



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development

REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF WESTERN EUROPE & NORTH AMERICA 2017/2018



Journalists' safety

Journalism is under fire. While more individuals have access to content and technological change have facilitated the rapid spread of information, the use of information that have characterized the period between 2012 and 2017 encourage adopting a more skeptical posture. Access to a plurality of information is a key indicator of a free society. The period covered by this report, in 2017, shows that journalists had access to information and the ability to report news and information.

Gender equality

Pluralism continues to be an ongoing fact that works to be underrepresented in media and in media content, both as sources and subjects. In response to the continuing marginalization of women, a range of civil society organizations, media outlets and individuals have developed initiatives to change the picture, including through the UNESCO-initiated Global Media and Gender and by Gender-Sensitive Indicators. Traditional business models and in the past, more than authentic news as a recent analysis of the origin and proliferation of fake news has suggested, only when a lie "is picked up by dozens of other blogs, retransmitted by hundreds of websites, cross-posted by thousands of social media accounts and read by hundreds of thousands, then it becomes fake news" (Boutegui et al., 2017). The power of 'fake news' to masquerade as verified

Pluralism

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Independent media

Independent media remains highly valued by individuals around the world, particularly in the North America and Latin America regions (Wike and Simmons, 2015). The World Press Trends Report referred to the decline in access to media as a 'gain for media pluralism'.

Political Polarization

Political polarization has suggested that there is a general trend of declining media freedoms across many regions (Wike and Simmons, 2015). At the same time, however, media remains highly valued by individuals around the world, particularly in the North America and Latin America regions (Wike and Simmons, 2015).

Published in 2018 by the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy, 7523 Paris 07 SP, France

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ISBN: 978-92-3-100296-0



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Title: *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Regional Overview Western Europe and North America 2017/2018*

This complete *World Trends Report* (and executive summary in six languages) can be found at en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017

The complete study should be cited as follows: UNESCO. 2018. *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: 2017/2018 Global Report*, Paris

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Printed in UNESCO printshop, Paris, France.



This publication was supported by Sweden.

World Trends in
Freedom
of **Expression**
and **Media**
Development

REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2017/2018

WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA



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Introduction

Introduction

This regional report discusses media trends regarding freedom, pluralism, independence and the safety of journalists in UNESCO Member States of the Western Europe and North America region. It covers the years from the start of 2012 to the start of 2017, with the five year period referred to in these pages as 2012-2017. As a regional study, this is one of six subsections of the wider report, with the global analysis published separately as “World Trends on Freedom of Expression and Media Development 2017/2018”, and which can be found at <https://en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017>.

All the reports follow the template of four trends: Media Freedom, Media Pluralism, Media Independence and the Safety of Journalism. The background to these reports, as well as the elaboration of these categories as essential components of press freedom, can be found in the global study cited above.

For more about UNESCO’s mandate and role in promoting freedom of expression and media development, readers are encouraged to visit <https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression> and sign up to our weekly newsletter at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression/news>.

Media developments vary significantly within this region due to the different conditions in each country, but broadly speaking, this overview of the Western Europe and North America region between 2012 and 2017 indicates several shifts and trends.

Despite historically well-established traditions of robust legal frameworks aimed at securing the freedom of the media, the legal environment has recently become more restrictive for journalists. A heightened climate of populism, nationalism, and political extremism in several countries, has impeded the independence of some news channels and platforms, which is coupled with the impact of measures to monitor and discourage ‘fake news’, hate speech, and violent extremism.

Concerns about globalization, immigration, terrorism, and economic stability, have directed governments’ decisions to opt out of regional commitments or to increase anti-democratic measures with regard to the press. An increase in media concentration, the neoliberalization of media markets, convergence, and media capture by business interest with close relationships to political actors, indicate continued risks to media pluralism, media independence, and media freedom.

A politicization of regulatory institutions and processes has affected the independence of media regulatory bodies in some instances, while traditional funding models of the media sector continue to result in difficulties regarding the financial sustainability of media outlets. News media sexism, gender bias, gender inequality in the media workplace, and gender stereotyping continue to occur across content delivery platforms, including within both the print sector as well as online digital media.

The region reflected a sharp decline in the safety of journalists between 2012 and 2017, due in part to the political turmoil present in one European state, as well as attacks by violent groups claiming religious motivation. In a sharply increasing trend, journalists were imprisoned in greater numbers between 2012 and 2017 than before, and are often detained and questioned about sources under anti-terrorism legislation. Government strategies to combat terrorism, including mass communication surveillance programs and the prosecution of whistle blowers, undermined the freedom of the press and safety of journalistic sources. An increasing trend of the de-legitimization of the media surfaced as politicians verbally assaulted the press, and in some cases encouraged attacks on the news media. Impunity occurred at lower levels when compared to other regions.

Trends in **Media Freedom**

Overview

Press freedom in a democracy requires constant attention to its public standing, yet the region has seen political rhetoric surrounding key events that could potentially encourage a reduction in public demand for a strong independent press. Decisions on how to implement principles of freedom of expression and media freedom have become more contested, particularly as news moves online, on social media and on digital platforms.

The freedom to publish in the 27 countries of the Western Europe and North America region has historically been strong, but there are signs that it is under increasing pressure. The rapid transformation of the economic context of the press in many countries; the rise of terrorism and countering violent extremism efforts by governments and others; the increased concentration in the region in traditional media ownership; and institutional struggles over the role of internet intermediaries, are challenging the freedom to publish. Refugee and migrant issues were also an important background factor during this period.

Terrorism, increasingly present and a substantial factor in media concerns, varied between being an explicit theme and an undercurrent throughout the region. Terrorism policy led to efforts aimed at countering violent extremism, which affected related narratives in the media, and has led to the emergence of measures, such as the State of Emergency in France between 2015 and 2017 and the Prevent agenda in the UK, that may threaten freedom of expression.

Trends in media freedom in the Western Europe and North American region include the following:

- Contestation between balancing the rights of freedom of speech and public safety, and the introduction of national security legislation, has had potential to curtail individual freedoms, including freedom of expression;
- Legal developments vary across the region, and while criminal defamation and insult laws have been repealed in some countries, stronger defamation laws have been produced or reintroduced in other countries;
- Governments increasingly attempt to enact the removal of particular online content, particularly hate speech, and contend that technology companies assume responsibility for content monitoring and the removal of content which is deemed offensive;
- Many governments explore the use of counter-narratives to offset the messaging disseminated by terrorist groups and recruiters, producing instances of regulated pluralism;
- Increased efforts to enhance data regulation in response to concerns about surveillance and privacy, including the involvement of regional courts;

- The legal environment has become more restrictive for journalists due to national security-related legislation which facilitates surveillance and criminalizes certain speech acts, which has occurred alongside the creation and implementation of policies which endanger communications between sources and journalists;
- Women in the media sector are more frequently targets of gender-related threats, intimidation, and harassment on the internet, and in Western European countries women have lower levels of internet access relative to men.

Limitations on media freedom

DEFAMATION AND OTHER LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON JOURNALISTS

All countries in this region exhibit constitutional protections for free speech or freedom of expression. A steady series of reviews of national laws has indicated the effectiveness of constitutional review, and accounts for continuity in the high level of legal protection for press freedom in both theory and practice.¹ In the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) system and in North American constitutions, press freedom is not interpreted as an absolute right, but rather a qualified right balanced with other rights, such as the right to reputation and privacy. Despite this strong history and post-war pattern favouring freedom of expression across the region, the balance between freedom of speech and public safety appears to be more tenuous at present, with countries introducing national security legislation that may curtail individual freedoms, including freedom of expression and association.

Legal developments vary across the region. Since 2009, many criminal defamation and insult laws have been repealed and there has been some progress in the area of blasphemy. However, in some countries, stronger defamation laws have been produced or reintroduced.² In common law countries, criminal defamation laws have mostly fallen into disuse.³ In contrast, most civil law countries in Western Europe retain criminal defamation laws. In addition, in several Western European countries, defamation is sanctioned more harshly if it involves a public official⁴, and in some instances, heads of state are often provided more protection as it relates to their reputation and punishments for defamation are more severe.⁵

International contestation surrounding the introduction of potentially problematic new laws has resulted in delays or roadblocks to their adoption and implementation. Some governments have strengthened criminal defamation laws to counter hate speech online or cyberbullying. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has demonstrated only limited influence in encouraging legal reforms associated with the Court's standards according to which the imposition of (suspended) prison sentences for defamation constitutes a violation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Other high courts in the region have had a mixed record when evaluating criminal defamation and freedom of expression.⁶

¹ Columbia Global Freedom of Expression, 2016

² Griffen & Trionfi, 2017

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

INTERNET CURBS, CUT-OFFS AND CONTENT REMOVAL

The convergence of media content across devices and platforms provides the potential for heightened media freedom in Western Europe and North America, and increased attention toward Media and Information Literacy. But this is coupled with increasing pressure from governments to enact the removal of particular online content, and a perspective that there is some material (for example, what gets deemed as hate speech) that should not be so easily accessible. Attempts to place more responsibility for content monitoring and removal on large tech platforms has consequences for media freedom and pluralism, where these companies then become de facto gatekeepers of certain content.

Governments and users have encouraged internet intermediaries to remove content that could be considered hate speech or contribute to violent extremism. Many platforms have increased the specification of their user policies regarding content considered 'harmful', and use such specifications as justification to block or filter content. In response, some technology companies have been criticized for inadequate due process. That is also confirmed by the absence of judicial oversight of decisions to exclude content or to conduct surveillance, and a lack of transparency regarding blocking and filtering processes, including how the state and private bodies interact to set filters and exchange the personal data of users. Many efforts which focus on these issues by a variety of public and private actors are currently ongoing.

Codes of conduct, like the European Commission's Code of Conduct for Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online, require companies to remove certain types of content from their platforms in a swift manner. An initial evaluation of the impact of this code found that in 169 cases (28.2 per cent) the content was removed from platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to varying degrees. YouTube was most likely to remove content (in nearly 50 per cent of the cases,) while Facebook removed content in a little over 28 per cent of the cases and Twitter took down content in approximately 19 per cent of the cases. YouTube accessed 60.8 per cent of the content within 24 hours, while Facebook accessed 50 per cent and Twitter addressed 23.5 per cent of the cases within the same time period.⁷

Some governments have sought to encourage social media companies to be more aggressive in the removal of apparent hate speech or face hefty fines if they are too slow to do so.⁸ The European Court of Justice articulated a "right to be forgotten" which puts legal onus on search engines to decide whether to delist links at an individual's request.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Citing concerns about unrest or terrorism, one government secured the authority to block internet communications or shut down the internet between 2012 and 2017, a trend which is increasing globally.⁹

Most Western Europe and North American countries make use of communications technologies in order to combat the use of online digital platforms for terrorist recruitment or to limit the reach of terrorists within the information realm. Many governments additionally explore the use of counter-narratives to offset the messaging disseminated by the recruiters.

⁷ Jourová 2016.

⁸ Eddy and Scott 2017.

⁹ AccessNow 2017; West 2016.

In some countries, there have been calls on regulators or satellite administrators to bar channels that are deemed to promote terrorism or further hate.

