



## CS2. Country case studies on critical junctures in the media transformation process in Four Domains of Potential ROs (2000–2020)

The aim of the second case study is to provide analysis of risks and opportunities concerning the diachronic changes in four domains defined by the project in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Excerpt:



#### An option for reference of this particular report:

Gálik, S.; Vrabec, N.; Gáliková Tolnaiová, S.; Čábyová, L'; Pravdová, H.; Hudíková, Z.; Višňovský, J.; Mináriková, J.; Radošinská, J.; Švecová, M.; Krajčovič, P.; Brník, A. (2022). SLOVAKIA. Critical junctures in the media transformation process. In: Country case studies on critical junctures in the media transformation process in Four Domains of Potential ROs (2000–2020). *Approaching deliberative communication: Studies on monitoring capability and on critical junctures of media development in 14 EU countries*, CS2, D-2.1, pp. 483–519. Mediadelcom. <https://www.mediadelcom.eu/publications/d21-case-study-2/svk/>



# SLOVAKIA

## Critical junctures in the media transformation process

*Slavomír Gálik, Norbert Vrabec, Sabína Gáliková Tolnaiová, Ľudmila Čábyová, Hana Pravdová, Zora Hudíková, Ján Višňovský, Juliána Mináriková, Jana Radošinská, Magdaléna Švecová, Peter Krajčovič, Andrej Brník – University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*

### Executive Summary

In Slovakia, we record several critical junctures in the years 2000 – 2020, which had a significant impact on the media development, as well as on the opportunities and risks for deliberative communication and democracy. These included the advent of online media after 2000, the rise of social media since 2004, the worldwide economic crisis in 2008, the corruption case ‘Gorilla’ in 2011, the murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak in 2018 and the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020. These events also affected the individual domains studied in Slovakia. Within the legal and ethical regulation, there are laws and standards that guarantee freedom of the press and the conduct of journalists is governed by multiple ethical codes. However, the most significant risks for the media in the journalistic domain are political influences and the pressures from media owners. These issues were also reflected in the decline in media credibility, as confirmed by research in the domain of media usage patterns. A rather positive phenomenon is, despite the persistent absence of empirical data that would support the claim, a sufficient number of academics who deal with the media competencies of media users. In summary, solid conditions (legislative, ethical, educational) for the media have been created in Slovakia, but the influences of politicians and media owners, job instability and poor financial evaluation of journalists remain a risk.

## 1. Introduction

According to the results of the 2021 population census, the population of Slovakia is 5.449 million, of which 51% are women and 49% are men. The official language is Slovak. Minority languages may be used while communicating with local authorities in municipalities where the share of the population speaking a foreign language exceeds 20%. In practice, this concerns more than a hundred Hungarian municipalities, dozens of Ruthenian/Ukrainian and Roma municipalities and one German-speaking municipality. The performance of the Slovak economy is slowly approaching the level recorded before the pandemic. In 2021, GDP per capita for Slovakia was 15,660 Euros. The unemployment rate in Slovakia decreased to 6.3% in June 2022 from 6.4% declared in May 2022, which is the lowest unemployment rate in the history of independent Slovakia (since 1993). According to the World Press Freedom Index, Slovakia ranked 27<sup>th</sup> in 2021 and thus improved in comparison with 2020 (35<sup>th</sup> place). Although the governing authorities attempt to improve freedom of the press and fully reflect the 2018 assassination of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and its society-wide consequences, the progress has been slow and most journalists work in a hostile atmosphere. Both public and private media remain vulnerable to economic or political interests unrelated to journalism. While the Slovak society is largely conservative, the media are, for the most part, liberal, which is a source of tension. En-

couraged by verbal attacks by some political opposition leaders, the opponents of government measures aiming to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic or reduce corruption have insulted or harassed journalists during public protests or on social media (Višňovský, Radošinská, 2021). This hostile atmosphere sharply contrasts with the widespread public support for journalists and their work following Ján Kuciak's murder in early 2018.

One of the important junctures in the development of Slovak media is also the 2008 economic crisis, which caused financial problems experienced by all major media outlets and some of them eventually falling into the hands of multinational corporations. These tendencies deepened in terms of the corruption case (called 'Gorilla'), which became publicly known in 2011. The affair was related to the Penta Financial Group, which wanted to improve its public image, so its representatives started buying some prominent media outlets, such as the elite daily newspaper SME. The assassination of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak in 2018, which also had severe political consequences (the replacement of the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic), also shook the media scene. At present, i.e., in the years 2020 – 2021, it is the pandemic that represents an unprecedented global event with a major impact on the life of society, including the media. All these events are the point of bifurcation of the media development; in other words, they pose both an opportunity and a risk to the media and society.

The development of the media environment in the era of independent Slovakia is characterized by the transformation of the media system after the fall of Communism in November 1989 and numerous legislative changes following the division of Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic in 1993. In its beginnings, the media system was marked by a high degree of state intervention in the functioning of the media, gradual entry of foreign capital into the media business and rather slow expansion of the commercial media market.

In the 1990s, a dual media system was constituted in Slovakia, which enabled the emergence and legal operation of private media outlets. State television, radio and news agency were transformed into public service media. In 2000, the dual media system in the country was stabilized and has continued to develop ever since (Mistrík, 2007). Almost all periodically issued newspapers and magazines are nowadays published by private publishers or privately owned publishing houses. In addition to public electronic media, private radio and television stations were established, and a new, commercial news agency was founded as well. On the other hand, several newspapers and magazines, along with some radio stations and television channels, have gone out of business or merged with other media organizations. After 2000, online media gained both public attention and economic prominence – either as sister organizations and platforms affiliated with print and electronic media, or as autonomous Internet ventures. Considering the Slovak media system in the context of legal norms, it should be noted that Slovakia did not have its own media law until 1993 but was governed by the laws of the then joint Czechoslovak Republic. Important changes took place within the Federation's legislation framework after the Velvet Revolution in 1989 and the subsequent end of the Communist regime. More than two decades of Slovak media legislation can be characterized by the gradual adoption and regulation of new types of media such as cable television and the Internet. At the same time, the digitalization of television broadcasting was completed in 2012 (full transition to digital radio broadcasting should be carried out by 2026, but it is already known it will be impossible to meet this deadline); the latest amendments had to reflect these changes as well.

The main aim of this second case study is to identify risks and opportunities for deliberative communication in Slovakia. Against this background, the sections that follow discuss each of the four domains covered by the project: legal and ethical regulation; journalism; media usage patterns; and media-related competences.

## 2. Risks and opportunities of legal and ethical regulation domain

### 2.1. Development and agency of change

The Slovak media market, as well as most media markets situated in the surrounding countries, is organized on based on a dual system of television and radio broadcasting. The development of the media market is closely related to the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic in 1993, related changes in political and social conditions, the development of private media business and, finally, globalization, the penetration of foreign investors and companies into the country's media market.

After the fall of the Communist government in November 1989 in Czechoslovakia, the first free parliamentary election was to take place in both parts of the republic. The year 1990 can be considered as a turning point. During this period, after the fall of the Communist regime, the foundations of democracy began to be laid, and free parliamentary election (8–9 June 1990) and municipal elections took place after 44 years. The main bearer of these changes in Slovakia was the movement called Public Against Violence. It was led by former dissidents, but also by other politically active citizens. At that time, the federal government immediately began to address the pressing economic problems that were a direct result of the rigidly planned economy. Market liberalization in the summer of 1990 also began with the Free Enterprise Act, and large-scale privatization laws were passed.

The first private media began to emerge only after the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic (after 1993). The reason was mainly the slow introduction of new media laws that would reflect the dual system of broadcasting. However, as a clear example, we can mention the broadcasting of FUN radio from Bratislava (it was originally a student radio, which was transformed by the entry of a French investor, which, for example, began to broadcast in 1991 on basis of an except granted by the Ministry of Culture. Until this time, public service media, which functioned as monopolies, had a dominant position, but they were often subject to the pursuit of political control, which can be described as one of the main risks of deliberative communication.

### 2.2. Freedom of expression

Freedom of speech is one of the basic human rights and freedoms defined by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. Freedom of expression and freedom of information are currently one of the pillars of a democratic society and are prerequisites for the proper functioning of the media.

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic defines in this area: (1) freedom of expression and the right to information are guaranteed; (2) everyone has the right to express their opinions..., as well as to freely seek, receive and disseminate ideas and information...; (3) publication of the press is not subject to the authorization procedure; business in the field of radio and television may be subject to a state permit; censorship is prohibited; (4) public authorities have an obligation to provide information about their activities in an appropriate manner... Freedom of expression and the right to seek and disseminate information can be limited by law if measures in a democratic society are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others, the security of the state, public order, the protection of public health and morality.

From the deliberative communication point of view, the freedom of expression and guaranteeing the fundamental rights established in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic play an important role. The freedom of expression and the opportunity to publish information in the public interest are a key element in the development of a democratic society and deliberative communication. Guaranteeing respect for fundamental rights, support for independent and

investigative journalism are among the most important opportunities in the development of deliberative communication. On the other side, measures to limit these rights or expressions are among the significant risks.

