the owners (overall, the four biggest owners command around 60 percent of audiences[20] in the TV, radio and newspaper markets), and, again, the only institution in charge of their regulation, oversight and licensing is the Council for Media Services.

Audience concentration

≈60%

HELD BY THE FOUR LARGEST OWNERS

Across TV, radio and newspapers. The Council for Media Services is the only body that regulates, oversees and licenses them.

15. Teraz.sk. (2026). Flašíková: Prepad dôvery v STVR je daný zníženou dôveryhodnosťou médií. [Flašíková: The decline in trust in STVR is due to declining trust in media]. www.teraz.sk/najnovsie/flasikova-prepad-dovery-v-stvr-je-d/993018-clanok.html
16. Godársky, I. (2026, February 18). Objektivita spravodajstva STVR sa prepadla o 8 percent, Radu STVR vedie štátny úradník, mediálny regulátor stráca nezávislosť. [The objectivity of STVR's news coverage has fallen by 8 percent; STVR's Board is led by a state official, and the media regulator is losing its independence.] memo98.sk/sk/clanok/media-blog-2-objektivita-spravodajstva-stvr-sa-prepadla-o-8-percent-radu-stvr-vedie-statny-uradnik-medialny-regulator-straca-nezavislost
17. Osvaldová, L. (2026, April 11). STVR odmietajú ďalší herci: Bárta, Kráľ či Geišberg nebudú v novom seriáli pre pomery v telerozhlase. [More actors refuse to work with STVR: Bárta, Kráľ and Geišberg will not appear in a new series because of the situation at the public broadcaster.] Denník N. dennikn.sk/5267642/stvr-odmietaju-dalsi-herci-barta-kral-ci-geisberg-nebudu-v-novom-seriali-pre-pomery-v-telerozhlase/
18. Valček, A. (2026, February 14). Strata dôvery, proporcionalita a hranice diskrečnej právomoci pri odvolávaní riaditeľa mediálneho regulátora. [Loss of trust, proportionality, and the limits of discretion in dismissing the head of the media regulator.] Právne listy. www.pravnelisty.sk/clanky/a1688-strata-dovery-proporcionalita-a-hranice-diskrecnej-pravomoci-pri-odvolavani-riaditela-medialneho-regulatora
19. Godársky, I. (2026, August 6). Evasive decisions by media regulatory and oversight bodies show worrying cracks in independent oversight of Slovakia's public broadcaster. memo98.sk/article/evasive-decisions-by-media-regulatory-and-oversight-bodies-show-worrying-cracks-in-independent-oversight-of-slovakias-public-broadcaster
20. Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF). (2026). Slovakia: Media Pluralism Monitor 2026. cmpf.eui.eu/country/slovakia-2026/

Moreover, the Slovak National Party (SNS), a minority partner in the governing coalition, has proposed a different model of media governance: renaming the Council as the National Media Authority and centralising power in the hands of its head.[21] This, however, was blocked by other members of the coalition[22], who said it would create a "censorship office". The European Commission had intervened as well[23], and the legislation was first postponed until the proposal met the requirements of European law, which did not happen. The MPs who proposed it took it back in September 2026.[24]

MISUSE OF STATE FUNDS AND OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY AND PLURALISM

EMFA ART. 6, 22 & 25

There were no major changes in media ownership transparency and pluralism, or in the distribution of state advertising. Parliament formally amended the law concerning state advertising in November 2025, strengthening the oversight role of the Council for Media Services, but this remains on paper. The core tool for transparency in state advertising should be a central register. Like the media ownership register, it still does not exist in practice, a gap the European Commission criticised in its Rule of Law Report on Slovakia in July 2026.[25]

Other than that, attacks on journalists remained a serious problem. The Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak (ICJK) recorded 77 attacks or incidents against journalists in 2025, a slight increase from 74 cases in 2024. These included 35 threats, three death threats and three abusive lawsuits.[26] Many of these attacks target the independent, non-oligarchic media, which have a strong presence online and in print: the daily SME, with a strong online presence; Aktuality, the most-visited online news site; and Denník N, a small independent daily with a strong base of online subscribers.[27]

The Slovak government is part of the problem by ignoring the independent media, not answering some of their questions and interview requests or targeting them with smear campaigns. In one prominent case, a criminally prosecuted far-right extremist, Daniel Bombic,[28] known for having cyberbullied[29] journalists, received legal help from a law firm co-owned by Robert Kaliňák, the minister of defense and a prominent Smer politician.