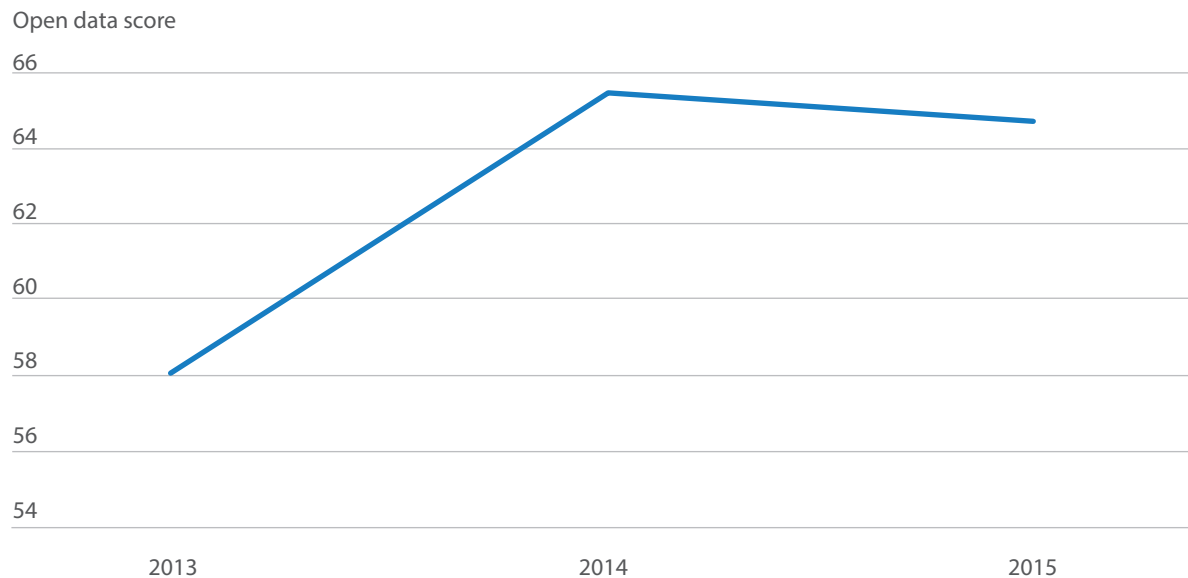
In addition to an increase in ‘fake news’¹⁰, there has been increasing visibility of racist, xenophobic, and intolerant discourse online, which may contribute to an environment where racism and xenophobia are condoned and lead to more serious outcomes such as violence (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2016).¹¹

Access to information and privacy protections

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

In some countries in the Western Europe and North America region, access to information has worsened from four years ago because of an increasing number of public record requests being denied, delayed, or redacted, resulting in less transparency.¹² Yet, as Figure 1-1 indicates, countries in Western Europe and North America have remained fairly steady in terms of their open data scores between 2013 and 2015.¹³

Figure 1-1: Open Data Index for Western Europe and North America



Source: Global Open Data Index Survey

¹⁰ "Fake news" here refers to fraudulent content that has a certain character of online circulation that implicates "mediating infrastructures, platforms and participatory cultures which facilitate its circulation" (Bounegru et al. 2017, p. 8).

¹¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2016.

¹² Cuillier 2017.

¹³ The methodology changed significantly between 2015 and 2016, therefore 2016 is not comparable to these other years.

PRIVACY, SURVEILLANCE AND ENCRYPTION

There have been increased efforts to enhance data regulation in response to concerns about surveillance and privacy. The Council of Europe has recently updated its Personal Data Convention “Convention 108” to address challenges related to privacy and ICT use, and four new countries belonging to the Council of Europe have either signed or ratified the Convention since 2012, including two in Western Europe and two in the North America region.¹⁴

Regional courts are also playing an important role in the development of online privacy regulations in Europe. In 2015, the European Court of Justice found that the Safe Harbour Agreement was invalid under European law because it was insufficient in its protection of European citizens’ data and protection from American surveillance.¹⁵ The EU-US Privacy Shield replaced the Safe Harbour Agreement, and governs the data transfer of personally identifiable information between Europe and the United States.¹⁶ Thus, United States companies have to be certified, thereby helping to ensure that European data is adequately protected, processed, and shielded from mass United States surveillance.¹⁷ In 2016, the Court found that indiscriminate retention of electronic data in the United Kingdom and Sweden violated the ‘fundamental rights to respect for private life and the protection of personal data’¹⁸ represented in European law.

PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES AND WHISTLE-BLOWING

Despite historically long traditions of robust legal frameworks for the media, the legal environment has become more restrictive for journalists in recent years. National security-related legislation which facilitates surveillance and criminalizes certain speech acts has increased alongside the creation and implementation of policies which endanger communications between sources and journalists. Countries have also considered and/or passed laws which provide more surveillance powers to law enforcement, increase data retention, and prevent certain content from being published, including photographs of law enforcement officials.¹⁹ These changes pose new risks for the work of journalists, their confidential sources, and freedom of speech and expression.²⁰

Concerns about adequate source protection for journalists have increased following the Edward Snowden surveillance disclosures in 2013, which shed light on the scope and depth of state-led surveillance, often in close cooperation with private companies. According to a 2017 UNESCO study, 25 out of 38 (66 per cent) countries examined in Europe and North America experienced significant developments associated with digital effects on legal source protection frameworks.²¹ Factors such as surveillance, laws and policies requiring data retention; disclosure of information by third-party intermediaries; seizure of digital devices with journalistic communications; and questions about who is entitled to claim source protection, all provide ways in which journalists’ sources can be mandatorily revealed, thereby decreasing the freedom journalists have to report.²²

¹⁴ Council of Europe 2017.

¹⁵ Glenster 2016.

¹⁶ International Trade Administration 2017.

¹⁷ European Commission 2016.

¹⁸ Columbia Global Freedom of Expression 2016.

¹⁹ Free Press Unlimited 2016.

²⁰ Ibid.

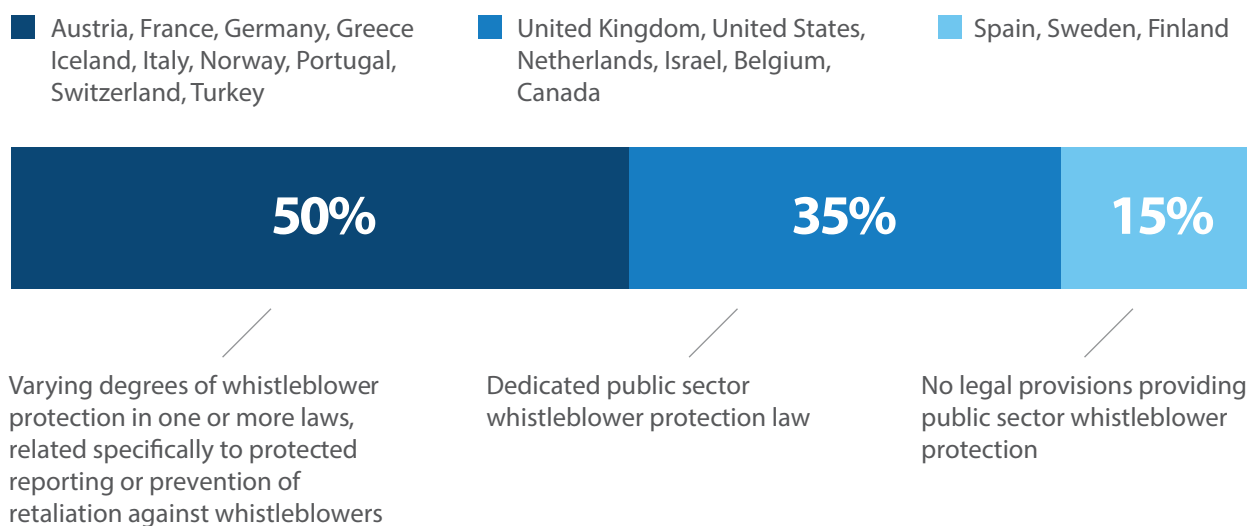
²¹ Posetti 2017.

²² Posetti 2017.

The surveillance of journalists and/or their communications has also come to light in various cases, including for reporters from the Associated Press, the BBC, Reuters, Fox News, and *The New York Times*, among others.²³ The prosecution of leakers of classified information in some parts of the region is an increasing trend. Additionally, some governments are using national security laws to conduct searches of journalists' homes, newsroom offices and at borders; as well as to remove not yet published information that is saved on digital devices.²⁴

Meanwhile, protection for public sector whistle blowers has improved in recent years. Since 2012, 22 new countries globally ratified or acceded to the UN Convention against Corruption, including one from the Western Europe and North America region in 2014.²⁵ Despite the increased legal recognition of whistle blower protections, such protections can be incomplete. Thirty-five percent of countries in Western Europe and North America have a dedicated public sector whistle blower protection law, while 50 per cent of countries have varying degrees of whistle blower protection in one or more laws, as indicated in Figure 1-2 below. Fifteen per cent of countries have no legal provisions specifically providing public sector whistle blower protection.²⁶

Figure 1-2: Provision of legal protection to whistle blowers in the public sector for Western Europe and North America



Source: OECD, Committing to Effective Whistleblower Protection Report 2016

Internet governance and media freedom

The United States generally adopts the position that data localization laws are a barrier to trade, while the European Union is investigating ways to facilitate cross-border data flows while also ensuring European Union citizens' right to privacy.²⁷ In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will go into effect which increases the European Union's oversight of data and also creates penalties for noncompliance.²⁸

²³ Baumgaertner, Knobbe, and Schindler 2017; Savage and Kaufman 2013; Marimow 2013.

²⁴ Machlin 2016.

²⁵ UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2017.

²⁶ OECD 2016.

²⁷ Fioretti, 2018.

²⁸ Reinsch 2018.

The flow of data is not restricted within the European Union as long as a third party country has laws which are in compliance with the GDPR. In addition, many European countries have their own national laws with regard to data protection and sharing, such as Denmark, Germany, and Greece. Despite Brexit, the United Kingdom has indicated its plans to implement the GDPR, but also warns against the possibility of the “Balkanisation of the internet.”²⁹

Gender equality and media freedom

Women media actors are more frequently targets of gender-related threats, intimidation, and harassment on the internet. In turn, such abuse affects conditions of safety, and can change women journalists’ online and offline behavior, resulting in decreased media freedom, increased self-censorship and disengagement.³⁰

Women may experience media freedom issues online differently to men as a result of differential access. There are significant gender gaps in internet penetration and mobile penetration. Internet penetration rates are higher for men than for women in all regions in the world.³¹ In many countries, there is a gender divide in terms of how many women versus men access the internet. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, “The world’s women still have...only 84 per cent of the access of men to the internet and mobile phones.”³² Although the gap is more significant in developing countries, there are statistically noteworthy differences with regard to internet access between women and men in Western European countries.³³

According to the ITU, the gender gap globally increased 1 per cent from 2013 to 2016, although the largest gap is in the world’s least developed countries. The gender gap between 2013 and 2016 in Europe went down from 9.4 per cent to 6.9 per cent and in the Americas it went up slightly from -0.4 per cent to 1.8 per cent.³⁴ There does not appear to be a mobile phone gender gap in Western Europe and North America;³⁵ but women are more likely than men to access news via social media³⁶ except via the social networking platform LinkedIn, which is used more frequently by men.³⁷

²⁹Reinsch 2018.

³⁰ OSCE 2016; Mijatović 2015; OSCE 2017.

³¹ International Telecommunication Union 2016.

³² MGI 2015, 9.

³³ Pew Research Center 2016b.

³⁴ International Telecommunication Union 2016.

³⁵ According to a study by GSMA Development Fund (2013), titled “Women & Mobile: A Global Opportunity – A study on the mobile phone gender gap in low and middle-income countries,” Europe had no gender gap. (p. 17).

³⁶ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

³⁷ Knight Foundation 2016.

Trends in Media Pluralism

Overview

An increasingly convergent and customizable media environment impacts the character of media pluralism in a number of complex ways. For example, technological and economic factors include the transformation or migration of media from traditional to digital platforms, and an increase in channels targeting specific and narrow-base audiences. Reductions in sustainable funding are leading to the weakening of legacy media in this new technology-dynamic environment.³⁸ More readers are obtaining news content through intermediaries such as social media networks rather than directly from news media publishing platforms. In addition, the increase in algorithmic selection of content and personalized apps for news stories³⁹ may reduce exposure to diversity of opinion, increase the echo chamber of news, and in turn, decrease democratic societal participation and discussion.⁴⁰

The MPM 2015 report assesses risks to media pluralism in 19 EU countries⁴¹ using four indicators, including basic protection, market plurality, political independence, and social inclusiveness. The report found that media ownership concentration and transparency, which comprise the 'Market Plurality' indicators showed the highest level of risk among 19 countries in the European Union, although small countries with a low Gross Domestic Product were considered low risk in this domain. The concept of "media capture" which characterized the media landscape in Eastern Europe, shows how governments use funding to control the media, often by withholding financing from outlets which produce independent journalism.⁴²

³⁸ Bárd and Bayer 2016.

³⁹ Out of 19 countries, 8 countries were not in the Western Europe and North America region.

⁴⁰ Bárd and Bayer 2016.

⁴¹ The report examined 19 European Union countries including Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

⁴² Dragomir 2017.