According to the latest press freedom index of the Reporters Without Borders organization, which evaluates the level of media freedom, Slovakia was ranked 27th out of 180 countries in the world (it scored 78.38 points in 2022). Compared to the previous year, this is an improvement of the position by 8 points.

The protection of personal data in the Slovak Republic is regulated by Act no. 18/2018 Coll. on the protection of personal data and amending certain laws and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 27, 2016 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46 / EC (General Data Protection Regulation - "GDPR").

Personal data (or information of a personal nature) are disclosed only if this is regulated by a special law or with the prior written consent of the person concerned. Data range is limited.

In the case of defamation, it is necessary to prove the spread of false or misleading claims and to interfere with personal rights or the occurrence of a criminal offense (because of causing significant damage). According to Slovak legislation, hate speech can be define as a criminal offense, that interferes with the right to protection of the dignity of the persons against whom it is directed. They are governed by their regulations:

Criminal law: §423 Defamation of the nation, race and beliefs; §424 Incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred.

## 2.3. Freedom of information

Free access to information is regulated in Slovakia by Act no. 211/2000 on free access to information. The law regulates the conditions, procedure and scope, as well as restrictions on free access to information. Deadlines and entities that are obliged to publish information are also defined.

In terms of enforceability and application of this law, the analysis was published by the non-profit organization Transparency International (2014). The analysis showed that the possibility of public control of state and municipal companies through the information law is insufficient in all countries surveyed. More than a quarter of a total of 85 mandatory companies in five company countries do not provide any information about themselves to the public or completely deny their information obligation, for which they use loopholes in the legislation.

The publisher of the periodical and the press agency are obliged to maintain confidentiality about the source of information obtained by publication in the periodical or news agency and the content of this information so that you can identify the source if requested by the natural person who provided the information and therefore does not infringe the rights of third parties; with documents, printed matter and other data carriers, in particular video recordings, audio recordings and audio-visual recordings, on the basis of which the natural person who provided the information which he provided could be established in such a way that the source of the information cannot be disclosed. The obligation of professional secrecy does not apply in the case of a statutory obligation to prevent the commission of a criminal offense.

According to the Reporters without Borders Slovak journalists have traditionally benefitted from a strong Freedom of Information Act and case law that defend their rights. After taking power in 2020, the current government promised new laws to improve the protection of journalists and their sources, to strengthen the editorial and financial independence of public

broadcasting, to increase the transparency of media ownership and funding, and to reduce prison sentences for defamation.

## 2.4 Accountability system

### 2.4.1. Development and agency of change

The state is the most important actor in the domain of legal and ethical regulation. Legal acts governing the activities of the media therefore represent a group of laws and other legal norms that directly or indirectly affect the activities of the media. We collectively refer to them as 'media law'. Media law regulates social relations arising in connection with the registration of periodicals, acquisition of authorization for broadcasting or retransmission, rights and obligations of publishers, broadcasters and retransmission operators, legal relations arising in the production, publishing and distribution of printed matter, as well as in production, broadcasting and relationships associated with the retransmission of a program service, legal relationships related to legal consequences of publishers, broadcasters or retransmission operators not fulfilling the given obligations, and legal relationships arising from infringements of the rights of publishers, broadcasters and retransmission operators by third parties.

The new media law was adopted this year (the government has approved the Act of media services in June, 2022). A major priority for the reform was to help journalists to carry out their work freely and safely, which can be another impulse for supporting deliberative communication. The key topics of the new legislation include transparent media ownership, resource protection, equal rights and obligations for television, radio, print and online media, and the regulation of online video platforms.

The most significant change brought about the new legislation is the inclusion of video-sharing platforms in the regulatory framework for audiovisual media services. For this reason, the new legislation regulates the rights and obligations of broadcasters, on-demand audiovisual media service providers, retransmission operators, multiplex providers, as well as the rights and obligations of video-sharing platform providers and content service providers that do not belong to the above-mentioned categories. The legislation also regulates the rights and obligations of the signal distributors.

Since 2019, there has been a law on the protection of whistleblowers (No. 54/2019), which regulates the conditions for providing protection to persons in an employment relationship in connection with reporting crime or other anti-social activities, the rights and obligations of persons when reporting anti-social activities and the establishment, status and the competence of the Office for the Protection of Anti-Social Whistleblowers. (There is an act no. 54 / 2019 which protects whistleblowers.)

Although there is a law on the protection of whistleblowers, the number of such cases (reports of corruption or unfair practices) is very low.

Legislation to prevent excessive concentration of media ownership was not adopted until after 2000. A new media law is currently being drafted in the legislative process, by which the state wants to introduce more transparency in media financing and make property and personnel relations more transparent.

In 2000, Parliament passed a new Broadcasting and Retransmission Act, which contained clauses against excessive concentration of media ownership. According to this law, to ensure the plurality of information, no individual or company may have ownership relations with the owner of more than one national television or radio station, nor may this person or company be the publisher of a national newspaper. Linking ownership and sharing of human resources within the network of broadcasters is allowed, if this network does not cover more than 50



percent of the country's population. However, this Regulation only applies to television and radio networks and does not cover national newspapers.

The law also lays down rules on ownership transparency for broadcasters: each license applicant must provide a list of their owners (shareholders) as well as their financial resources for the operation of the broadcast. The applicant is obliged to draw attention to the links between ownership relations with other media companies, whether national or foreign.

Apart from the provisions mentioned, there are no property laws or laws or provisions for the print media that prevent excessive concentration of media ownership.

According to Transparency International, until 2000 there was no legislation to prevent excessive concentration of media ownership. However, even after its adoption, this legislation is not properly applied. The Slovak media continue to publish reports on their owners without providing relevant information about their interests or ownership relationships. The oligarchs own several media through third parties.

#### *2.4.2 Existing media accountability instruments and an evaluation of their effectiveness*

In this domain, there is a noticeable lagging in terms of legislation, specifically media law, digital communication technologies, online media and social media. New media laws are newly approved in Slovakia waiting for their implementation, the aim of which is to transform Slovak media legislation, modernize it and update it for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main priority of the reform is to help journalists carry out their work freely and safely, which can be another impetus to promote deliberative communication. The key topics in this new legislation include transparent media ownership, source protection, equal rights and obligations for television, radio, print and online media, and online video platforms.

Within the ethical area of the domain, it can be said that every major media outlet has a code of ethics. These ethical codes and their particular regulations are more flexible than the existing legal regulation. For example, the regulation of the behavior of journalists on social media is currently being implemented into the codes of ethics. One of the most important documents in the field of ethical self-regulation is the so-called Codes of Ethics issued by the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists (SSN, 2011), but also by Radio and Television of Slovakia, which relate to communication on the Internet (RTVS, 2018).

Not only the print media, but also radio stations and television channels, which deal with news and journalism in their editorial activities, have established their own codes of ethics. Every decent medium has an ethical code at its disposal. These rules focus mainly on objective and truthful information dissemination, but also on the non-concealment of important information. At present, the codes also include the regulation of the behavior of journalists on social media, where these persons must take into account that they are publicly known and behave according to the philosophy of the given medium.

Journalists' mistakes and misconducts are not only addressed by complaints and legal actions, but also by the former journalist and now blogger Miroslava Kernová. She analyzes and draws attention to various ethical lapses of journalists and specific media on her blog omediach.com. Newspaper ethics is also monitored by the Press and Digital Council of the Slovak Republic as an independent body. It responds to complaints about breaches of the code of ethics established by this board. In addition, it also issues opinions and advocates for journalists if their rights are suppressed, or they are victims of unjustified criminal reports. Also, in Slovakia The Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission is an administrative body which executes state regulation in the field of radio and TV broadcasting, retransmission and on-demand audiovisual media services. Regarding public services, RTVS (Slovak public radio and TV company) has its own body which control audiences' complaints.

*Analytical conclusions:*

The biggest risks of this domain in Slovakia include the slow reaction of the government to the existence and operation of new types of media (online, on-demand services, podcasting, etc.), a small media market with a small audience and globalization and media concentration represented by media conglomerates and media owners.

On the other hand, the greatest opportunities include a greater diversity of views and production of media and digital content, and a new media legislation that is supposed to be more comprehensive, normative and able to cover several types of media.

The following scheme summarizes the risks and opportunities regarding to the domain Legal and Ethical Regulation.

**Risks** for deliberative communication:

- significant saturation and a high number of entities operating in a relatively small market,
- several legal acts covering media segments (press law, broadcasting, and retransmission law, RTVS law, copyright law, advertising law),
- slow reactions of the government, its bodies, and national regulators towards regulating new types of media (online, on-demand services, podcasting, etc.),
- a small media market with a small audience that is limited by their own mother tongue,
- globalization and media concentration represented by media conglomerates and media owners,
- indirect political influence on public service media.

**Opportunities** for deliberative communication:

- greater diversity of opinions and rich production of media and digital content,
- new media legislation, which is more comprehensive, normative and covers several types of media,
- establishment of a national media regulator, whose competencies could be strengthened to be able react more flexibly in relation to the new media types without government standards,
- dual broadcasting system,
- impossibility of media cross-ownership within different types of media,
- pro-European country – regular adoption of various European directives and initiatives.

