[MK] Study of the media landscape

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A study entitled “Media Regulatory Framework and the Online Media - the Macedonian Case”, which was supported by the European Union and the Council of Europe, showed that no additional media regulation of new media is needed in that country. This outcome highlights the need to maintain freedom of the media as the main public policy objective and therefore avoid any type of content regulation, supporting instead, where necessary, self-regulation.

Current discussions concerning reform of the media regulatory framework in Macedonia is intended to ensure professional standards of media reporting and freedom of expression after a decade of enormous pressure on journalists, state-controlled media outlets, hate speech, massive state advertising in favour of the ruling parties and the hyper-production of fake news. During the discussion many interested parties have proposed additional regulation of web content and online services.

The recently published study, by contrast, recommends a decrease in the regulatory level in the country and does not support an increase in online media regulation: “In this regard, it should be stressed that not being subject to statutory media regulation does not mean that online media operate in a legal vacuum. On the contrary, media outlets are already subject to an important set of laws such as the body of corporate law (if they engage in commercial activities) or the Law on Associations and Foundations (if they operate on a non-profit basis). Besides, several public policy objectives in terms of content published by online media (such as, for example, the fight against hate speech and discrimination and respect for copyright) can be safeguarded by an important set of laws other than the media law, such as the Criminal Code, the Law on Civil Liability for Insult and Defamation, the Law on the Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination, the Law on Copyright and Related Rights, and the Law on Protection of Personal Data ...”.

The Country’s Progress Report, which was published by the European Union in April 2018, noted an improved media climate; however, it noted that “[i]t is essential that the authorities demonstrate zero tolerance towards all incidents of physical and verbal abuse or threats against journalists and that these are effectively followed up by the relevant authorities”, and urged the authorities to keep working on the democratisation and professionalisation of the public broadcasting service and of the media regulatory authority

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Study Media Regulatory Framework and the Online Media - the Macedonian Case

https://rm.coe.int/media-regulatory-framework-and-the-online-media-the-macedonian-case/16808c9c76

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