Trends in media pluralism in the Western Europe and North American region include the following:

- The rate of mobile news consumption has increased in Western Europe and North American countries, and news is now more frequently accessed via social networking sites and via mobile messaging applications as opposed to most other platforms of news;
- Even though media consumers and especially the youth are seeking out news online with increasing regularity, television remains a major source of news;
- Fewer media consumers are obtaining their news from print newspapers. Daily print circulation in Europe and North America has decreased over the past five years as the consumption of news is occurring more frequently via social media platforms; yet print newspapers continue to play an important agenda-setting role (Cushion et al., 2018).
- Funding provision for public service media has generally stagnated or shows little growth, while the public service media in the United States continues to be dwarfed by extreme commercialism of the media;
- More actors are allocating spending to internet and mobile advertising. Yet, free online content and the diminishing circulation of print media is leading to reduced revenue for many media organizations; even those on digital platforms.
- Interest in and support for crowdfunded journalism in North America and Western Europe is growing;
- Gender disparities in the media persist since women do not predominantly cover 'hard beat' stories related to the government or politics, and are rarely consulted as experts for comment on a story, and the scope of topics covered by women journalists has declined.

Access

INTERNET AND MOBILE

According to country-level data, which has been collected and analysed from ITU data between 2012 and 2016⁴³, there has been an increase in mobile cellular telephone subscriptions and active mobile and fixed broadband subscriptions in Western Europe and North America.⁴⁴ Mobile subscriptions, however, may be reaching saturation and growth is slowing⁴⁵ as indicated by the downward slope in the growth rate in Figure 2-2.⁴⁶

Figure 2-1: Mobile growth rates

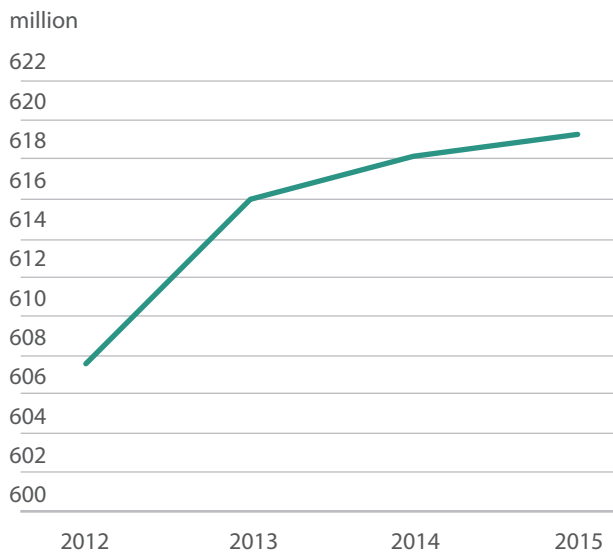
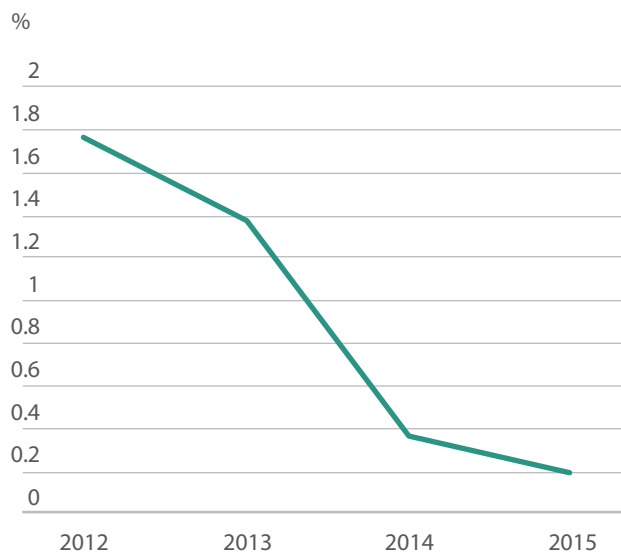


Figure 2-2: Mobile telephone subscription



Source: ITU

Mobile broadband subscribers have grown significantly in comparison to fixed broadband households since 2009 and this growth is anticipated to increase over the next several years,⁴⁷ however mobile telephone subscriptions in developed regions like Western Europe and North America may be reaching saturation. Meanwhile, the number of fixed-telephone subscriptions has decreased.⁴⁸

Although global smartphone user use is slowing, between 2012 and 2015, individuals in North America and Western Europe increasingly used smartphones.⁴⁹ The rate of mobile news consumption has increased, from 54 per cent of United States adults in 2013 to 72 per cent in 2016.⁵⁰ An increasing number of individuals in the Western Europe and North American region are using smartphones to access the news, especially younger individuals aged 18-34.⁵¹ In the United States, eighty-nine per cent of the mobile population (144 million users) access information and news from mobile devices, but growth has recently slowed, indicating the mobile news audience may be closer to plateauing.⁵²

⁴³ 2016 includes estimated figures from the International Telecommunication Union.

⁴⁴ International Telecommunication Union 2017. Individual country-level data has been gathered and aggregated according to the Western Europe and North America Region.

⁴⁵ GSMA 2016.

⁴⁶ GSMA 2016.

⁴⁷ McKinsey and Company 2015.

⁴⁸ International Telecommunication Union, n.d.

⁴⁹ Meeker 2016.

⁵⁰ Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel, and Shearer 2016.

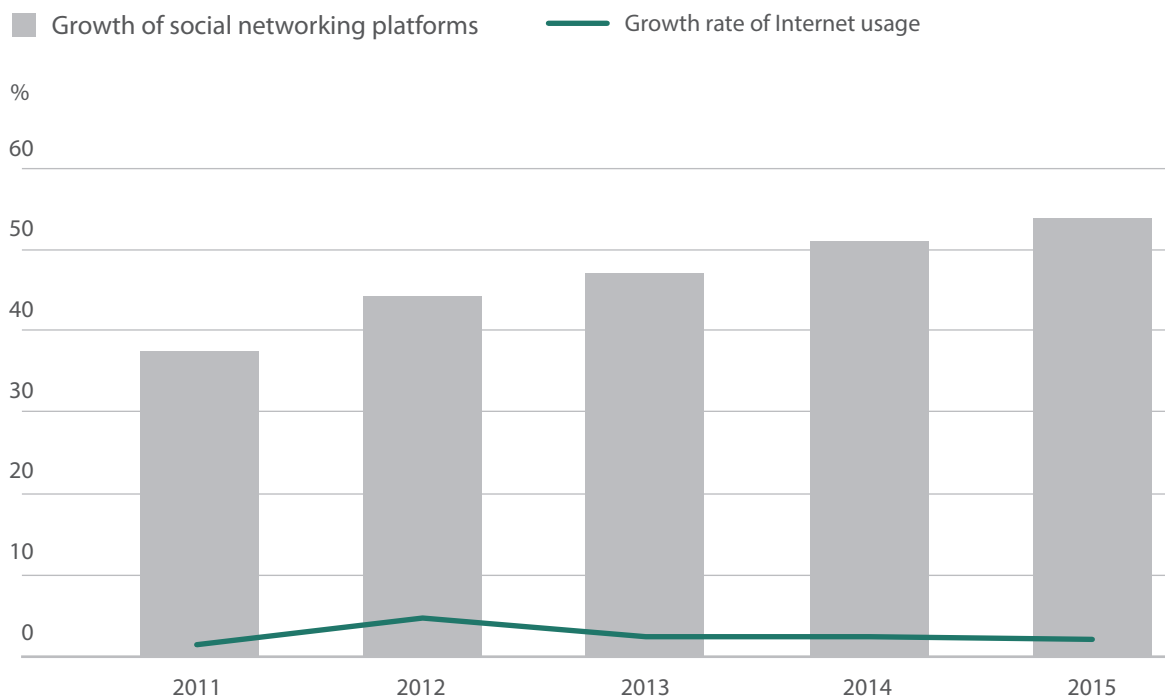
⁵¹ Newman, Fletcher, Levy, and Kleis Nielsen 2016; Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, and Kleis Nielsen 2017.

⁵² Knight Foundation 2016.

In many Western Europe and North American countries, news is more frequently accessed via social networking sites and increasingly via mobile messaging applications than other platforms for news.⁵³ More individuals are coming to depend on social media, especially Facebook, for the direct consumption of news. Despite this, in certain countries⁵⁴ (not including the United States or the United Kingdom), social media use is slowing or declining while growth in the use of messaging applications for consuming news is increasing.⁵⁵ For instance, in Western Europe and North American countries,⁵⁶ Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp were the most frequently used mobile messaging applications to access the news and are outpacing other social media platforms.⁵⁷

Households with a computer, internet access at home, and number of individuals using the internet also increased between 2012 and 2016 as illustrated in Figure 2-3 below.⁵⁸ A major driver of such high growth rate has been the general improvement in technology. Figure 2-3 below indicates the growth of social networking platforms and the growth rate of internet usage for countries in Western Europe and North America.

Figure 2-3: Percentage growth rate of social networking platforms and percentage growth rate in internet usage in Western Europe and North America



Source: Eurostat and ITU

⁵³ Newman, Fletcher, Levy, and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

⁵⁴ Spain, France, Germany, Portugal, Sweden, and Austria. Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, and Kleis Nielsen 2017.

⁵⁵ This list includes Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. It does not include: Andorra, Cyprus, Iceland, Israel, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, or San Marino.

⁵⁶ WAN-IFRA 2015; Newman, Fletcher, Levy, and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

⁵⁷ ITU 2017.

Key global drivers of growth include broadband's expansion and its subsequent drive of increased digital spending and increased media access through mobile devices underpinning mobile's dominance as the primary digital platform. At the same time, fixed broadband penetration in Western Europe and North America reached more than 70 per cent in 2014. Mobile broadband penetration is slightly lower at 54 per cent in North America and 67 per cent in Western Europe, but is growing. More consumers are spending money to access content, although not to own it as digital video and audio streaming increases.⁵⁹ As more people migrate to broadband, it is anticipated that more people will also migrate to digital media from print media, suggesting that the print market will continue to decrease, although its decline might level out as the broadband market reaches saturation.⁶⁰

More individuals are consuming media via mobile devices than desktop computers. Internet consumption via desktop has grown rapidly since 2010 but peaked in 2014. Desktop internet consumption is now on the decline, while mobile device consumption is increasing and 71 per cent of internet consumption now occurs via mobile device.⁶¹

In Western Europe and North America between 2012 and 2016, individuals spent less time consuming media from newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and desktop internet. However, individuals in Western Europe spent slightly more time at the cinema or viewing outdoor advertising.⁶² However, the biggest jump for the Western Europe and North America region involved the time individuals spent consuming media on the mobile internet.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Zenith 2016.

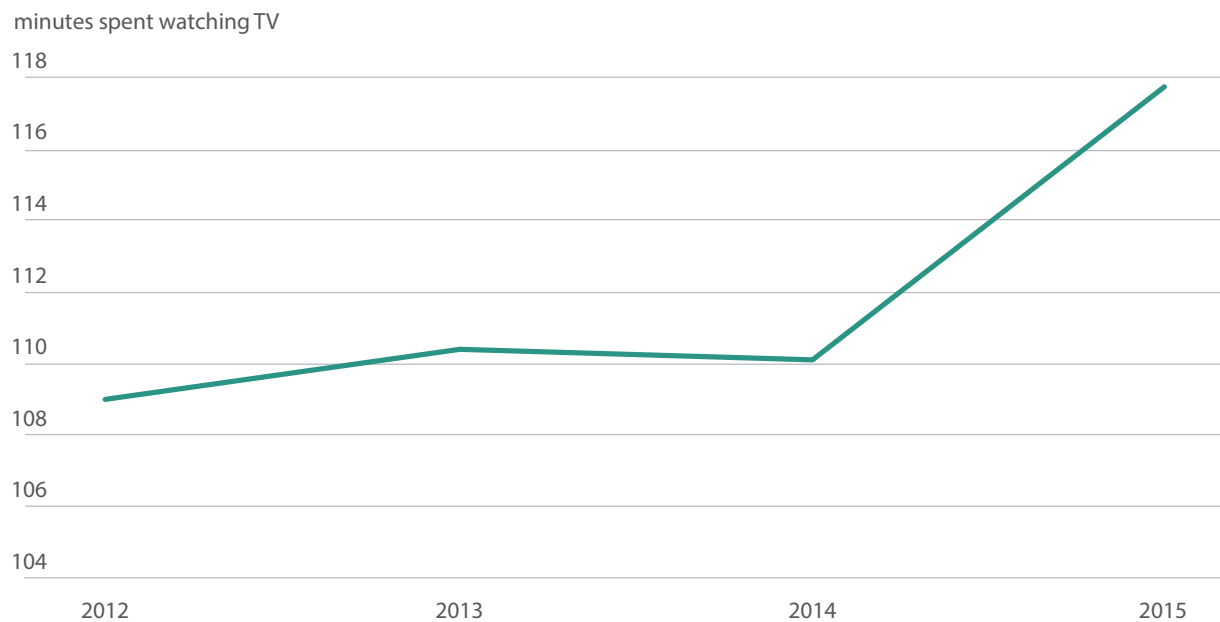
⁶² The report did not have metrics regarding outdoor advertising or cinema attendance for the United States.