## 3. Risks and opportunities of journalism domain

### 3.1. Development and Agency of Change

The deregulation of the media sector occurred after November 1989, when the Communist regime fell and, subsequently, the legislative and economic environment adapted to the entry of private capital into the media sphere began to emerge. The Constitution of the independent Slovak Republic declared that publishing the press is subject to the notification procedure and business in the fields of radio and television broadcasting and retransmission is subject to the authorization procedure. Gradually, the bodies regulating the audiovisual sector were created, but in the second half of the 1990s, there was a clear attempt by politicians to influence the functioning of both public and private media. There was no unified media policy strategy in Slovakia. The economic crisis in 2008 also affected the operating of the media sector and the



conditions of the journalistic profession. Gradually, however, digital media were established in the media space, which opened up new platforms for journalistic production, but also for citizen journalists who could become creators of media content. Another challenge for the media was the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences.

The media and journalism in Slovakia have always been very sensitive to political and economic forces that had an impact on their ability to remain independent and produce quality journalism. This fact is also striking in the case of the public broadcaster RTVS, since its director-general is elected and removed from office by the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Since 1993, a total of 18 directors-general have managed the public television broadcaster in Slovakia. The unflattering image of this public broadcaster, which in the past was perceived by the general public as a servile showcase of the dominant political power, has been amended in the last decade, and RTVS news stories are currently considered as the most reliable news service in Slovakia.

### 3.2. Market Conditions

The contemporary Slovak media market can be characterized by the presence of foreign capital, especially in terms of electronic and online media. At present, private media players have a dominant position on the media market in relation to television and radio broadcasting. In the case of print and online media, these are exclusively privately owned entities.

The most important fact that changed the whole media legislation was the creation of a dual system of broadcasting – the efficient coexistence of private media companies and public service media within the national media market. New media outlets, which were operated and financed by domestic or foreign investors, began to appear on the market. The first democratically passed legal act related to media was Act No. 468/1991 Coll. on Operation of Radio and Television Broadcasting (1991), which was later preserved by the independent Slovak Republic after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Basically, we can say that during the 1990s, media legislation was focused on ‘opening’ the free, pluralist media environment and thus enabling privately owned media to operate on the market and, more importantly, ensuring free access to information.

Several significant changes took place on the press market after 2015. Back in 2014, the Penta Investment Group bought a 50% stake in the Petit Press Publishing House from the German shareholder Rheinisch-Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft. This course of events led to departure of 50 journalists working in the editorial office of the elite daily newspaper SME; they subsequently founded a new elite daily newspaper titled Denník N. The Penta Group definitively left Petit Press in April 2021, when its remaining 34% minority stake was bought by the New York-based Media Development Invest Fund (MDIF). The remaining shares are still owned by the original domestic shareholder Prvá slovenská investičná spoločnosť. The most widely read Slovak dailies include Nový čas (FPD Media), Plus jeden deň (News and Media Holding), Pravda (Our Media SR), SME (Petit Press) and Hospodárske noviny (Mafra Slovakia). Most of these companies (FPD Media, News and Media Holding, Our Media SR) are domestic. Foreign capital and activities of multinational publishing companies based outside Slovakia have reduced significantly, the major Slovak online news media outlet Aktuality.sk operated by Ringier being an exception.

As for the segment of commercial television, the most watched commercial television, TV Markíza, also manages the secondary television channels Doma and Dajto and the TV Markíza International station (since 2016). The channel has maintained its leading market position since its foundation in 1996. In 2020, it was bought by the late Czech billionaire Petr Kellner, the chief executive officer of the PPF Investment Group.

The radio market in Slovakia is quite stable. The commercial Rádio Expres has been the most listened-to radio station for a long time, followed by the first circuit of the public RTVS, Rádio Slovensko, and the commercial broadcaster Fun rádio. In August 2021, Expres, after obtaining the necessary consent of the Slovak Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission, bought the competing radio stations Európa 2 and Jemné (now called Rádio Melody) and their online products. These radio stations now represent the newly formed domestic company Bauer Media Slovakia, together with their online platforms. It can be said that due to this, the radio market in Slovakia is horizontally concentrated.

In terms of social networking, Slovak media market is shaped and saturated by major foreign conglomerates based (mostly) in the U.S. In 2021, research conducted by the Go4insight agency involving 1,000 Slovak citizens aged 15–79 claimed that the most popular social networking site in the country is Alphabet's streaming platform YouTube (78% of the adult population visit YouTube at least once a month), followed by Meta's Facebook (76% of the adult population visit Facebook at least once a month) and Instagram (45%) and the most prominent Slovak social networking site, Pokec (24%). Social media services such as Pinterest, TikTok, Snapchat or Twitter are significantly less popular, visited at least once a month by less than 20% of the respondents.

Changes also occurred in the structure of the media. In 2018, the Mafra Publishing House, which belongs to the Agrofert Enterprise, took over the publishing activities of the German publishing house Bauer Media in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In 2021, the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission approved the acquisition of the radio stations Európa 2 and Jemné by Bauer Media, the company which also operates the most popular Rádio Expres. Therefore, since September 2021, there have been two strong players on the Slovak commercial radio market. The first one is the company Bauer Media Slovakia, which operates Rádio Expres, Rádio Melody and Európa 2. The second major broadcaster is the company Radio Group, which includes the popular radio stations Fun rádio and Rádio Vlna.

### 3.3. Public Service Media

In the 1990s, the transformation of the Slovak media system in the context of the ongoing social changes and Slovak media and their functioning within democratic society were negatively influenced by government lead by the Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar (Olekšák & Kravčák, 2008; Kravčák, 2008, Kerecman, 2009). Both television and radio were characterized by a low level of credibility and acceptance by the public, which they restored only slowly. Also, for that reason, public media could hardly compete with commercial media, which far surpassed them in terms of market share, viewership and listening ratings.

One of the most significant changes in the public media sector in Slovakia was the merger of previously autonomous institutions – Slovak Television and Slovak Radio – into one public media organization called Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS). This transformation was realized on the basis of Act No. 532/2015 Coll. on Radio and Television of Slovakia, as a result of which several organizational changes took place in this institution. It was an effort to reform the public medium and at the same time save financial resources for its operation. The suspension of concessionary fees, the public broadcaster's main source of income, was also discussed among politicians, but eventually this did not happen. In 2019, in addition to Jednotka and Dvojka, a third television program service, Trojka, began its broadcasting. It offered dramatic productions, various kinds of TV shows, series or older films drawn from the archive of Slovak Television. The fourth public TV channel is called :ŠPORT and it was established in December 2021, focusing on live sporting events attended by Slovak athletes. On 28 February 2022, RTVS reacted to the armed conflict in Ukraine by temporarily replacing Trojka by a specialized round-

the-clock news channel :24. However, this lax idea was widely criticized due to low quality of the offered news services; thus, Trojka became available again on 10 June 2022.

Regarding the financing of Slovak public radio and television, the current mechanism is unsustainable and a new model of financing the public media needs to be considered as soon as possible. The contract with the state guarantees Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS) an annual subsidy of at least 15 million Euros, which, however, does not cover the costs of the broadcaster's basic annual activities. According to Media Pluralism Monitor, the Political Independence area in Slovakia shows a large discrepancy between the private sector and the public service media (PSM). For the most part, private media have shown to be surprisingly resilient to political influence – contrary to public television.

The public broadcaster RTVS's revenues in 2020 amounted to more than 113 million Euros, of which 81.7 million were revenues from payments received from citizens (concessionary payments for public media services), 26 million were provided by a subsidy from the state budget and 5.9 million Euros were obtained from advertising and commercial activities. In 2021, the state subsidy was expected to increase to more than 31.5 million Euros. The public agency the News Agency of the Slovak Republic's revenues in 2020 were at the level of 5 million Euros, of which the subsidy from the state budget amounted to 2.2 million Euros.

In Slovakia, professional news and information services are provided by the public News Agency of the Slovak Republic (TASR) and the privately owned Slovak News Agency (SITA), which started operating in 1998. Since 2000, the private news agency has begun to gain significant clientele in the field of media business. While disseminating information, the public news agency TASR functions as a free and independent organization; its services must not support or act against any political, economic, religious, ethnic or other interest groups.

### 3.4. Production Conditions

The usual models and journalistic routines began to change both in connection with the economic crisis after 2008, but also with the advent of social media and multiplatform publishing. The COVID-19 pandemic also had a significant impact on the journalistic profession, primarily in terms of the reduction of editorial positions, subsequent accumulation of specializations and topics covered by a single journalist, but also changes in the types of contracts concluded between journalists and their employers. Permanent (full-time) employment contracts became scarce and hard to achieve.

Slovak media scholars and researchers express their rising interest in the Internet and social media. Becoming more and more significant publishing platforms and journalistic sources, these media are discussed from various points of view. The existing sources focus on different problems resulting from the complex relationships between 'traditional' (especially print) media, journalism, social media and digital and information competencies of media professionals (Poláková, 2007). Security issues associated with online communication and ethical aspects of the journalistic profession in terms of the digital environment are important as well. As a profession, journalism is defined as the essential driving force of today's media culture (Radošinská & Višňovský, 2013). Instead of applying this approach drawn from media and cultural studies, other theoretical works offer different perspectives of understanding the given problems by discussing philosophical (phenomenological and hermeneutical) aspects of processing and disseminating media content (Gálik & Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2015). Some authors underline the fact that journalism is, in many ways, losing its core values (Sámelová, 2019; Sámelová, 2020). Another important line of research is represented by authors interested in the processes of shaping journalistic content (Tušer, 2010; Tušer, 2012) and various aspects bound to creative

ways of processing information that is to be disseminated via different communication platforms (Tušer, 2010; Rončáková, 2011; Rončáková, 2015).

