[SI] Update on media legislation proposals and European Parliament debates on media freedom

IRIS 2021-5:1/20

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In 2020, IRIS reported on a range of legislative proposals from the Slovenian government relevant to the media sector. These included the following: a draft proposal for amending the Law on Audiovisual Media Services (see IRIS 2020-9/12 and IRIS 2021-1/26); a draft law on creating a Super Regulator, which proposes a merger between the Agency for Communication Networks and Services (AKOS) and five other regulators (see IRIS 2020-10/14); and draft amendments to the Slovenia Radio and Television Act, the Mass Media Act and the Slovenia Press Agency Act (see IRIS 2020-8/21).

There was a strong national critical response from Slovenian stakeholders, journalists and experts concerning the three laws (Slovenia Radio and Television Act, the Mass Media Act and the Slovenia Press Agency Act). In addition, international organisations have also expressed concern regarding various aspects of these laws and their threat to the freedom of the media in Slovenia (The European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), and the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)). To date none of the procedures relating to these legislative proposals have been finalised. At the end of 2020, the Government suspended the funding of the *Slovenska Tiskovna Agencija* (Slovenian Press Agency - STA), which is a public institution.

An analysis of “The Situation of Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Slovenia” was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), for the Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights Monitoring Group (DRFMG). This document focuses on freedom of expression and information, media freedom and pluralism, and also on the judiciary, on checks and balances and other issues. With regard to media freedom, the analysis provides a detailed chronology of the issues and events that have raised concern regarding media freedom in Slovenia, alongside the responses of international organisations to the situation.

The situation in Slovenia was discussed at a meeting held on 5 March 2021, by the DRFMG in the context of a discussion on media freedom in Poland, Hungary and Slovenia. A second discussion was held with the monitoring group, a range of experts, and the Slovenian Prime Minister and Minister of Culture on 26 March

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2021, after which the DRFMG issued a statement regretting that the exchange of views was interrupted when the Prime Minister left the meeting. The DRFMG has published a list of questions to the Slovenian government which were not addressed during the meeting.

European Parliament Briefing: 04-03-2021: Media freedom under attack in Poland, Hungary and Slovenia

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2021-03-08/6/media-freedom-under-attack-in-poland-hungary-and-slovenia

European Parliament Press release of 25 March 2021: Media freedom in Slovenia: MEPs to continue taking stock of recent developments

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210322IPR00514/media-freedom-in-slovenia-meps-to-continue-taking-stock-of-recent-developments

Statement by the Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights Monitoring Group, 26 March 2021

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210319IPR00448/statement-by-the-democracy-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-monitoring-group

"The Situation of Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in Slovenia". Report for the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, for the Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights Monitoring Group

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/231906/SLOVENIA%20IDA%20DRFMG.update.pdf

DRFMG Members' follow-up questions to the Exchange of views on the situation in Slovenia in relation to Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights, held on Friday, 26 March 2021, 13.30-16.30.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/231681/DFRMG%2031.03.2021%20-%20Follow-up%20questions%20to%20SL%20authorities.pdf

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