⁶³ Zenith 2016.

BROADCAST MEDIA

Television is still a major source of news, even though media consumers, especially the youth, are seeking out news online with increasing regularity. Figure 2-4 below indicates the average minutes per day spent by users to watch television. The graph indicates that audience members in Western Europe and North America spend an average of 110 minutes per day watching television. The majority of modern news consumers in the United States still turn to television for news, though digital is the second most common medium for individuals to receive news content.⁶⁴ According to the Reuters Institute, television still remains a significant source for news among Europeans, but younger generations are less likely to get their news from television than older individuals in the United States, and Europe.⁶⁵ Users in many countries⁶⁶ in Western Europe and North America are primarily accessing the news via online means, including via social media.⁶⁷

Figure 2-4: Average minutes per day spent watching television by media audiences in the Western Europe and North America region



Source: World Press Trends database, available at: <http://www.wptdatabase.org/customize>

⁶⁴ Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel and Shearer 2016.

⁶⁵ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

⁶⁶ For example, the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Greece, Turkey and Canada.

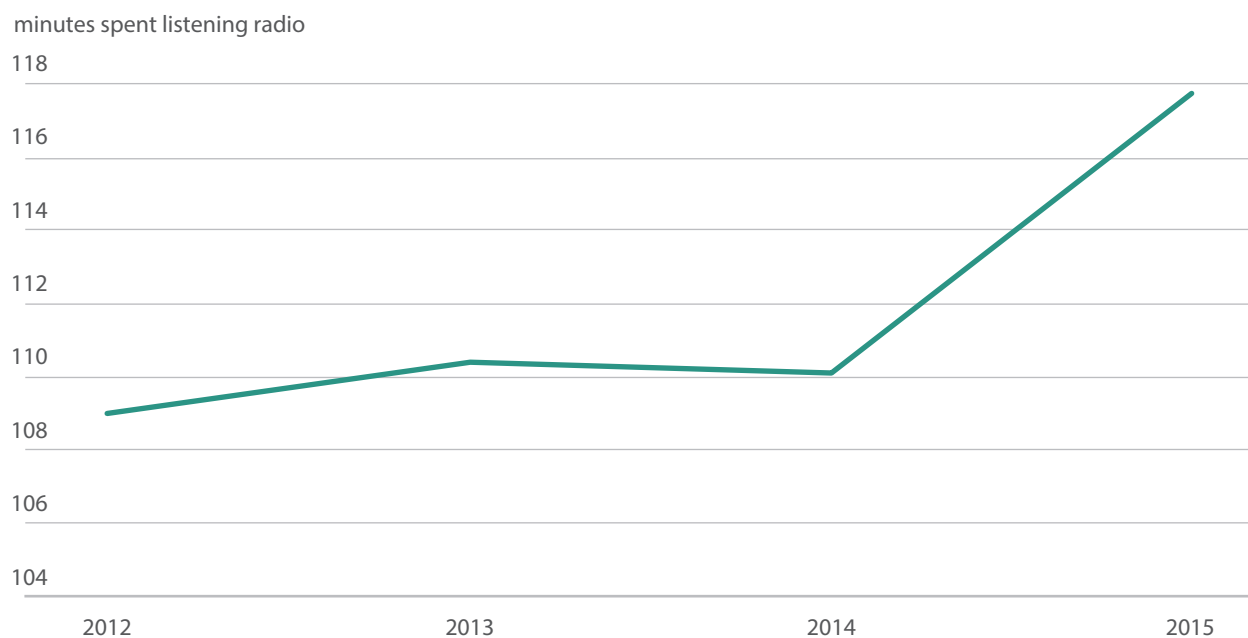
⁶⁷ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

In all of the countries assessed, the users who tend to access news in traditional ways (for example, via television, radio, printed newspapers and magazines) rather than via digital means tend to comprise an older audience segment (67 per cent are 45+), female (54 per cent), the majority of whom did not go to university (69 per cent), and who generally trust the news most of the time (49 per cent).⁶⁸

Satellite television subscriptions in Western Europe are decreasing as pay television subscriptions on other platforms increase. In Western Europe, more people are paying for Internet Protocol television (IPTV) subscriptions than satellite television subscriptions. Satellite television revenues are expected to decrease and analog cable services are expected to mostly disappear in the coming years. At the same time, digital pay television subscriptions are anticipated to increase in Western Europe.⁶⁹ Some estimates anticipate IPTV subscribers to grow 37 per cent between 2014 and 2020, while digital cable is estimated to increase by 30 per cent.⁷⁰

In general, individuals are less likely to get their news from print media and even less likely to receive their news from the radio⁷¹, although the Pew Research Center has found that radio is still a common source of news among adults in the United States.⁷² Figure 2-5 below shows that without singling out news, users in Western Europe and North America spent up to 116 average minutes per day on radio compared to 110 average minutes spent on television.

Figure 2-5: Average minutes per day spent listening to radio by media audiences in the Western Europe and North America region



Source: World Press Trends Database

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Broadband TV News 2016.

⁷⁰ eMarketer 2015.

⁷¹ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

⁷² Pew Research Center 2016c.

Online radio listenership is increasing in the United States, while Western Europe is embracing digital radio to varying degrees. Online radio listenership in the United States among individuals 12 years of age or older has doubled since 2010⁷³, listening to web-based radio in motor vehicles has remained the same among United States users for the past several years, indicating stagnated growth.

Digital broadcast radio has been rolled out to varying degrees in Western Europe, where local and regional services provide the majority of new digital radio services.⁷⁴ Digital radio stations are targeted toward senior citizens and local communities. Changes in technology are providing new entrants with ways to deploy digital radio by cheaper means.⁷⁵

Low-power FM radio stations in the United States have nearly doubled between 2014 and 2016, while Norway began shutting down its FM transmissions in January 2017 and intended to shut all of them down by December 2017. The option to switchover from FM to digital offerings is a topic of debate in many countries. In addition, Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) is being switched off in several countries to install DAB+ as the only digital terrestrial system.⁷⁶

There is a growing trend in Western Europe to provide public funds for the support and promotion of digital radio.⁷⁷ Analog radio sets are still popular with most listeners in Western Europe, although in Norway more listeners use digital sets to listen to the radio than analog sets in Norway.⁷⁸ Listeners are turning to a variety of devices to listen to digital radio via broadcasting, but are also transferring to digital devices such as television sets and devices that connect to radio services through the internet via mobiles and desktops.⁷⁹ Digital broadcast radio is also becoming more common in new motor vehicles.⁸⁰

Listeners in Western Europe generally tend to listen to terrestrial radio via DAB/DAB+ rather than internet radio, except in Switzerland.⁸¹ Internet radio is still considered as supplementary to broadcast⁸², and broadcasting is still widely considered the most effective way to ensure digital radio reaches large audiences in Western Europe.⁸³ It is anticipated that DAB/DAB+ will outpace internet radio, and local digital radio will continue to expand.⁸⁴

NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

Fewer individuals in Western Europe and North America are obtaining their news from print newspapers. Daily print circulation in Europe and North America has decreased over the past 5 years.⁸⁵ In addition, adults in the United States who read the news from print newspapers dropped 27 per cent between 2013 and early 2016.⁸⁶ Newspaper print advertising expenditure also decreased between 2011 and 2015.⁸⁷ Local journalism in the United States continues to decline, while some American publishers increased their digital footprints abroad.⁸⁸ Globally, a shift in intermediated and integrated content is occurring across platforms, especially via social media platforms to reach users outside of the readership base of the original source.⁸⁹

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ EBU 2017.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 13.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 14.

⁸¹ EBU 2017, 37.

⁸² EBU 2017, 39.

⁸³ EBU 2017, 38.

⁸⁴ EBU 2017, 43.

⁸⁵ WAN-IFRA 2016.

⁸⁶ Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel and Shearer 2016.

⁸⁷ WAN-IFRA 2016.

⁸⁸ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

⁸⁹ McKinsey & Company 2015, 6.

Access to news is occurring increasingly via social media networks, and users are increasingly consuming news via social media platforms. As the Reuters Institute notes, Facebook worked with news media platforms over a period of time, which led to Facebook developing algorithms, which have prioritized news items. Instant articles within Facebook began via publishers in the middle of 2015. This resulted in more people consuming news via their social media feeds than from the publisher's own website.⁹⁰ In early 2018, however, Facebook reconfigured its algorithms to emphasize posts from family and friends and reduce the content viewers see from brands and publishers, although the news feed remains customizable.⁹¹ Even though more people are using social media to read the news, sharing news onsite and offsite has not increased since 2014 for most countries.⁹²

Economic models

PLURALISM AND MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Public service media funding shows little growth. In addition, there has been a struggle in many parts of the region against subsidizing public service broadcasters. Public service media organizations that are European Broadcasting Union members were funded to a slightly higher degree in 2015 after experiencing drops in funding in 2012 and 2013⁹³, but overall degrees of funding for public service media have mostly stagnated.⁹⁴ In Canada, public service broadcasters were allocated a boost in funding in 2015, with a \$675m increase in funding over five years, but commercial television stations revenues declined 14 per cent between 2012 and 2014.⁹⁵

The encouragement of community broadcasting through low powered radio and television stations was designed to promote pluralism, but the implementation thereof has been slow and uneven. This is coupled with the factor of competition of audiences, which has decreased the capacity of these entities to expand pluralism.

In the United States, pluralism in public media is primarily a consequence of the structure of local stations with national network content suppliers, mainly PBS for television and NPR for audio. Terrestrial radio and television appear to have fairly stable audiences and revenues, but existing federal support may be cut. Terrestrial radio stations have been seeking to expand their digital offerings and have commonly created podcasts to that effect.⁹⁶ Pew reports that public radio stations in the United States have experienced increased revenue and expenses since 2008.⁹⁷ The Pew Research Center also found that radio revenues remained steady in the United States between 2014 and 2015, while the satellite radio company, Sirius XM had a slight revenue increase between 2014 and 2015.⁹⁸

Public service media in the United States continues to be undermined by the for-profit dominance of a media driven by extreme commercialism and which often results in sensationalized news coverage aimed at capturing large audiences, but which potentially ignores the media's role to provide information for the public good or in the public interest.⁹⁹ Perhaps, partially as a result, sensationalized, "click-bait" journalism is on the increase and the public's trust in the media is at an all-time low.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁰ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016, 8.

⁹¹ Bromwich and Haag 2018; Mosseri 2018

⁹² Ibid., 99.

⁹³ EBU 2016.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

⁹⁶ Pew Research Center 2016c.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Pew Research Center 2016c.

⁹⁹ Pickard 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Edelman Trust Barometer 2018

In several western countries, local and regional issues and voices have been de-emphasized in favour of national programming.¹⁰¹ However, there has also been an increase of diaspora broadcasting via satellite and cable. The existence of cable channels and some instances of conditionality in allowing mergers of cable systems, has led to competition among 24-hour news channels. Historically, the European Commission has been more purposeful about pluralism through regulations and policy than the United States.

ADVERTISING, BETWEEN OLD AND NEW MODELS

Amidst increasing challenges brought about by increased digitalization and technological change, media industries continue to search for profitable economic models. More actors are allocating spending to internet and mobile advertising, as media outlets also transition to digital platforms.¹⁰² But free online content and the diminishing circulation of print media is leading to reduced revenue for many media organizations. Most users are not willing to pay for online news, although the percentage of individuals willing to pay is slightly higher in Scandinavian countries than in other parts of Western Europe and North America.¹⁰³ In addition, more individuals are using ad blocking applications when they visit websites, limiting the revenue from advertisers, and causing concern among media organizations.¹⁰⁴ Ad blockers are more popular among younger users, and those who utilize them tend to keep on using them consistently.¹⁰⁵

Private entities and platforms are engaging with media content in increasing and varied ways, acting as moderators, publishers, and controllers of content. This trend appears to have been accentuated by the increasing economic pressure on business models supporting journalism, while online advertising revenue for media companies continues to decline. Although some media companies saw increased subscriptions and support following highly contested elections and referenda, economic pressures have led many media organizations to close newsrooms and/or cut staff, making them more susceptible to political and commercial influence, less independent, and decreasing the quality and scope of coverage.