As for investigative journalism, it has gained society-wide importance after the murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée. Kuciak's work published by the online news media outlet Aktuality.sk gained public attention and recognition after his untimely and violent death on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018. The following criminal investigation confirmed that the murder was associated with the young journalist's investigative work. As a result, the NGO Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak was established later in 2018. However, even this area of journalism is financially undermined, and only a few media outlets specialize in investigative journalism. As a result, opinion-based investigative TV programs have gradually disappeared from Slovak television screens.

### 3.5. Journalists' Agency

Regarding journalists and their position on the labor market, official statistical data on the number of journalists working in public and commercial media is not available. In practice, there are collective agreements between journalists and their employers, but they do not apply to freelance journalists or those who work for a variety of different media outlets.

The professionalization and autonomy of journalists are necessary for the free exercise of the journalistic profession. The Slovak Syndicate of Journalists as a state organization was founded in 1993. Its task is to protect the freedom of speech and information dissemination in accordance with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, international treaties and other relevant documents, defend the professional interests of the Syndicate's members as well as other journalists, and promote the access of journalists to quality information sources. Thus, the organization aims to improve the conditions of journalistic work, which is necessary for the realization of the social mission of the media. The Syndicate also supports the professional development of journalists and education of future media professionals.<sup>307</sup> However, it can be concluded that its position is currently rather formal and the organization needs to deal with a number of internal problems.

Even though the ethical standards related to journalism are clearly defined and declared in Slovakia (the Journalistic Code, PR Code and others), the media practice is much more complex. In the past, journalists were exposed to tensions within the media (their employers), which faced political and economic pressures, or were involved in direct or indirect corruption affairs driven by and associated with lobbyists and economic or political interest groups. This phenomenon is not unique in post-communist countries. Slovak journalists are affected by this problem to a lesser extent than, for example, journalists in the Russian Federation, but significantly more than journalists in the neighboring Czechia.<sup>308</sup>

### 3.6. Journalists' Working Conditions

It may be stated that the generally low acceptance of the journalistic profession in Slovakia is inadequate, resulting in social (mis)recognition, low social prestige and worsening economic conditions of Slovak journalists. However, a focused discussion about the opportunities and risks related to this fact was established in Slovakia, especially in 2018, after the murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak. The event brought a wave of protests and drove a significant political change. It also raised the issue of supporting investigative journalism and the urgent need to increase its social and cultural status.

<sup>307</sup> <http://www.ssn.sk/o-ssn/stanovy/>

<sup>308</sup> [https://www.transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/030807\\_uloha.pdf](https://www.transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/030807_uloha.pdf)

The activities of the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists, as a status organization of professional journalists, are questionable. In 2008, the Slovak Press Watch agency conducted a survey including 165 journalists working for print and electronic media; they were asked about their opinions on selected media coverage issues. Naming the biggest problems, they mentioned the low ethical and professional level of journalism as a factor negatively affecting journalistic communication, the absence of rules on how to approach donations, the intrusiveness of media agencies and their efforts to distort information, the tendency of companies to 'buy' a journalist, the pressure realized through advertising and various forms of manipulation. Within their own ranks, they were embarrassed by their colleagues' unprofessionalism, conscious distortion of information, violations of the right to privacy and acceptance of inappropriate 'gifts'.<sup>309</sup>

Researchers affiliated with FMK UCM in Trnava are currently evaluating data from the third wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study research (2021–2022). 244 respondents (journalists) filled in the questionnaire, while almost 60% of them work in Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak Republic, as editors. Considering the dominant forms of employment, 41.8% of research participants have a full-time employment contract and almost 39% of respondents are self-employed or freelancers. The results of the inquiry did not confirm any significant changes of the situation of journalists before and during the pandemic. As many as 84% of respondents stated that they were not affiliated with any professional journalistic organization. Even though the questionnaire did not monitor the average wage, the answers showed implicitly that for most respondents, journalism is the main source of income. And as for the salaries in the journalistic profession, the average gross salary of a Slovak journalist is currently 1,530 Euros, the highest gross wages being located in the Bratislava Region (1,730 Euros). However, the salaries of journalistic professions working outside the capital are incomparably lower. Recently, the NGO Transparency International has indicated that staff reductions in RTVS concerning media professionals specializing in news making might have been excessive and unnecessary, but no misconduct of either the (now former) director-general Jaroslav Rezník or other managers has been proven so far.

Slovak journalists have traditionally benefitted from a strong Freedom of Information Act and case law that defend their rights. After taking power in 2020, the current government promised new laws to improve the protection of journalists and their sources, to strengthen the editorial and financial independence of public broadcasting, to increase the transparency of media ownership and funding, and to reduce prison sentences for defamation. Their adoption has been, however, progressing slowly.<sup>310</sup>

The 2018 assassination of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová can be perceived as a notable breaking point. Although two persons involved in the double murder to order and a supposed intermediary have been convicted, the trial of the main perpetrator, the controversial entrepreneur Marián Kočner and his accomplice is still ongoing. The case of the long-term illegal surveillance of Ján Kuciak and 30 other journalists preceding his murder is not closed either. Facing frequent online attacks, Slovak journalists are also subject to threats and physical violence when attending public protests against COVID-19 restrictions or other kinds of events that reflect the general public's dissatisfaction with the current political situation in the country.

### 3.7. Intra-Organizational Diversity of Human Resources

Currently, there is no official data on the journalistic profession in Slovakia regarding gender, age and education of journalists, their level of experience and other relevant indicators. There is

<sup>309</sup> [https://is.muni.cz/th/oa0s9/Vysledna\\_sprava\\_SK.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/th/oa0s9/Vysledna_sprava_SK.pdf)

<sup>310</sup> <https://rsf.org/en/country/slovakia>



also no data on journalists affiliated with the public or commercial media. However, some information regarding human resources can be found in official documents issued by the public media, e.g., in their annual reports. The number of journalists employed by private media companies (and other data regarding their education, gender and forms of employment) is not publicly available. The latest available data on PSM was recorded in 2020. In RTVS's annual economic report, it is stated that in 2020, RTVS employed 1,556 people in total, 41.2% of them women. Compared to 2019, RTVS's employees included more people categorized as 'artists'. Moreover, in 2020, RTVS employed more college-educated people than in 2019; in contrast, the number of employees possessing high school education without GCSE decreased. The average age of RTVS's employees was 46.73 years of age.

### 3.8. Journalistic Competencies, Education and Training

University education centered on journalism and media studies is highly developed and provided by publicly funded as well as privately owned universities, predominantly by Comenius University in Bratislava, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Catholic University in Ružomberok, and Pan-European University (private university). The universities offer Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral degrees in journalism, media and communication studies, marketing communication and similar fields of study.

Various courses and workshops focused on specific abilities and the development of professional journalistic competencies are also offered by NGOs. According to the third wave of WJS, 63.9% of respondents completed their university education in the field of journalism. However, data on the competencies of professional journalists in Slovakia has not been systematically collected.

Access to the journalistic profession in Slovakia is not limited and its performance does not require specialized education or experience. However, according to the results of the third wave of the WJS, the share of journalists who are journalism graduates or have a degree in media and communication studies (or in a related field) is increasing. Journalists' professional development and training are primarily carried out on an individual basis. Some NGOs offer specialized trainings focused on, for example, fact checking, debunking disinformation or data analysis. Even in connection with reporting during the pandemic, it became clear that Slovak journalists have limited knowledge on, for example, medical and other highly erudite topics (Višňovský & Radošinská, 2021). Working with digital technologies is an integral part of the professional competences of journalists and media professionals. This necessity became apparent especially after the advent of online journalism, but much more clearly in connection with social media, podcasts, etc. Digital media are also an important source of information for journalists.

### 3.9. Professional Culture and Role Perception

Research on professional culture and perception of the roles of journalists does not have a long and continuous tradition in Slovakia, which is also conditioned by the late historical and democratic development of the media system (after 1989), and by clear, unwelcome state interference in the functioning of the media and the work of journalists in the 1990s. Some studies have focused, for example, on the profession of a journalist and their desired independence from economic and political influences. Research within more specific areas of professional culture and perception of roles is notably absent.

According to research conducted by the Slovak Press Watch agency in 2008, in which 165 journalists participated, 75% of journalists have encountered various types of 'gifts', but according to them, accepting these presents does not affect their journalistic work. However, the opinion on accepting a gift was not uniform, with 42% of journalists against accepting presents under



any circumstances; on the contrary, 8% of journalists would accept gifts with no remorse. Roughly 50% made their decisions depending on the value of the gift and the circumstances of receiving it – the more expensive the gift is, the less acceptable it seems to be.<sup>311</sup> The transfer of journalists to political positions is also significant; for example, some former media professionals now work as members of the Slovak National Council or are employed by politicians as their assistants or media advisers, affiliated with the press departments of ministries, state companies, etc.