Attacks on journalists, 2025

77

ATTACKS AND INCIDENTS

Up from 74 in 2024, including 35 threats, three death threats and three abusive lawsuits. Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak.

21. International Press Institute (IPI). (2026). Slovakia: Bill on media regulatory and public service media. ipi.media/slovakia-bill-on-media-regulatory-and-psm/
22. Hanák, P. (2026, June 5). Rudolf Huliak: Moja strana zachraňuje demokraciu, brzdíme Dankov cenzorský úrad. [Rudolf Huliak: My party is saving democracy; we are blocking Danko's censorship office.] Aktuality.sk. www.aktuality.sk/clanok/UcFaryy/rudolf-huliak-moja-strana-zachranuje-demokraciu-brzdime-dankov-cenzorsky-urad/
23. Hanák, P. (2026, March 25). Eurokomisár po stretnutí s Robertom Ficom: Dodržanie pravidiel EÚ zabezpečíme aj na Slovensku. [EU Commissioner after meeting Robert Fico: We will ensure compliance with EU rules in Slovakia too.] www.aktuality.sk/clanok/Iet2Y8b/eurokomisar-mcgrath-ficova-zmena-ustavy-aj-nedodrziavanie-europskeho-prava-su-neakceptovatelne-rozhovor/
24. National Council of the Slovak Republic. (2026, September 4). Parliamentary document. www.nrsr.sk/web/Dynamic/DocumentPreview.aspx?DocID=597176
25. European Commission. (2026, July). 2026 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Slovakia. eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1782188985802&uri=CELEX%3A52026SC0925
26. Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak (ICJK). (2026, February 21). Bezpečná.žurnalistika.sk: Počet útokov voči novinárom sa v roku 2025 opäť zvýšil. [Safe Journalism: The number of attacks against journalists rose again in 2025.] icjk.sk/442/Bezpecnazurnalistikask-Pocet-utokov-voci-novinarom-sa-v-roku-0-opat-zvysil
27. Kőváry Sólymos, K., Šlerka, J., & Możański, M. (2025, October 8). Platená nenávisť: Útoky na novinárov najviac sponzorovali politici na Slovensku a v Maďarsku, platformy nezakročili. [Paid hatred: Politicians in Slovakia and Hungary sponsored the most attacks on journalists, while platforms failed to act.] Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak (ICJK). www.icjk.sk/419/Platena-nenavist-Utoky-na-novinarov-najviac-sponzorovali-politici-na-Slovensku-a-v-Madarsku-platformy-nezakrocili
28. The Slovak Spectator. (2026). Influencer Daniel Bombic found guilty of extremism charges by Slovak court. spectator.sme.sk/politics-and-society/c/influencer-daniel-bombic-found-guilty-of-extremism-charges-by-slovak-court
29. Kiripolská, K., Pavlovičová, P., & Kyjovský, M. (2025, February 6). Meet Slovakia's Most Toxic Propagandist: An Indicted Extremist Loved by Fico and His Allies. VSquare vsquare.org/daniel-bombic-danny-kollar-dkx-meet-slovakias-most-toxic-propagandist-an-indicted-extremist-loved-by-fico-and-his-allies/

This creates an atmosphere in which verbally or physically attacking journalists in the street becomes acceptable to government supporters. In one especially serious case, in January 2026, the SME daily's political columnist Peter Schutz was beaten[30] in the toilet of a shopping mall, suffering a serious leg injury that required hospitalisation. The attack occurred shortly after coalition politicians slammed Schutz for his commentary against Smer voters.

Journalists in court

- Peter Bárdy
  Aktuality.sk; the Prime Minister's EUR 200,000 claim failed
- Michal Kovačič
  won against TV Markíza at first instance

The only uncaptured institution left in the country that helps to mitigate the media capture is the justice system. Two landmark cases of prominent journalists show that the courts often back the freedom of the press against SLAPPs or capture. The editor-in-chief of Aktuality.sk, Peter Bárdy, was sued by Prime Minister Fico over the cover photo of a book Bárdy wrote about Fico. The Prime Minister demanded EUR 200,000 in damages, but he ultimately lost the case[31] in 2026.