NEW PLATFORMS AND BUSINESS MODELS

New forms of content are also part of the news industries' advertising growth strategy, including virtual reality, video, and sponsorship.¹⁰⁶ Interest in and support for crowdfunded journalism in North America and Western Europe is growing. According to the Pew Research Center, between 2009 and 2015, 658 journalism-related projects that were proposed on Kickstarter received full or more than full funding with a total worth of nearly \$6.3 million.¹⁰⁷ Journalism funded projects are less popular than nearly all of the other funding categories on Kickstarter, but the number of journalism projects has increased over time and includes proposals from established media organizations.¹⁰⁸ Despite this increase in proposals, not all crowd-funded journalism projects have been successful.¹⁰⁹ New collaborations across news organizations seeking to carry out investigative projects, and document and report on issues key to the public interest, increasingly occur, such as the Panama Papers and the Paradise Papers. In addition, national news companies are beginning to collaborate with more local news organizations.¹¹⁰

¹⁰¹ Ali 2013.

¹⁰² McKinsey & Company 2015.

¹⁰³ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰⁷ Pew Research Center 2016a.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ DeJarnette 2016.

¹¹⁰ Stearns 2017.

Some news organizations in the United States appear to be returning to a subscription model for newspapers and public broadcasters, as advertising revenues and the advertising model continues to erode for many media organizations. For example, *The New York Times'* digital subscription revenue continues to grow while digital advertising is also growing despite the increasing amount of advertising spend allocated to platforms like Google and Facebook.¹¹¹

Content

'FAKE NEWS'

The creation and propagation of 'fake news' has become more of a concern among countries in the Western Europe and North American region. For example, *BuzzFeed* discovered that 'fake news' was more predominant than real news on Facebook in the months before the United States presidential election. Social media platforms were some of the channels used to disseminate false news, leading some companies such as Facebook to eventually offer an option for users to report content as fake. Once an article is reported by several people as false, fact-checking organizations which have partnered with Facebook will scrutinize the article in question. If the article fails the fact check, it will be publicly flagged as "disputed by 3rd party fact-checkers" when it appears on Facebook.¹¹² European leaders have argued for the need for a legal framework that would help to stop 'fake news' dissemination, which is perceived as harmful to democracy.¹¹³

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

While media literacy varies widely from country to country, there are 189 primary media literacy initiatives across the European Union.¹¹⁴ Although there are numerous stakeholders involved in media literacy projects, the largest group of stakeholders were from civil society such as foundations and NGOs, followed by public authorities and academia. Media literacy projects aim to provide front-line support to citizens and help teenagers and older students foster critical thinking skills.¹¹⁵ Numerous international and regional bodies such as UNESCO, the European Union, and the European Commission have provided media literacy support for countries. For instance, UNESCO created a Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Assessment Framework which enables nation states to carry out assessments and monitoring of media literacy in their own countries.¹¹⁶ In addition, the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme has served as a catalyst for the development of projects in the majority of European Union countries in part through its provision of funding, its established network of facilitators, and centralized messages and themes.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Leonhardt, Rudoren, Galinsky, Skog, Lacey, Giratikanon and Evans 2017.

¹¹² Jamieson and Solon 2016.

¹¹³ Schumacher 2016.

¹¹⁴ European Audiovisual Observatory 2016.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ UNESCO, n.d.

¹¹⁷ European Audiovisual Observatory 2016.

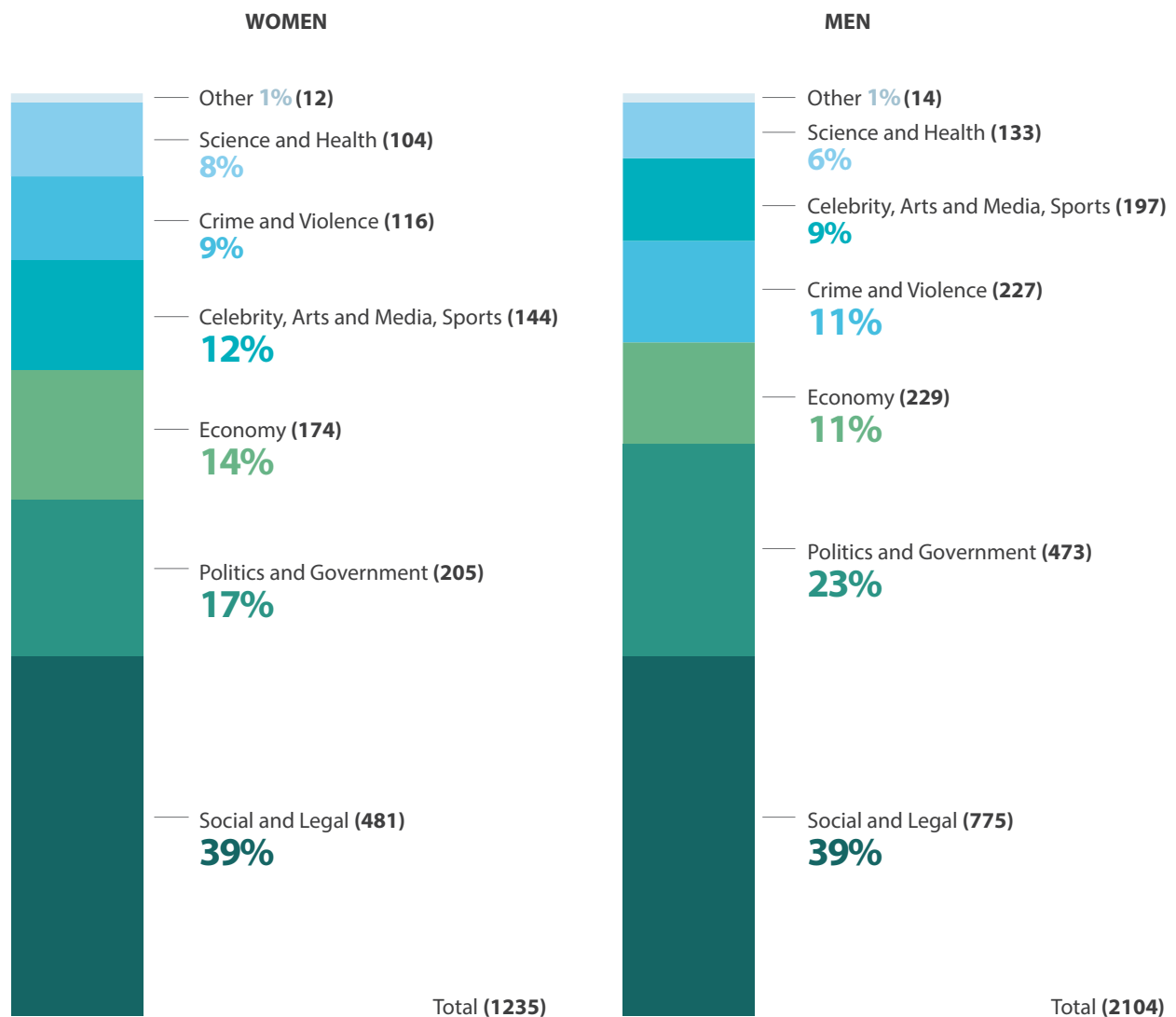
Gender equality and media pluralism

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA WORKFORCE

News beats in Europe continue to be gendered, with more than a third of women reporters covering legal and social news, rather than more prestigious beats like government and politics. Only 30 per cent of women journalists write stories considered prestigious.¹¹⁸

Figure 2-6 below shows the gender breakdown according to story topic. The graph shows that men are more likely to cover politics and government and crime and violence, while women are more likely to cover economy, celebrity, arts and media, and sports.

Figure 2-6: Gender of reporters by main story



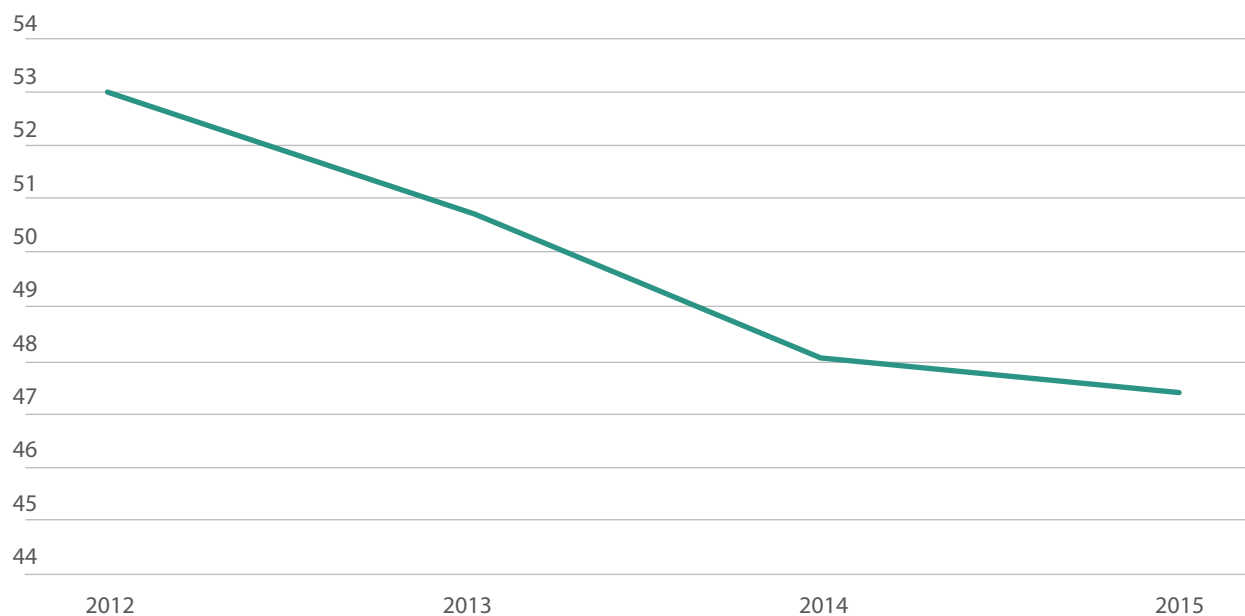
Source: GMMP Europe Global Media Monitoring Project Regional Report 2015

¹¹⁸GMMP 2015, 6.

GENDER AND REPRESENTATION

When women are used as sources or subjects, they are more likely to be asked for their personal experiences or opinion, rather than quoted as experts or used as sources in hard news stories.¹¹⁹ Women's visibility in the news media has stayed relatively stagnant in this region over the last 5 years.¹²⁰ Figure 2-7 below reveals that the variety of different subjects by women journalists has declined between 2012 and 2015.

Figure 2-7: Variety of subjects written about by women journalists in print media



Source: World Press Trends Database

CHANGING THE PICTURE FOR WOMEN IN MEDIA

Women continue to be underrepresented in stories, especially news that focuses on politics, government and the economy.¹²¹

Women journalists tend to use more female subjects in their stories than men, and stories by women reporters challenge or negate gender stereotypes more often than stories written by male reporters.¹²² The underrepresentation of women in news stories is not only confined to print journalism, but to digital platforms as well.¹²³ Women are less likely to be quoted in the capacity of an expert in news stories. Instead women are more likely to be asked to provide popular opinion and personal experiences.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ GMMP 2015, 4 and 8.

¹²⁰ GMMP 2015, 18.

¹²¹ Global Media Monitoring Project 2015.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Trends in **Media Independence**

Overview

A diverse and free media system requires equal treatment by authorities including market entry criteria, conditions of operating in the market, and assessment of any infringement of the law.¹²⁵ Media regulators must be free and independent from interference if they are to ensure adequate regulation of the media sphere.¹²⁶ Regulatory authorities are more effective when they are independent and their powers often range in line with their level of independence.¹²⁷ However, trends in this region include a politicization of the regulatory processes, as well as a decrease in state funding for regulators, which has affected the independence and functioning of media regulatory bodies.

Additionally, ‘media capture’, a phenomenon that occurs when the media are not independent from economic, political, or technological interference, has weakened the strength and autonomy of the media.