Politicians, judges, but also financial groups often use lawsuits against the media to intimidate journalists, but also for their own enrichment. While in the past mainly judges got into disputes with the media, toward the end of Robert Fico's second government in 2016, the Penta Financial Group became more active in this area. According to analysts, lawsuits against the media are a significant problem in Slovakia, because the high compensations granted by the courts are intimidating and discouraging for journalists who are involved. In addition, the media have to invest a lot of time, money and energy in court disputes. This puts pressure on journalists to be less critical. For example, the former Prime Minister Robert Fico and the former Minister of Justice and Chair of the Supreme Court Štefan Harabin earned hundreds of thousands of Euros from the media through lawsuits.

*As for the risks and opportunities related to deliberative communication and democracy within the journalism domain, various statements need to be emphasized:*

**Risks** for deliberative communication:

- low degree of journalistic freedom and journalists being under constant verbal pressure of politicians,
- populist polarization of Slovak society,
- low level of protection of journalists and the state's unwillingness to act in terms of protecting lives and professional activities of journalists (also discussed in connection with the murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak),
- inadequate acceptance of the journalistic profession in relation to social (mis)recognition, its generally low social prestige,
- weak involvement of NGOs in the processes of deliberative democracy and communication,
- inability of editorial offices and newsrooms to offer their staff full-time jobs, favoring forms of employment that are more convenient for employers, such as short-term contracts and freelancing,
- insufficient financial evaluation of journalists,
- strong propensity of Slovak citizens to believe in disinformation and hoaxes,
- insufficiently developed mechanisms to debunk disinformation and hoaxes, especially at the level of the media themselves,
- deleting user comments on social media.

<sup>311</sup> [https://is.muni.cz/th/oa0s9/Vysledna\\_sprava\\_SK.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/th/oa0s9/Vysledna_sprava_SK.pdf)

**Opportunities** for deliberative communication:

- constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and the right to information and other legal regulations,
- pluralist functioning of the media environment,
- a well-developed system of educating journalists and the existence of the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists,
- functioning mechanisms of ethical self-regulation,
- use of new distribution channels and implementation of innovation in terms of producing and disseminating journalistic content,
- journalists being granted access to open sources and able to exercise their right to access information obtained from public and state authorities.

## 4. Risks and opportunities of media usage patterns domain

### 4.1. Development and agency of change

The Slovak media environment of the first twenty years of the 21st century has gradually evolved under the influence of technological development, economic situation and political and social situation. Essential for the first decade was the formation and stabilization of individual media on the media market, the struggle for the media consumer. The second decade was marked in particular by the change in ownership relations, the merging of media under one ownership and economic roof within media houses and media consortia, the intense boom in the availability of the Internet and mobile phones as ubiquitous means of consuming media content, and the murder of the journalist Ján Kuciak. All this has influenced the availability and perception of media content, as well as the formation of certain stable patterns of behaviour of media content users. The behaviour of the recipients of media content has also been influenced by the charging for the consumption of media content on the Internet (in the first half of the second decade through the common payment portal Piano, in the second half by the introduction of charges by individual media separately).

### 4.2. Agency of media-users and analysts

If we look at the availability of media and the Internet in Slovakia, as one of the important conditions for free access to information and access to the Internet as an important and preferred communication medium, we can conclude that the audience in Slovakia, despite not very favourable geographical conditions, has access to all broadcast media (radio, television - through terrestrial broadcasting, cable distribution and satellite broadcasting) and Slovakia is very well covered by the Internet - up to 90% of households<sup>312</sup> are connected to the Internet.

A survey on the media behaviour of different generations shows that there are differences between the generations in terms of access to traditional media and new media (news portals, web portals, social networks). Generation X spends an average of 2 hours a day in front of the TV, Baby Boomers an hour and fifty minutes, Generation Y an hour and three-quarters, and the youngest Generation Z almost half as much as their parents – less than 75 minutes. A significant platform that each generation pays attention to when watching video is YouTube. The difference between generations in downloading films and videos is interesting, and on the other hand understandable – this activity is more characteristic of Generations Z and Y. In watching streaming services, the behaviour of the generations is balanced.<sup>313</sup>

<sup>312</sup> <https://virtualno.sk/vyrocnna-sprava-o-internete-na-slovensku-2021/>

<sup>313</sup> <https://medialne.trend.sk/marketing/zakutia-generacie-ako-komunikuje-ake-media-vyuziva>

If we talk about radio broadcasting, it is also confirmed here that the older generations tend more towards classical media than the younger ones. Radio listening among Generation Z is roughly half that of other generations (approximately 79 minutes - on weekdays). The research also confirms another thing, namely that the youngest generation prefers listening to music from YouTube instead of radio. Older generations engage in this activity significantly less.<sup>314</sup> Although it is not yet very well documented in the research, listening to podcasts, from a variety of platforms (e.g. Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify or Deezer), is currently very popular with both younger and older generations. This is related to the possibility to listen to auditory content while performing other, mainly physical and automated activities.

Today, all media have their media content on the Internet, its accessibility to the public varies, and some users of news portals or TV stations have to pay for it. Today, mobile phones are very popular and have become dominant for communication on social networks<sup>315</sup>, as well as for entertainment and for obtaining news and information.

In Slovakia, smart phones with the Android operating system are the most used - more than 55% of Slovaks use them, almost 10% of Slovaks use Apple phones, and the remaining third use so-called "non-smart" phones (the data are from Market Locator research; they are based on data collected in the period 05/2017 - 04/2018 from 2.9 million customers of Orange, Telekom and O2 operators who provided consent; the 4ka operator has not yet joined the project).<sup>316</sup> Looking at the use of brands, the young generation tends towards iPhones, the younger and older middle generation towards smartphones and retirees towards "non-smart" phones. Here too, the situation has already changed slightly and more and more pensioners have started to use smart phones.

The question is what the different generations are doing on the internet. GFK research has confirmed that for Generation X, the Internet is a source of information – whether news or through search engines. For Generation Z, the priority is visiting social networking sites, watching videos and searching for information through search engines. Although in the past Facebook was important to young Gen Z (up to 90%), today they have moved on to Instagram and Snapchat. Tik-Tok is gaining more and more popularity. Facebook has remained as a communication space for Generation X and Y, WhatsApp or Viber. The average member of Generation Z is active on up to five social networks, accessing them from mobile devices almost half the time.<sup>317</sup>

#### *Agency of the data collectors/analyst:*

In Slovakia, quality media research was carried out until 1993 by the Methodological Research Cabinet (MVK), which was part of the Slovak Radio. It was a professional workplace and, in addition to media research, it also occasionally conducted public opinion polls. Slovak Television also had a media research office. After 1993, MVK became an independent commercial research agency and expanded its activities to other areas of research. In 1993, MEDIAN.SK<sup>318</sup> was established, a stable research agency in the field of media, public opinion and market research. It regularly provides quarterly reports on the readership of daily, weekly and monthly newspapers, radio listenership and television viewership. It has modern technical solutions for efficient survey management, e.g. wheeluator or adMeter. Since 1996, MEDIAN has been Czechia's licensing partner for the TGI global survey for Czechia and Slovakia, which, in addition to the media behaviour of Czechs and Slovaks, describes their consumer behaviour or lifestyle. The survey is conducted annually on a relatively large sample -- more than 8,000 respondents in

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022>

<sup>316</sup> <https://www.mojandroid.sk/smartfony-vyuzivaju-dve-tretiny-slovakov/>

<sup>317</sup> <https://medialne.trend.sk/marketing/zakutia-generacie-ako-komunikuje-ake-media-vyuziva>