Another prominent case is Michal Kovačič vs TV Markíza. Markíza is the most popular commercial TV station, captured by an oligarchic family with state-business ties. Kovačič protested against "censorship and Orbanisation" during a live broadcast in 2025; he was fired, but then sued the station and won the case[32] in the first instance, although the station can still appeal.

30. International Press Institute (IPI). (2026). Slovakia: IPI condemns violent attack on prominent media commentator. ipi.media/slovakia-ipi-condemns-violent-attack-on-prominent-media-commentator/
31. Kyseľ, T. (2026, June 2). Robert Fico žiadal premrštené peniaze, sudkyňa na jeho fotke nevidela nič hanlivé. Premiér na súde neuspel. [Robert Fico demanded an excessive amount of money; the judge found nothing defamatory in his photograph. The prime minister lost the case.] Aktuality.sk. www.aktuality.sk/clanok/we4jaCv/premier-fico-na-sude-neuspel-v-spore-o-jeho-fotku-dala-sudkyna-za-pravdu-aktualitam-navyse-ziadal-premrstene-peniaze/
32. Struhárik, F. (2026, September 3). Michal Kovačič vyhral súd s Markízou, jeho výpoveď z televízie bola neplatná. [Michal Kovačič won his case against Markíza; his dismissal from the television station was unlawful.] Denník N. dennikn.sk/5539562/michal-kovacic-vyhral-sud-s-markizou-jeho-vypoved-z-televizie-bola-neplatna/

02 Has the situation improved?

No. The institutional capture described in the 2025 report has transformed into capture in practice, deepening media capture and seriously undermining press freedom in Slovakia. At STVR, a board appointed entirely by the government and its majority, and a director with family ties to the governing party, have presided over dismissals of critical journalists and union members, stopped programmes, a halted investigative episode and news coverage that monitors found dominated by the government, while trust in the broadcaster has fallen. The Council for Media Services, the one body that could check this, has itself been reshaped by politicised coalition appointments. It removed its chief of staff in a decision one of its own members called possibly illegal, and opened proceedings in only one of the 15 cases of alleged bias documented by civil society organisations. Because the same regulator oversees private broadcasters, in a market where the four largest owners hold around 60 percent of audiences, its capture reaches well beyond public media. The limits on capture have come from outside the government: the Constitutional Court's referral to the CJEU, the European Commission's reported intervention against the National Media Authority plan, and court rulings in favour of journalists.

03 Outstanding problems

MEDIA REGULATORS

AVMSD ART. 30

The Council for Media Services now has a coalition-appointed majority and a chair associated with the earlier capture of public television. It dismissed its chief of staff on what one member called a pretext, appointed a successor with no media law experience, and declined to act on most complaints against STVR. As the sole regulator of both public and private broadcasters, its capture closes the loop. The plan for a centralised National Media Authority has been postponed, not abandoned.

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

EMFA ART. 5

All STVR Board members are nominated by the government or its parliamentary majority, funding depends on political decisions, and news coverage favours the governing coalition. Critical journalists and union members continue to be dismissed, and the constitutional challenge to STVR's governance will not be decided until the CJEU answers the Constitutional Court's question.

MISUSE OF STATE FUNDS

EMFA ART. 25

The update records no significant change in this area. The 2025 report found state advertising allocated without a central database, criteria or oversight, with evidence of preferential funding for pro-government outlets, and no rules have since been introduced to change this.

OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY AND PLURALISM

EMFA ART. 6 & 22

The four largest owners control around 60 percent of TV, radio and newspaper audiences, and private broadcasters are tied to oligarchic and political interests, as the dismissal of Michal Kovačič at Markíza showed. The 2025 report's concerns about the non-functional media register and the lack of a pluralism test in merger control remain. Independent outlets such as SME, Aktuality and Denník N are the main targets of government smears, and the ICJK recorded 77 attacks and incidents against journalists in 2025.

MEDIA CAPTURE MONITORING REPORT 2026

An annual measure of how far EU Member States have fallen under media capture, and of how well they meet the standards set by the European Media Freedom Act to combat it.

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