Financial independence and financial viability is necessary for news organizations to be involved in investigative reporting.¹²⁸ Sometimes it is not enough to be philosophically independent from government or other entities: private media or non-profit media also need to be financially solvent in order to be carry out investigative or watchdog journalism.¹²⁹

Trends in media independence in the Western Europe and North American region include the following:

- Some media regulatory bodies are struggling to maintain their independence or function effectively. While in most EU countries, regulatory bodies are primarily or exclusively financed by the state, austerity schemes and state budgets place pressure on regulatory bodies’ structure and efficacy;
- Media concentration has occurred in different countries at varying rates and to different degrees, meaning that media content is sometimes lacking in independence because of the increasing neo-liberalization of the media and global markets, as well as differing levels interest by funders or content, which is subject to the influence of elite networks;
- Strong business interests which are connected with political elites place pressure on the independence of the media, which is compounded by the difficulties in achieving financial sustainability in many media outlets. Media outlets become politicized and captured by commercial and business interests a smean to acheive financial stability, and this limits media independence;

¹²⁵ Polyak and Rozgonyi 2015.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ European Commission 2015.

¹²⁸ Coronel 2009.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 9.

- Public trust in the media reflects an overall decline due to widespread perceptions of political influence over the media, as well as commercial or business influence. This decline in public trust is predominantly owing to public perceptions that media owners have interfered in editorial issues while having close relationships with politicians;
- News media sexism, gender inequality in the media workplace, and gender stereotyping continue to occur across content delivery platforms, and these factors are prevalent in online digital media as much as they are in traditional media platforms and outlets.

Trends and transitions in regulation

INDEPENDENCE AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION

In some European countries, there has been recent cause for concern about the independence of media regulators. For example, in late 2015, one country dismissed the members of the national broadcasting regulatory body, and partially transferred aspects of its work to the government.¹³⁰ Some regulators in Europe are struggling to maintain their independence and thus function effectively. A respected regulators' association has recommended that a revised regulatory framework for audiovisual media services in the EU should contain revised standards and criteria for the independence of media regulators.¹³¹

The independence of regulators often necessitates adequate available resources, such as staffing capacity and suitable budgets, in order for the regulator to operate satisfactorily. Resources are often provided by national entities. Resultantly, state budgets and austerity schemes may place pressure on regulatory bodies' structure and efficacy.¹³² In most EU countries, regulatory bodies are primarily or exclusively financed by the state. Sometimes funding models involve fee-based processes, that is, fees are collected by the broadcaster or the end-user or both. Interim or initial funding of some regulatory bodies stopped following the 2010 INDIREG study conducted on behalf of the European Commission, although one country switched from a fee-based model to a predominantly state-funded model in order to allow for greater transparency. Regulatory bodies in four countries rely on fees for their budgeting requirements more so than in the past.¹³³

In EU countries, regulatory authorities have generally been able to engage in systematic monitoring, and all regulatory authorities are authorized to collect information from third parties.¹³⁴ All regulators possess a variety of monitoring powers, but sometimes under-staffed regulators minimize their own monitoring activities and rely instead on public complaints. All regulatory authorities examined in the AVMS-RADAR report appear to have adequate sanctioning powers to enforce the law, although regulators in some countries are more restricted in particular ways. In one country, regulators lack power to impose fines, while in another they are unable to revoke licenses. Despite these restrictions, they

¹³⁰ European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) 2016.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² European Commission 2015.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

appear to use existing sanctions effectively.¹³⁵ In other countries, regulators have been strengthened in their ability to sanction. In addition, regulators at the international and European level are increasingly cooperative, in part due to the global nature of audio-visual media services.¹³⁶

In general, regulatory authorities in the audio-visual sector in the EU are sufficiently independent and function efficiently, although the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) has recommended stronger safeguards for national regulatory authorities to ensure media independence in Europe.¹³⁷ In December 2015, the ERGA recommended that the AVMS Directive be strengthened to ensure the independence of National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) by engaging in open and transparent nomination/appointment procedures, ensuring that the dismissal of the NRA's Chair or Board Members is conducted in a transparent and objective manner, and by including conflict of interest rules in laws and regulations.¹³⁸ Achieving the ideal of complete independence from external influence for regulatory bodies remains unlikely until such bodies are self-sufficient with their own resources.¹³⁹

The regulatory framework for audio-visual media services has remained stable in most European Union countries,¹⁴⁰ while new regulatory bodies have been established in a number of countries.¹⁴¹ Less than half of the regulatory authorities assessed in the 2015 AVMS-RADAR report have policy making powers, while all have policy implementation powers, and are designed to implement policies instituted by their respective governments or legislatures. The past several years in the European Union has reflected an increase in direct enforcement powers¹⁴² and policy-making powers¹⁴³ to independent regulators. This has resulted in increased insulation of institutions from political pressures, but also resulted in more opaque structures, sometimes hindering the openness and accountability of regulators.¹⁴⁴

SELF-REGULATION

Organizations like the Council of Europe have long been active in the promotion of media self-regulation and have adopted a number of documents which aim to facilitate the development of such systems.¹⁴⁵ Press and media councils have engaged in self-regulatory and media freedom activities, including initiatives for journalists to combat hate speech, promote ethics, and to document self-censorship among journalists.¹⁴⁶

In Canada, a voluntary and self-regulatory body known as the National News Media Council, was created in 2015 for the news media industry in Canada. The body comprises regional press councils and acts as a forum for the promotion of ethics across the news media and for resolving complaints against members. In the United States, some news outlets have an ombudsperson to address complaints and concerns about content. Although the government does not restrict the majority of media content, it does regulate certain content such as child-abuse images, distribution of confidential information, and the use of copyrighted material.¹⁴⁷

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services 2016.

¹³⁸ ERGA 2015.

¹³⁹ European Commission 2015.

¹⁴⁰ The report examines EU Member States and candidate countries to the EU as at the end of July 2014 (Albania, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey) totalling 34 countries.

¹⁴¹ European Commission 2015.

¹⁴² Scott 2000.

¹⁴³ Maggetti 2009.

¹⁴⁴ Polyak and Rozgonyi 2015.

¹⁴⁵ Hulin 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Ethical Journalism Network 2015.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Political and economic influences in media systems

TRENDS OF DE-LEGITIMIZING MEDIA, AND 'FAKE NEWS'

Trends in de-legitimizing the media through verbal attacks by political actors, characterising the media as the 'enemy', or trivialising media reporting, is not widespread in the Western Europe and North American region, but prominent examples of this phenomenon have become apparent particularly surrounding election campaigns and by certain governments and leaders.

Technical changes have afforded the blurring of boundaries between professional news and legitimate citizen journalism, and disinformation in the form of 'fake news'. This context has been popularly referred to as the 'post-truth' world, where appeals to emotion and personal belief are seen as more influential and persuasive than reliance on objective facticity.¹⁴⁸

Adding to the increasing dissemination of misinformation are the creation and propagation of bots, and spurious online accounts, which have been used by a variety of actors to spread disinformation more widely. In response, there has been a rise in government pressure on technology companies to remove content that is fake, including governments threatening to sanction should the technology companies fail to do so.¹⁴⁹ Fact-checking websites and partnerships with social media companies have significantly increased in response to such concerns, as well as calls for increased media and information literacy education to help individual media users identify "fake news".¹⁵⁰ In January 2018, the European Commission created a high-level group of experts to provide expertise on ways to counter disinformation and "fake news" online. Its subsequent report provided a series of recommendations on ways to address these problems without inadvertently increasing public or private forms of censorship.¹⁵¹

MEDIA CONCENTRATION AND CAPTURE

In Europe, business interests have connected with political powers to place pressure on the media in a way that limits the journalistic watchdog function, particularly as many media outlets experience financial difficulties.¹⁵² Additionally, media content is sometimes limited and lacking in independence because of the increasing neo-liberalization of the media and global markets, as well as differing levels of interest by funders and the influence of elite networks. In turn, this concentration of media ownership affects content because media outlets become susceptible to reproducing narratives from which corporations benefit. The reduction in public service media in countries around the world is symptomatic of this neo-liberalization.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ Bentzen 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Radsch 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Bentzen 2017.

¹⁵¹ European Commission 2018.

¹⁵² Bárd and Bayer 2016.

¹⁵³ McChesney 2001.

Media concentration has occurred in different countries at varying rates and to assorted degrees. In the United States, local television stations continue to be merged and acquired, although the number decreased to 101 in 2015 from 300 in 2013.¹⁵⁴ While the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) prohibits media owners from owning “more than one top-four local station in any one market”, companies have skirted the rules through “joint service agreements”. In 2014, the FCC focussed on curbing this practice with a new rule stipulating that a media company has an ownership stake if the company sells 15 per cent or more of a station’s advertising time.¹⁵⁵ In Canada, private media ownership is significantly concentrated with four corporations bringing in nearly two thirds of television revenue. In 2013, Bell Canada, the largest telecommunications company in Canada, took over Astral Media, thus giving Bell Canada 36 per cent of the English-language market. In France, the media industry has struggled to transition successfully to digital, and there is also a growing concentration of media ownership,¹⁵⁶ while Italy continues to have concentrated ownership, especially in the television sector.¹⁵⁷

Many sectors of society hold the general perception that media outlets are politicized and captured by commercial and business interests, which limits their independence.¹⁵⁸ In the United States, the majority of individuals surveyed believe that the news media are not independent of commercial or business interests.¹⁵⁹ In Europe, only 29 per cent of individuals surveyed indicated they believed the media in the EU were independent from undue government or political influence most of the time.¹⁶⁰

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND BUSINESS MODELS

Difficulties in securing financial stability and sustainability are having an effect on media organizations throughout North America and Western Europe. Print revenues continue to decline, and digital revenues do not provide enough financial support for media organizations to be sustainable. The lack of financial stability has weakened the capacity of media organizations to cover investigative stories, although there are some organizations which are proactively seeking to fill these gaps. Local news organizations have also been declining, limiting the news coverage and scrutiny of local affairs and local-level corruption. Some of these market pressures have led to unique partnerships between different news organizations, where a pooling of resources allows for the coverage of investigative and other types of stories. In the United Kingdom, digital-born media brands are beginning to make more of an impact than in previous years.¹⁶¹ More media companies are considering the introduction of paid-for content and/or membership models, as digital advertising remains unsustainable as a sole income stream.¹⁶² An increasing number of news organizations are working with social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook to publish their stories and reach a wider audience. Business leaders have become publishers at national and regional newspapers in the region.

Job security is of increasing concern for journalists as traditional business models show signs of strain. As newsrooms increasingly cut staff, more journalists become freelancers, contributing to an economy that requires more and offers less to its workers. For example, one third of the European Federation of Journalists federation’s members are now freelancers.¹⁶³ Increasing workloads, time-related deadline-driven pressures, and profit-driven news collection, combined with fewer resources and compensation, are leading to increasing rates of burnout and an overall lack of well-being among journalists.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Grégoire 2017.

¹⁶⁴ Brédart 2017.

PUBLIC TRUST IN THE MEDIA

Public trust in the media reflects a general decline. According to the Reuters' 2016 Digital News report, trust in news is highest in Finland at 65 per cent, but in other countries is as low as 20 per cent. While there is an increase in trust among the general population toward the media in 18 countries¹⁶⁵, the majority of people in most countries tend to trust news organizations rather than editors or journalists.¹⁶⁶ This is in part because individual journalists have sometimes had their credibility damaged by high-profile scandals.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, trust in the media is declining amidst increased fragmentation and access to news via social media platforms. For example, Edelman found that two of the three most-used sources of news and information are peer-influenced media.¹⁶⁸ According to the Knight Foundation and Nielsen, most people look to friends and contacts they follow on social media as trusted news sources to an equal measure or more so, than the degree to which they depend on media outlets.¹⁶⁹ In addition, young people are generally more trusting of digital media than other news sources.¹⁷⁰

Another aspect of dwindling trust in media organizations is the perception of political influence over the media as well as commercial or business influence.¹⁷¹ This lack of trust relates to the belief and perception that media tycoons have interfered in editorial issues and have close ties to politicians.¹⁷²

The November 2016 Eurobarometer report, which involved surveys with nearly 28,000 individuals from the 28 member states of the European Union, found that, "[t]he majority of respondents think their national media provide a diversity of views and opinions."¹⁷³ Yet, despite this perception of the diversity provided by their media, most respondents do not believe that their national or public service media are free and independent, and 3 in 10 respondents believe their national media have decreased in independence and freedom within the last 5 years. In a correlated manner, respondents placed greater trust in media outlets they believed to be independent, and less trust in the outlets they believed to be captured by financial or political pressures.¹⁷⁴

Trust varies significantly across countries, but the media in Scandinavian and Western European countries which have well-funded public service media as well as commercial media, tend to attain higher levels of public trust. Media consumers in Southern European countries and the United States tend to have lower levels of trust of the media.