<sup>318</sup> <https://www.median.sk/sk/o-nas/>

the Slovak Republic and more than 15,000 respondents in Czechia. In 2002, MEDIAN.SK was founded with the intention to be closer to its Slovak clients and to build its own survey network. It closely cooperates with and represents LERACH, which has a significant position in the field of software for the analysis of data from TV viewership surveys (TV meters) and media monitoring in Czechia and Slovakia. The basic outputs of this agency are freely available and are the basis for various reports and comparative research. The second company that is engaged in full-screen objective data collection on media consumption, specifically television viewership, is PMT (<https://pmt.sk/>). It was founded in 2002. Its aim is to ensure the implementation of electronic measurement of television viewership through peplemeters in Slovakia. Its partners were Slovak Television, TV Markíza (MARKÍZA - SLOVAKIA, spol. s r.o.), TV JOJ (MAC TV, s.r.o.), TA3 (C.E.N. s.r.o.) and AMA (Association of Media Agencies). Since 2004, they have been regularly carrying out measurements through peplemeters, giving both TV and media agencies access to correct TV market data and making the viewership results available to them the day after the measurement day in the morning, while every second of the TV broadcast can be analysed. From the data they can select various data (e.g. on TV behaviour of standard or defined target groups, audience shares in the TV market, ratings, loyalty, etc.). A few years ago, another agency dedicated to monitoring media content was created -- Monitora.sk (<https://monitora.sk/>). Monitora.sk offers a comprehensive media intelligence system for print, online, radio and TV in Slovakia and Czechia. In addition, each media outlet performs its own analyses, mostly for more efficient use of time and space related to the subsequent sale of advertising space. Most of the time, these workers are members of the marketing departments. Full-screen broadcasters also have special departments that do their own research before deploying a new proprietary or licensed format. They pay special attention to analysing data on political talk shows. In addition, research on media perception and credibility has been sporadically conducted by other agencies that have carried out special research at the request of the media or on the basis of social practice requirements (the aforementioned IGC, AKO (<https://ako.sk/>), the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) (<https://www.ivo.sk/104/sk/kto-sme/ivo>), the Media Institute (<http://www.mi.sk/index.html>), etc.). The outputs of the above-mentioned companies are mostly carried out on the basis of the client's requirements, they are paid for and access to them is limited, they serve specific purposes of the given media. Since 2017, Slovakia has been included in the global research Reuters Institute: Digital News Report, which has been conducted globally since 2012 by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism University of Oxford (<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022>). Expert articles on research and developments in the media have been published variously. They regularly appear in the professional journal Strategies (<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/news>), on the web portal medialne.sk (<https://medialne.trend.sk/>) or omediach.sk (<https://www.omediach.com/>). They are freely available to readers. Various specific research (both quantitative and qualitative) is produced by university academics who publish it in scientific journals (e.g. Communication Today (<https://communicationtoday.sk/>), European Journal of Media, Art & Photography (<https://ejmap.sk/>), Media Literacy and Academic Research (<https://www.mlar.sk/>), Acta Ludologica (<https://actaludologica.com/>), – all articles are freely accessible, Questions of Journalism (<http://www.questionsofjournalism.sk/>) (until 2006 they are freely accessible, from the following year only through the Central and Eastern European Online Library database, access to the articles is chargeable). In conclusion, we can state that in Slovakia there is continuous research on media viewing as well as consumer behaviour of media users. Research is being done in professional practice and in academia.

The general basic outputs of research agencies' research are also publicly available, specific outputs on consumer groups and the impact of articles or shows are specific information, the requirements for their research are mostly commissioned by media or media agencies or com-

munication or marketing departments and then handled internally. Most academic research is publicly available in scientific journals, peer-reviewed journals or conference proceedings.

### 4.3. Access to news and other media content

Users have good accessibility to news print newspapers as well as other print media. They can subscribe and receive them in their mailboxes through mail carriers, buy them in town and village grocery stores or shopping malls, at specialized newsstands, or at the post office. However, by the end of 2021, there was a backlash over the abolition of Saturday delivery of subscription printed newspapers. This service was popular with the elderly population; the Saturday edition had the benefit of so-called Saturday supplements (e.g. a weekly television programme, a supplement for women, advice for gardeners, a special supplement for pensioners, etc.) On Saturdays, the newspapers *Sme* and *Pravda* were particularly popular; they decided to publish their Saturday editions with supplements on Fridays, so their subscribers were not deprived of these editions. Saturday editions are officially on sale until Sunday. All Slovak serious daily newspapers (*SME*, *Pravda*, *Hospodárske noviny* and *Denník N*) have their news content on the Internet. The disadvantage is that up to 3 out of 4 (except *Pravda*) require a fee to make their news content available. The tabloid media are available online for free. In addition, internet news portals (e.g. *aktuality.sk*, *seznam.sk*, etc.) also publish news. Each print media - weeklies, monthlies, also has its own website, where the reader can find, with some delay, published media content, but also other, unpublished articles in the press.

Radio broadcasting is available under allocated licences, the licence is granted for eight years, and broadcasts are produced terrestrially, via satellite and cable, and over the internet. In Slovakia, radios are broadcast nationwide - the public broadcaster RTVS, *Rádio Expres* (the most listened to radio), *Fun rádio*, *Europe 2*, *Rádio Melody*, *Rádio Vlna*, etc. In addition to the nationwide (multi-regional) radios, regional, local, urban and internet radios are available to listeners. Each radio also has its own website where it streams its broadcasts, has an archive and communicates with listeners through articles and competitions.

Television broadcasting is carried out in several ways. In addition to terrestrial digital broadcasting, cable and satellite broadcasting are widespread. Each company has its own line-up of programmes (programme packages), which it communicates to the audience for a fee. Televisions offer their own linear broadcasts, and on-demand streaming services are beginning to proliferate, which are chargeable in all TV channels except the RTVS. In the specialised area, in addition to the archive, they offer extra programmes - the possibility to watch the programme/film in advance, interviews with filmmakers and actors, docudramas from the filming, programmes published only in this section.

In terms of the availability of media content in Slovakia, we can state that the content is mostly available to the audience free of charge, while the content of online news newspapers and the archives of commercial television (except for news) are charged for. Each media outlet also has a Facebook page where recipients can express their opinions on the content.

### 4.4. Relevance of news media

In terms of the free availability of news to the audience, the situation in the Slovak media space is changing. There are fewer media in the internet space that have freely available news content than those for which you have to pay (some media unlock their content at least for a certain period of time). Commercial radio stations have minimised news coverage, mostly drawing on agency news, news is not archived. Commercial television stations have pay-per-view broadcasts in linear broadcasting, and news or news packages on cable and satellite operators' offerings; they are only available in the archive for a certain period of time, after which access is



charged. The public service broadcaster RTVS (both radio and television) has a news archive available free of charge. Each media outlet also has a Facebook page where recipients can comment on the content.

Older audiences tend to search for news through news portals and by watching TV news. Younger audiences are not very interested in news, and if they do follow it, it is mostly through social media. This is also documented in a recent survey by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2022) (<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022>). After 2020, online news will overtake TV news, and news viewing in print media will decline. This is as much due to declining subscribers to traditional print newspapers as their lagging behind flexible online news coverage. At the same time, we may see an increase in news acquisition via social media, a consequence of an increasingly large working-age Generation Y and Z. For these generations, social media is becoming the dominant source of information. In Slovakia and in the European Union there is an intense need to address the distinction between quality news content and fake news and hoaxes, which has been reflected in the formulation and adoption of new media laws in both the European Union and Slovakia (2022). In the first half of 2022, some news websites that claimed to be alternative were temporarily blocked. It will be interesting to analyse how the behaviour of some recipient groups changed after the blocking of some news websites and media outlets in relation to their production and dissemination of conspiracy theories and hoaxes. This blocking has sparked a debate in both the professional and lay public about freedom of journalistic expression and censorship of media content, and has divided society into two camps. The first approved of the blocking of some alternative online news media because it saw it as an opportunity to combat conspiracies and hoaxes. The second camp objected to the decision because it deciphered in it an attempt by the government to prevent criticism of it by the opposition, who felt marginalised in the mainstream media and that the recipients lacked a different perspective on events at home and in the world than the mainstream media provided.

#### 4.5. Trust in media

Only 26 percent of Slovaks trust the media. According to an international survey by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2022), this is four percentage points lower than a year ago and eight points lower than in 2018 (34%), when trust in the media was at its highest since the start of regular measurement (2017). The Slovak part of the survey was conducted on a sample of 2007 respondents. RTVS and TA3 are perceived as the most trustworthy media. They are public service and news channels whose broadcasts should be based on the factuality, objectivity and impartiality of their reports, as well as their attractiveness, which is confirmed by their position in the ranking. After them, regional and local newspapers are trusted by the audience. Hospodárske noviny and Rádio Expres - the most listened to radio station - are ranked fourth and fifth respectively as the most trusted news daily/portal. Subsequently, the news media, commercial radio and television are interspersed. Interestingly, Denník N, belonging to the group of serious media, is almost at the bottom of the ranking, just ahead of the tabloid media; it was also overtaken by the regional daily from Košice<sup>319</sup>

RTVS as a public broadcaster is ranked mostly second according to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (in 2020 it was ranked first) (<https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/>), according to median.sk Slovak recipients perceive it as the television with the most trustworthy news for the tenth quarter in a row<sup>320</sup>. Despite this assessment, there are also opinions in both the professional and lay public about the bias and unprofessionalism of public service news. It

<sup>319</sup> <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022>.

<sup>320</sup> <https://www.rtvs.sk/novinky/zaujímavosti/293753/televizne-spravodajstvo-rtvs-stale-najobjektivnejšie>



will be interesting to see what the credibility of public service news and opinions on it will be after the measures that the new director of RTVS, elected to office by Parliament in June 2022, is going to take. He has made news coverage one of the priorities of his project.

*As for the risks and opportunities related to deliberative communication and democracy within the media usage patterns domain, various statements need to be emphasized:*

**Opportunities** for deliberative communication:

- there is sufficient internet coverage in Slovakia, the Slovak audience has access to all media, as each media outlet is already available via the internet, it has its own page on the social network as well
- information and news is accessible, the recipient can choose from a sufficient amount of domestic and foreign diverse media content and news (the assessment is until 2021),
- RTVS (public service broadcaster) and TA3 (news television) are perceived as the most trustworthy media. These are public service and news channels which should pride themselves on the factuality, objectivity and impartiality of their contributions, but also on a certain interest for the recipient, as confirmed by their position in the rankings,
- some sites have locked discussions under articles - there are no negative patterns of communication that have often taken place under articles.
- both older and middle generations and young audiences are involved in the discussions, but each on their own platform.

**Risks** for deliberative communication:

- Media credibility drops from 34 (2018) to 26 (2020) points (began to be measured in 2017 – Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, sporadic surveys until then),
- loss of ability to discuss content online by locking discussions under articles,
- 14% of content is paywalled (2022) - not everyone is willing to pay for it, with interest in multiple media this amount increases significantly, TV content is also starting to be paywalled in the form of locked archives and/or special spaces for paying audiences
- the murder of the Slovak investigative journalist Ján Kuciak was not only a terrible crime, but also an unacceptable threat to media freedom in Slovakia and the European Union.
- Media owners influence the selection, shaping and framing of news in order to attract advertisers,
- a small number of oligarchs have seized control of most of the country's media.,
- oligarchs are buying up the media, founding political parties and entering the political fray.

## 5. Risks and opportunities of media related competencies domain

### 5.1. Development and agency of change

Currently, the role of the state in the system of media education in the process of lifelong education relates primarily to media education in the field of formal and informal education. In Slovakia, competences within the state administration for the field of media education are mainly divided between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture. The competence of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic includes media education in formal and informal education, accreditation of educational programs and training of media education teachers. The competence of the Ministry of Culture primarily includes the creation of appropriate legislative and institutional frameworks to support the development of citizens' media competences, as well as the area of regulation and co-regulation of the media environment, which also have an impact on media literacy. Some other ministries are part of this framework of state actors. These are mainly the Ministry of Investments and Regional Development, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of the Interior, which support the development of citizens' media competences through grant programs aimed mainly at financial support of non-governmental organizations.

Academic institutions are important actors in the promotion of media competences. It is mainly about the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, the Faculty of Arts of the Catholic University in Ružomberok, the Faculty of Arts of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra and the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Žilina. These academic institutions are mainly active in the implementation of various types of educational programs - not only for university students, but also for other target groups (especially seniors, teachers, parents.). Outside the academic environment, there is an active organization Iuventa - Slovak Youth Institute, which is mainly devoted to the development of media competences of young people and youth workers. An important place in increasing media literacy is also played by the corporate sector, which annually allocates financial resources to support non-governmental organizations dedicated to the development of critical thinking and other aspects of media competence. These are mainly telecommunications operators (Slovak Telecom, Orange, O2), but also IT companies (ESET) and banks. Some media news organizations are also active in Slovakia, which regularly hold educational workshops aimed mainly at secondary school students and publish various methodological and educational materials on an irregular basis (Denník N., Denník SME).

Over the past 15 years, Slovak experts in media literacy and media competencies have been members of several working groups and project teams dealing with various aspects of this issue. It was a participation in the "Media Literacy Expert Group" platform, which is an advisory body of the European Commission in the field of media education. Within this platform, research on media literacy of the adult population, children and adolescents, seniors, teachers in kindergartens and other target groups was carried out in Slovakia. In addition, Slovak experts participated in the activities of the European Audiovisual Observatory in Strasbourg, where they participated in an international comparative study focused on media literacy (Vrabec, 2016). In 2013-2014, Slovakia participated in the research activities of the "Transforming Audiences / Transforming Societies" project (ANR Translit). As part of this project, a comprehensive report on the current state of media literacy in Slovakia was prepared (Vrabec, N., & Petranová, 2014). Slovakia was also represented in preparing a collective monograph, which dealt with cross-country comparisons of public policies in media and information literacy in Europe (Aroldi, Mariño, & Vrabec, 2017). In 2016, Slovak experts participated in international comparative research to integrate media education into formal education (Vrabec, 2016). Faculty of Mass

Media Communication, University of St. Cyril and Methodius established a specialized workplace in Trnava in 2015 called the Media Literacy Testing Center. The centre aims to provide various research tasks focused on media literacy and media and information education issues. In 2018, the faculty established the Training Media Center focused on supporting and developing media competencies of pupils, students and teachers of primary and secondary schools, and other entities. The centre implements educational and research programs focused on the media outlet and the development of media competencies. The centre aims to develop the practical competencies of participants in working with the media, their evaluative and critical thinking concerning media content and a responsible approach in dealing with the media.

## 5.2. Overview of media related competencies in policy documents

The media education in Slovakia context is defined as a multidisciplinary concept that integrates knowledge and scientific apparatus of the wide range of social sciences (in particular mass media communication, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, information and library science, etc.) and that contributes to their application in the process of lifelong learning and the current needs of social practice. The main legal document framing media education policies is the Concept of Media Education in the Slovak Republic within the context of lifelong learning valid since 2009 (Ministerstvo kultúry SR, 2009). The document presents the main goals and strategies for media literacy policies and media education activities within the lifelong learning process.

In Slovakia, media education is defined as a lifelong, systematic and purposeful process of acquiring media competences and increasing the level of media literacy.

The main goals of media education in the lifelong learning process in Slovakia are as follows:

- increasing media literacy of all age groups of the population,
- updating of media competences, responsible and critical approach to media, effective use of media and new communication technologies,
- develop citizens' abilities to use the opportunities offered by the media and new means of communication to their advantage,
- protection of children and adolescents from threats brought by the media and new communication technologies in the content offer or the method of communication,
- protection of specific groups (children, seniors, people at risk of social exclusion, etc.) from contents and services that could endanger them by their nature, and which they cannot assess due to the insufficient level of media literacy,
- to prevent any forms of social exclusion due to insufficient level of media literacy.

## 5.3. Information about the media literacy programs in formal and/ or in non-formal education

Media education became part of the curriculum for the first time on the basis of school content reform implementation, which began in 2008 – 2009. In relevant school legislation, it is defined as a compulsory part of education, and individual schools have the right to decide about the form of its implementation into the curriculum. They can choose from three primary forms of integrating media education into educational programmes:

- (A) Media education as a cross-cutting topic integrated into the curriculum of suitable study courses;
- (B) Media education as independent subject;
- (C) Media education implemented in the form of a project, course and other practically aimed activities. (Vrabec, 2016, Kačínová & Kolčáková, 2013a, 2013b).

Slovakia has media literacy programs implemented in formal education, but they are not widely applied. This phenomenon is mainly due to the lack of qualified and motivated teachers who could teach media education. In addition, there is no pedagogical faculty in Slovakia that has an accredited teacher's study program focused on media education. Teacher education is present in Slovakia, but in most cases, it is not provided by public institutions but rather by NGO activists and academic institutions focused on media studies.

In Slovakia, there are roughly 18 parties involved in media literacy development in non-formal education. Seven of these significant stakeholders are academic institutions, with a primary concentration on media and information studies and pedagogy. Two stakeholders are classified as public authorities, while the other two are classified as audiovisual content suppliers. The Broadcasting and Retransmission Council is a stakeholder in the category of media regulators. According to the Media Services Act (2022), the regulator also has new competences in the area of monitoring the level of media competences of residents, as well as other tasks related to the support of educational activities in this area. Other stakeholders fall under the umbrella of civil society organizations (Nikoltchev, Cappello, Blázquez & Valais, 2016).

The opportunity concerning deliberative communication is that several non-profit organizations operating in Slovakia deal with various aspects of the development of media competencies. This is especially the prevention of the spread of hate speech and extremism in the online ecosystem (Gregussová, Drobný & Milo, 2013; Velšic, 2017); the development of media and information competencies as an essential part of critical thinking (Filo, Ivanič & Luppová, 2011; Makroš, 2019; N-Magazine, 2017) and the development of media competencies with a focus on disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories (Slovak Security Policy Institute, 2017; Slovak Security Policy Institute, 2018; Mesežnikov & Bartoš, 2020; Kačínová, 2019, Čavojská, Panczová & Závacká, 2020; Zajac, 2020).

#### 5.4. Actors and agents of media related competencies: risks and opportunities

Media education in Slovakia is aimed at acquiring several types of skills (especially digital and civic), with a special emphasis on competencies related to a critical approach to media content, as well as the ability to analyze, evaluate and create media content in various formats. Within the life stages and integration of an individual into society, media literacy is part of the process of primary and secondary socialization and becomes part of general and lifelong education. Target groups for the development of media literacy are therefore perceived as a means of eliminating generational differences and social exclusion, which ensures the prerequisites for the responsible use of media and new communication technologies by various target groups.

The Concept of Media Education in the Slovak Republic within the context of lifelong (Ministerstvo kultúry SR, 2009) divides the practical implementation of the development of media literacy into three basic levels, which are:

- (1) Primary and general, which represents the basic framework of media education with an emphasis on basic media competences, skills and abilities in relation to media and new communication technologies. It also includes the formation of a critical and selective approach to the content offer of media and communication systems, as well as the development of the basic knowledge level of individuals in the field of media and new communication technologies.
- (2) Secondary and updating, which includes updating the abilities and skills of individuals following the constant development of media, new trends in communication technologies and communication systems. This level builds on and complements the knowledge acquired in formal education.

**(3)** Tertiary and specific, which includes all potential spheres of threat, the protection of specific groups of the population against media contents and services that could endanger them by their nature. It mainly includes the prevention of generational lag and social exclusion and the protection of disadvantaged groups and seniors, as well as other specific topics and areas of the given area (e.g. the ability to resist misinformation, fake news, etc.)

The individual levels follow each other, they are not mutually exclusive, and they can be combined during practical implementation.