¹⁶⁵ Edelman 2016.

¹⁶⁶ Newman, Fletcher, Levy and Kleis Nielsen 2016.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Edelman 2016.

¹⁶⁹ Knight Foundation 2016.

¹⁷⁰ Edelman 2016.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ European Commission 2016, 50.

¹⁷⁴ European Commission 2016, 50.

Gender equality and media independence

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA WORKPLACE

Media independence is compromised by gender-related discrimination and insensitivity. News media sexism, gender bias, and gender stereotyping continue to occur across content delivery platforms, including print and online media.¹⁷⁵ Women journalists commonly report on softer stories, rather than on stories related to politics and/or the government.¹⁷⁶ The Women's Media Center found that in the U.S., "Women are not equal partners in telling the story, nor are they equal partners in sourcing and interpreting what and who is important in the story."¹⁷⁷

Popular awareness on sexual harassment in newsrooms and media organizations has become increasingly visible in recent months with the advent of the #MeToo movement that originated in the United States and morphed into a global phenomenon. The phrase, 'me too' was originally created by activist Tarana Burke in 2006, and then popularized by United States actress Alyssa Milano, who aimed to show the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and sexual assault. Facilitated by social media platforms, the movement helped to articulate widespread sexual harassment and assault of women, particularly in the workplace. The movement has resulted in resignations and firings of men accused of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault in myriad sectors, including the media.¹⁷⁸ It is still unclear how prevalent sexual harassment and sexual assault is within newsrooms or media outlets. In 2017, the *Columbia Journalism Review* conducted a survey in which it asked 149 news outlets in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada to provide explanations about their sexual harassment policies and reporting procedures. None of the news organizations surveyed responded with answers to the survey.¹⁷⁹ 310 freelance and staff journalists responded to additional surveys: 66 per cent said their newsrooms had clear sexual harassment policies, while only 1 in 5 respondents said they understood the policies.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ Global Media Monitoring Project 2015.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Women's Media Center 2017.

¹⁷⁸ Scott 2017.

¹⁷⁹ Neason 2017.

¹⁸⁰ Tompkins 2017.

Trends in
**Safety of
Journalists**

Overview

The Western Europe and North American region reflected a sharp decline in the safety of journalists between 2012 and 2017. Political turmoil in one European state led to large numbers of journalists experiencing imprisonment, while attacks by religious extremists causing the deaths of journalists resulted in a much higher rate of journalist killings when compared to the previous 5-year period. Physical attacks and threats of violence against journalists were also posed by extreme political groups, including neo-Nazi groups, and organized crime, among other groups. In addition, state authorities in several countries dealt harshly with journalists covering protests.

In countries which have traditionally embraced a free press, journalists were harassed, arrested, beaten, pressured, and interrogated by authorities. Government strategies to combat terrorism, including mass communication surveillance programs and prosecution of whistle blowers, severely undermined the ability of journalists to investigate and report freely while ensuring the safety of their sources. Politicians verbally assaulted the press, in some cases encouraging attacks. During this period journalists, particularly women, were under heavy assault by trolls and other cyber attackers.

In a positive trend, the rate of impunity is lower than any other region, with the majority of killings having been resolved.

Trends in the safety of journalists in the Western Europe and North American region include the following:

- The number of killings of journalists increased sharply in the Western Europe and North American region since 2012, mainly due to attacks from groups claiming religious motivation;
- Impunity occurred at lower levels when compared to other regions. The majority of cases of enquiry into journalist killings are resolved, while the others are reported as ongoing;
- Pervasive online harassment and threats are targeted at women journalists throughout the region, motivating some women journalists to self-censor, retreat from social media, or to relocate for fear of their personal safety
- In a sharply increasing trend, journalists were imprisoned in greater numbers between 2012 and 2017 than during the previous 5-year period, and are often detained and questioned about sources under anti-terrorism legislation;
- Newly established government policies to prosecute whistle blowers and leakers, contributed to self-censorship as journalists are unable to guarantee the safety and secrecy of their sources. Legislation passed since 2016 in some countries further strengthened states' ability to monitor the communications of journalists.

Physical safety and impunity

While the Western Europe and North American region have traditionally been among the safest areas for the media to operate, the number of killings of journalists rose sharply since 2012, mainly due to attacks from religious groups claiming religious motivation. UNESCO's Director General condemned 17 killings from 2012 to 2016 which took place in 4 countries¹⁸¹. In the previous 5-year period (2007 to 2011), the Director General condemned only 3 killings from 2 countries.

2015 was the most dangerous year, when 11 journalists were killed in Western Europe. 8 journalists died at the hands of gunmen who ambushed the French satirical newspaper, *Charlie Hebdo*, in Paris, and 3 Syrian journalists seeking refuge in Turkey were assassinated. Extremist groups claimed responsibility for all 11 of the murders. Print journalists comprised the largest group of journalists killed according to medium at over 70 per cent of the victims, followed by internet journalists who made up 24 per cent.

Figure 4-1: Journalists killed in the Western Europe and North American region each year between 2012 and 2016

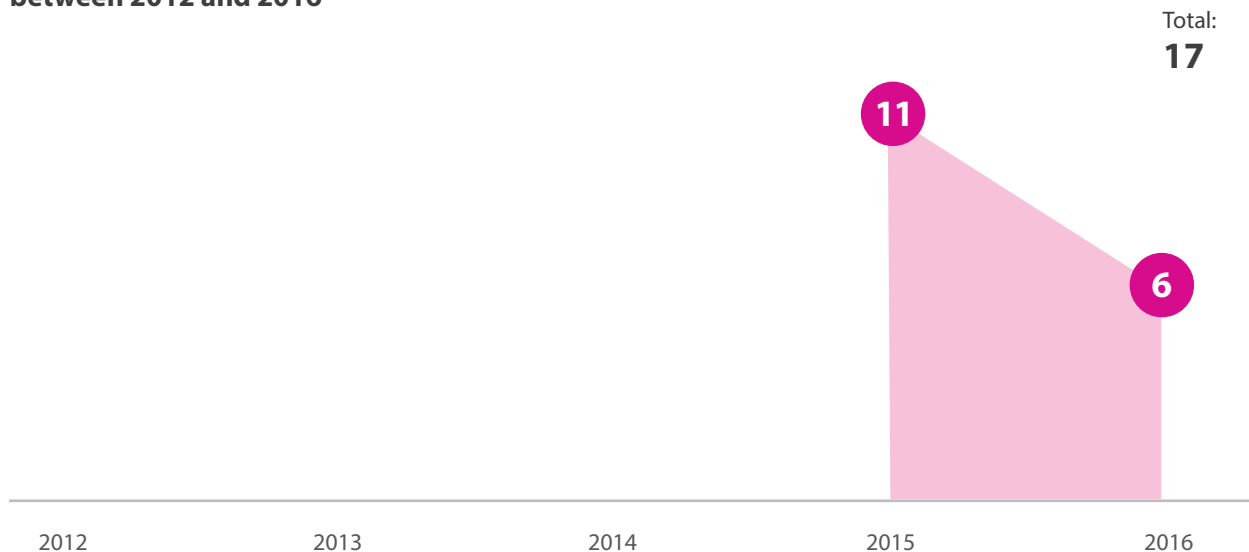
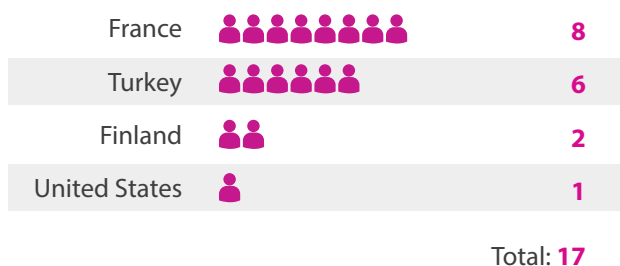


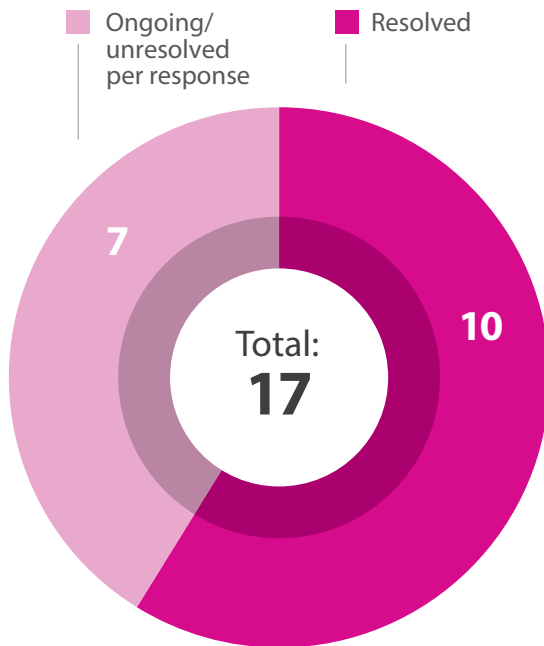
Figure 4-2: Journalists killed in the Western Europe and North American region by country



Impunity occurred at far lower levels than in other regions. In mid-2017, all member states where journalists had been killed responded to the UNESCO Director-General's request for an update on the status of judicial inquiries into the deaths. In 10 cases, or 59 per cent of the overall number of killings in the region for the 2012 to 2017 period, states reported that resolutions were achieved. In 7 cases (41 per cent) states reported the status of the enquiry to be ongoing.

¹⁸¹ UNESCO's internal database of Journalist Killings and Status of Judicial Inquiry, 2012-2016 inclusive. Unless stated otherwise, the figures on killings of journalists that follow are taken from this database.

Figure 4-3: Responses provided by Western Europe and North American states to the UNESCO director general’s requests for judicial status of journalist killings



Other sources of danger to journalists since 2012 include the mafia, which has threatened and attacked high numbers of journalists in Southern Europe. Acts of intimidation included the burning of journalists’ cars, sending journalists bullets in the mail/post, and verbal threats¹⁸². There has also been a rise in attacks on journalists, including beatings and vandalism, by right wing groups and other political militants¹⁸³.

The 2012 to 2017 period was also characterized by multiple incidents of aggression against journalists at public protests in the United States and Mediterranean countries, where police beat and detained journalists, and destroyed or confiscated equipment. Journalists were also injured by rubber bullets and tear gas projected at short-range.¹⁸⁴ Since 2012, journalists have been increasingly harassed, searched, detained or turned away at borders. In some cases, authorities seized personal devices and demanded passwords from journalists.

Verbal attacks by politicians heightened insecurity for journalists. During a prominent presidential election campaign in 2016, the press was labeled as “dishonest” and “scum”, while individual journalists and media outlets were criticized and denied access to some events¹⁸⁵. Cyber-attacks against the media also took place in Western Europe and North America, including the release of journalists’ personal information, smear campaigns, trolling, and online death threats.

¹⁸² Kirchgaessner 2015; RSF 2017.

¹⁸³ Marthoz 2015; Allen 2015.

¹⁸⁴ CPJ 2013; RSF 2013; Sánchez 2013; PEN 2014; RSF 2016; ¹⁸⁵ CPJ 2016; Index in Censorship, Mapping Media Freedom.

¹⁸⁵ Rowe 2016.

Gender equality and the safety of journalists

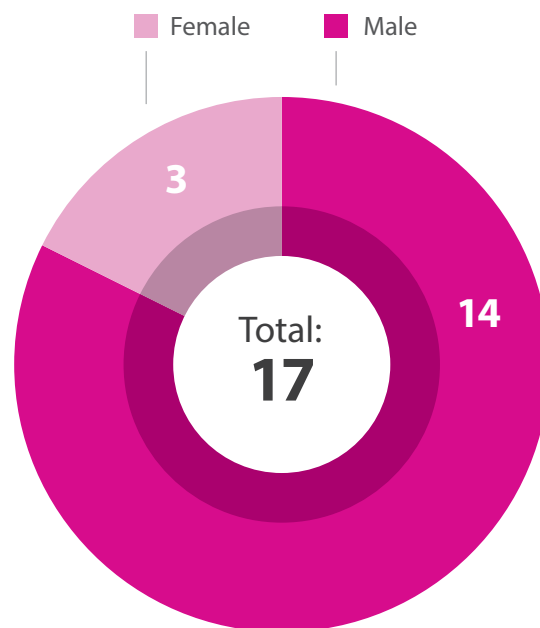
Three women were among the 17 journalists killed in the region between 2012 and 2017. All 3 cases of enquiry were subsequently resolved. In 2017, 4 female journalists were killed in Western Europe.

Research conducted since 2012 has recorded the pervasive online threats affecting women throughout the region. In a survey on cyber abuse against women journalists conducted in 2015, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) found that most women respondents¹⁸⁶ received online threats. In the United States, a 2014 survey by the Pew Research Center found that while male internet users experienced more frequent insults via internet, online abuse toward women tends to be far more severe in nature¹⁸⁷. In the United Kingdom, a 2016 study by the *Guardian* newspaper found that women received the highest percentage of abusive comments in response to what they wrote.¹⁸⁸

These studies, and other reports in the region, revealed that threats received online by women journalists are characterized by a gender-focused brand of intimidation, often involving graphically detailed threats of sexual assault, or revealing personal information including knowledge of the targeted woman's personal residence. In some cases, women were the victims of coordinated, organized online smear campaigns.¹⁸⁹ Women journalists have also reported having their emails or social media accounts hacked. The ferocity of online attacks motivated some women journalists to retreat from social media or to relocate for fear of their personal safety.

Types of coverage that triggered cyber assaults against women journalists included reporting on the topics of religion, terrorism and politics, as well as reporting and commentary on issues that impact women, such as domestic abuse, abortion and gender equality. One European feminist newspaper, which focused on reporting on women's issues, received multiple threats and was eventually shut down in 2017.¹⁹⁰

Figure 4-4: Number of journalist killings condemned by UNESCO DG 2012-2017 according to gender in the Western Europe and North American region



¹⁸⁶The survey included respondents from 7 West European and North American countries (Spain, Austria, Norway, Sweden, USA, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands) as well other respondents from other OSCE states: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

¹⁸⁷ Duggan 2014.

¹⁸⁸ Gardiner 2016.

¹⁸⁹ RSF 2018.

¹⁹⁰ IBID.

There has been increased push-back to counter online abuse in recent years. For example, one former victim founded a United States based organization to support women journalists against online harassment.¹⁹¹ In the United Kingdom, a journalist and activist successfully pressed charges against two trolls who threatened her with extreme physical violence. In 2015, the OSCE organized an expert meeting titled 'New Challenges to Freedom of Expression: Countering Online Abuse of Female Journalists' to examine how to combat online abuse.

Other dimensions in the safety of journalists

Journalists were imprisoned in greater numbers between 2012 and 2017 than during the previous 5-year period. At the end of 2011, 15 journalists were in prison in Western European Member States, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists' annual prison census.¹⁹² In 2012, that number surged to 53. Fewer journalists were jailed from 2013 to 2015, but 2016 saw a sharp increase when 88 journalists were jailed, most of whom were arrested following an attempted coup in Turkey. Imprisonments were primarily concentrated to 2 countries over the 5-year period (2012-2017), but the CPJ also recorded imprisonments of journalists in 2 other countries, 1 in Southern Europe and 1 in North America during the period.

According to a 2017 report by the OSCE's Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, criminal defamation laws are in place in at least 21 out of the 27 Member States that make up the Western Europe and North America region.¹⁹³ In addition, at least 13 states retain statutes penalizing blasphemy or religious insult.¹⁹⁴ While it is broadly acknowledged that the existence of these laws has a chilling effect on the media, most of the journalists imprisoned since 2012 have been subject to anti-state charges, such as alleged relationships with, or membership in, extremist or terrorist groups. Journalists were also detained while covering citizen activism or protests on various charges, including trespassing.

In both North America and Western Europe, concerns surrounding terrorism led to adversarial government conduct toward the media. In addition to the imprisonments cited above, journalists have been detained and questioned about sources under anti-terrorism legislation: one media outlet's hard drives were destroyed by authorities, and its editor was required to appear before a government counter-terrorism committee for reporting on mass surveillance by intelligence agencies.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Ferrier 2016.

¹⁹² Unless otherwise noted, the figures for imprisoned and exiled journalists have been compiled from reports by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

¹⁹³ UNESCO's regional breakdown includes Israel which is not one of the OSCE member states and not included in the 21 states this report found to have criminal defamation laws.

¹⁹⁴ Griffen 2017.

¹⁹⁵ Article 19 et al 2013.

The exposures of government surveillance programs, combined with policies to aggressively prosecute whistleblowers and leakers that some governments put in place, contributed to self-censorship as journalists found themselves unable to guarantee the safety and secrecy to their sources. Legislation passed since 2016 in some countries further strengthened states' ability to monitor the media's communications.¹⁹⁶ Threats, violent attacks and fear of arrest also encouraged self-censorship among journalists in European countries, according a 2017 survey conducted by the Council of Europe¹⁹⁷. Following high profile attacks, some media outlets have used extreme caution in their reporting on religion, due to both fear of reprisal and deference to religious sensitivities, a tendency critiqued by some freedom of expression groups to have at times crossed the line from sensitive reporting to censorship.¹⁹⁸

Few states in the region have had reported cases of journalists going into exile, but according to news reports many journalists allegedly entered exile from one country, including one prominent editor¹⁹⁹, subsequent to an attempted coup and following mass arrests of other journalists.²⁰⁰ Traditionally most of Western Europe and North America has been haven for journalists persecuted in other parts of the world, but it has become more difficult to secure refuge in the region since 2012, due to increasing social and political tensions over immigration issues, heightened protocols, and bans allegedly aimed at combatting terrorism.

The security environment and migrant crisis also resulted in greater regulatory attention to hate speech. Following attacks by extremists in France, several governments asked internet service providers to remove online content 'that aims to incite hatred and terror'.²⁰¹ In 2017, one European parliament passed a new hate speech law that freedom of expression groups claim will enable internet censorship. The media have simultaneously been criticized for their coverage of provocative statements surrounding Europe's migrant crisis, the Brexit referendum, and elections in the United States.

Actions taken to enhance the safety of journalists

Western Europe and North American member states have led efforts to promote the safety of journalists and combat impunity in international forums. All 27 states sponsored at least 4 of the 11 resolutions addressing the safety of journalists adopted by UN bodies between 2012 and 2017. Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States of America sponsored all 11 resolutions and 7 other states sponsored 10 of the resolutions.

10 states are part of the 'Group of Friends on the Safety of Journalists', an informal working group of states committed to strengthening the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and its implementation at the national level. Canada, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands participate in the 'Group of Friends' that convenes in Paris, and Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Sweden and the United States of America are active members in both New York and Paris.

¹⁹⁶ IFJ 2016.

¹⁹⁷ Clark et al. 2017.

¹⁹⁸ Marthoz 2017; RSF 2016.

¹⁹⁹ Dündar 2016.

²⁰⁰ Dündar 2016.

²⁰¹ Embassy of France 2015. Paris attacks: joint statement of the ministers of interior.

Though no formal mechanism to address the safety of journalists has been set up by states in Western Europe or North America, in some cases, journalists under extreme threat have received police protection.²⁰² In addition, as members of the Council of Europe, 22 states from Western Europe and North America region took part in the establishment of the “Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists” in 2014. The initiative works in partnership with civil society groups to alert Council of Europe bodies and institutions of press freedom violations to support coordinated responses and policy measures.

Figure 4-5: Western Europe and North American member states sponsoring UN resolutions on the safety of journalists since 2012

| | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | | 2016 | 2017 | |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|------|--|
| | HRC | UNGA | HRC | UNGA | UNESCO | UNSC | UNGA | UNHRC | UNESCO | UNESCO | UNGA | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | |
| Andorra | | ● | | ● | | | ● | ● | | | ● | |
| Austria | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| Belgium | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Canada | | | ● | ● | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | |
| Cyprus | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | | ● | |
| Denmark | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| Finland | ● | | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| France | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Germany | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Greece | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Iceland | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| Ireland | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | | ● | |
| Israel | | ● | | ● | | | ● | ● | | | ● | |
| Italy | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Luxembourg | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| Malta | | ● | | ● | | | ● | ● | | | ● | |
| Monaco | | ● | | ● | | | ● | ● | | | ● | |
| Netherlands | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Norway | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| Portugal | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| Spain | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Sweden | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Switzerland | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | ● | ● | |
| Turkey | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | | | ● | |
| United Kingdom | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | |
| United States of America | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| San Marino | | | | ● | | | ● | | | | ● | |

²⁰² RSF 2017.

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Regional Groupings

WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (27)

| | | |
|---------|-------------|--|
| Andorra | Greece | Norway |
| Austria | Iceland | Portugal |
| Belgium | Ireland | San Marino |
| Canada | Israel | Spain |
| Cyprus | Italy | Sweden |
| Denmark | Luxembourg | Switzerland |
| Finland | Malta | Turkey |
| France | Monaco | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| Germany | Netherlands | United States of America |

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (25)

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Albania | Estonia | Republic of Moldova |
| Armenia | The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | Romania |
| Azerbaijan | Georgia | Ukraine |
| Belarus | Hungary | Uzbekistan |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Latvia | Russian Federation |
| Bulgaria | Lithuania | Serbia |
| Croatia | Montenegro | Slovakia |
| Czech Republic | Poland | Slovenia |
| | | Tajikistan |

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (33)

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Antigua and Barbuda | Dominican Republic | Paraguay |
| Argentina | Ecuador | Peru |
| Bahamas | El Salvador | Saint Kitts and Nevis |
| Barbados | Grenada | Saint Lucia |
| Belize | Guatemala | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Guyana | Suriname |
| Brazil | Haiti | Trinidad and Tobago |
| Chile | Honduras | Uruguay |
| Colombia | Jamaica | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) |
| Costa Rica | Mexico | |
| Cuba | Nicaragua | |
| Dominica | Panama | |

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (44)

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Afghanistan | Kazakhstan | Timor-Leste |
| Australia | Kiribati | Malaysia |
| Bangladesh | Kyrgyzstan | Maldives |
| Bhutan | Lao People's Democratic | Marshall Islands |
| Brunei Darussalam | Republic | Micronesia (Federated States of) |
| Cambodia | Niue | Mongolia |
| China | Pakistan | Myanmar |
| Cook Islands | Palau | Nauru |
| Democratic People's | Papua New Guinea | Nepal |
| Republic of Korea | Philippines | New Zealand |
| Fiji | Republic of Korea | Tonga |
| India | Samoa | Turkmenistan |
| Indonesia | Singapore | Tuvalu |
| Iran (Islamic Republic of) | Solomon Islands | Vanuatu |
| Japan | Sri Lanka | Viet Nam |
| | Thailand | |

AFRICA (47)

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Angola | Ethiopia | Nigeria |
| Benin | Gabon | Rwanda |
| Botswana | Gambia | Sao Tome and Principe |
| Burkina Faso | Ghana | Senegal |
| Burundi | Guinea | Seychelles |
| Cameroon | Guinea-Bissau | Sierra Leone |
| Cape Verde | Kenya | Somalia |
| Central African Republic | Lesotho | South Africa |
| Chad | Liberia | South Sudan |
| Comoros | Madagascar | Swaziland |
| Congo | Malawi | Togo |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Uganda |
| Democratic Republic of | Mauritius | United Republic of Tanzania |
| the Congo | Mozambique | Zambia |
| Djibouti | Namibia | Zimbabwe |
| Equatorial Guinea | Niger | |
| Eritrea | | |

ARAB REGION (19)

| | | |
|---------|------------|----------------------|
| Algeria | Libya | Saudi Arabia |
| Bahrain | Mauritania | Sudan |
| Egypt | Morocco | Syrian Arab Republic |
| Iraq | Oman | Tunisia |
| Jordan | Palestine | United Arab Emirates |
| Kuwait | Qatar | Yemen |
| Lebanon | | |

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World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development

REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2017/2018

WESTERN EUROPE & NORTH AMERICA

Across the world, journalism is under fire. While more individuals have access to content than ever before, the combination of political polarization and technological change have facilitated the rapid spread of hate speech, misogyny and unverified 'fake news', often leading to disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression. In an ever-growing number of countries, journalists face physical and verbal attacks that threaten their ability to report news and information to the public.

In the face of such challenges, this new volume in the World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development series offers a critical analysis of new trends in media freedom, pluralism, independence and the safety of journalists. With a special focus on gender equality in the media, the report provides a global perspective that serves as an essential resource for UNESCO Member States, international organizations, civil society groups, academia and individuals seeking to understand the changing global media landscape.

en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017



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