## 5.5 Assessment of media related competencies among citizens

Research on media literacy and media related competencies has been a tradition in Slovakia for almost 15 years. Until 2010, most research activities focused on the position and problems of traditional mass media (television, radio, the press) and their anchoring in a social and individual context. Only marginal attention has been paid to the media competencies of media users. After 2010, research and publications focusing on digital media and online communication gradually increased. This fact can be considered as one of the opportunities in terms of deliberative communication, as theoretical reflection and empirical research on media communication is an essential element contributing to a better understanding of the development and current trends of the media ecosystem. However, in the analysis of the corpus of bibliographic outputs in Slovakia, we also identified a risk, which is the majority focus on the theoretical or normative approach. The theoretical grounding of the issue of media competencies is fundamental. Still, without empirical approaches and examination of their current state in the population, this domain is limited by a lack of necessary knowledge reflected in application practice.

In terms of target groups, most research projects focused on children, adolescents and young adults. This can be seen as an opportunity, as a better understanding of the young generation serving to outline the relationship of these target groups to media communication and for a systemic approach in preparing youth policies. In 2007, the first research was conducted through a project focused on assessing young people's media literacy level in Slovakia (Vrabec, 2008). In 2009, a second research project was carried out in Slovakia to assess the level of online competence among young people aged 13 to 30 years (Vrabec, 2009). In 2013, qualitative research on youth in the context of media communication was implemented in Slovakia. The research also included an examination of this target group's media and information competencies (Vrabec & Petranová, 2013).

Psychologically oriented research focused on the attitudes and behavior of children and adolescents in the online space also has a tradition in Slovakia (Gregussová, Tomková & Balážová, 2010; Madro et al., 2015; Tomková et al., 2015; Hladíková & Hulajová, 2016; Hladíková, 2018). The research focused on these aspects had a relatively limited area of interest in media competencies. In most cases, the researchers focused thematically on the risks of online communication and digital media and the possibilities of preventing risky online behaviour. As a result, research on online communication opportunities has only been carried out to a very limited extent (Vrabec, 2010; Vrabec, 2012; Velšic, 2012; Velšic, 2014; Fichnová, Wojciechowski & Mikuláš, 2014; Vrabec, 2015; Vrabec & Petranová, 2015).

We also consider the fact that a relatively wide range of research has focused on the media competencies of the senior population to be a positive factor regarding this issue (Petranová, 2013; Petranová, 2014; Velšic, 2014; Petranová, 2016; Švecová, Kaňuková & Kačincová Predmerská, 2019; Jurczyk-Romanowska et al., 2019; Švecová & Kaňuková, 2019). The risk factor in terms of deliberative communication is the fact that in Slovakia, there is no research on disadvantaged groups. The only exception is research focused on examining the media competencies of visually impaired citizens (Vrabec & Petkáčová, 2014). However, a wider spectrum of empiri-



cal examination of the media competencies of other disadvantaged groups (e.g., Roma, migrants, etc.) could be both a challenge and an opportunity for research in this area.

As an opportunity in the context of deliberative communication, we can see that research focused on media competencies in the educational context has a strong tradition. IMEC – Centre of Media Literacy at FMK UCM – conducted two surveys targeted on the scale and the form of the representation of media education in the educational system in Slovakia. These surveys focused on comparing the level of media education strategies at different schools in the country. The main aim was to map the current status of the implementation of media education into the curriculum in elementary and secondary education in the Slovak Republic. The first survey carried out in 2011 was focused on the current status of media education teaching at secondary schools. The research team collected data from 631 schools – this represents 82% of all schools in Slovakia (Kačínová & Kolčáková, 2013a). The second survey was conducted in 2012 on the representative sample of 567 elementary schools from different municipalities and regions in Slovakia. In both surveys, data collection was carried out by the method of a telephone interview with teachers or school directors. This method was combined with curriculum analysis (Kačínová & Kolčáková, 2013b).

Further research has focused on various aspects of teacher education in the field of media literacy and the development of media competencies (Biziková, 2015; Kačínová, 2015; Magová, 2016; Kačínová, 2016; Vrabec, 2017; Petranová & Burianová, 2014, Vrabec, Graca & Mazáková, 2015, Hekelj, 2017). Another part of the research in this area focused on the media competencies of the students themselves (Vrabec, 2017; Prostináková Hossová & Košťálová, 2021; Hladíková, 2019). After 2016, we record a shift in Slovakia from the risks and prevention aspects of the Internet and digital media to the research of disinformation, fake news and hybrid threats (Slovak Security Policy Institute, 2017; Slovak Security Policy Institute, 2018; Mesežnikov & Bartoš, 2020; N-Magazine, 2017; Kačínová, 2019, Čavojová, Panczová & Závacká, 2020; Bulganová, 2020; Kvetanová, Kačincová Predmerská & Švecová, 2021).

Slovakia ranks 22nd of 27 EU Member States in the 2021 edition of the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). The country stays at the same position as in 2020. Across the human capital dimension indicators, Slovakia is just below or close to the EU average. In comparison to the EU average of 56 percent and 31 percent, 54 percent of Slovaks have at least basic digital abilities and 27 percent have above-basic digital skills. Slovakia's overall improvement in the examined sectors is limited. So far, public money used to promote digital transformation have not always had the expected effect. Education's digitalisation is falling short of its promise due to a shortage of skills and resources among schools, teachers, and students.

One of the primary pillars of the Slovak Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) is digital transformation, with an emphasis on public services, skills, and business digitalization. Slovakia is strongly connected to the major European digital efforts, and the RRP will support various multi-country projects.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted existing gaps in Slovakia's digital economy and society, including as connectivity, digital skills acquisition, and digitalization of schools, households, businesses, and public services. Slovakia has pledged to improve its DESI score and position. The Ministry of Investments, Regional Development, and Informatics published a thorough strategy and action plan<sup>1</sup> with actual initiatives to resolve deficiencies indicated by DESI indicators. This document reflects the core DESI elements and intends to achieve significant improvements by 2025. (Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2021: Slovakia, 2021).

According to the findings of a new edition of the Media Literacy Index for 2021, Slovakia ranked 22nd among the 35 monitored European countries. The index evaluates the resilience potential to fake news in 35 European countries by utilizing variables for media freedom, education, and



trust in people. Because the indicators are of varying importance, they are given varied weights in the model. The media freedom indicators (Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders) have the most weight, followed by the education indicators (PISA), with reading literacy having the most weight among them. The indicators of e-participation (UN) and trust in people (Eurostat) have a lower weight than the other indicators. (Lessenski, 2021).

In 2021, Slovakia achieved the following Media Literacy Index results in individual indicators:

Freedom of the Press (Freedom House): 26

*On a scale from 0 to 100 (best to worst)*

Press Freedom Index (Reporters without Borders): 22.67

*On a scale from 0 to 100 (best to worst)*

PISA score in reading literacy (OECD): 458

*The higher score the better; 500 is very good and below 300 is a very poor result*

PISA score in scientific literacy (OECD): 464

*The higher score the better; 500 is very good and below 300 is a very poor result*

PISA score mathematical literacy (OECD): 486

*The higher score the better; 500 is very good and below 300 is a very poor result*

Share of population (%) with university degree (Eurostat): 22

*In percentages from 100% to 0% (higher is better)*

Trust in others (Eurostat, EQSL): 4

*On a scale from 10 to 0 (highest to lowest)*

E-participation Index (UN): 0.7024

*On a scale from 1 to 0 (highest to lowest)*

*As for the risks and opportunities related to deliberative communication and democracy within the media related competencies domain, various statements need to be emphasized:*

**Risks** for deliberative communication:

- insufficient research into the cognitive abilities of media users (no empirical research focused on the ability to think critically, verify the objectivity and relevance of information, identify disinformation, hoaxes, conspiracy theories and the ability of logical argumentation in the context of interpersonal and social communication),
- the weak connection between educational activities and research aimed at target groups.
- relatively weak results in Media Literacy Index 2021 (Lessenski, 2021).
- relatively weak results in research “Trust in others” (Eurostat, EQSL)
- relatively weak results in the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI).

**Opportunities** for deliberative communication:

- the sufficient number of competent actors (especially from academia and NGOs) who deal with the issue of media competencies of users.
- relatively favourable results in the E-participation Index (UN,
- relatively favourable results in the PISA score in reading literacy, scientific literacy and mathematical literacy (OECD).

## 6. Conclusions

The media ecosystem in Slovakia was affected by several sociocultural events. The first major event was the revolution in 1989, which ended the Communist regime in the former Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and started a democratic change. Another major event was the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic in 1993. These political changes were subsequently reflected in the media, within which a dual system was created – public and private media. In the field of media production, it was the digital revolution and the advent of the Internet in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which significantly affected the media ecosystem in Slovakia. These political and media changes created the background for the further development of the media in Slovakia in the years 2000 – 2020, which are the subject of the Mediadelcom project. Within these years, we have recorded the following **critical junctures** in the Slovak media space:

1. Development of online journalism since 2000 (more precisely since 1994).
2. Rise of social media since 2004.
3. Financial crisis in 2008.
4. Corruption case (called ‘Gorilla’) in 2011.
5. The murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak in 2018.
6. Pandemic crisis since 2020.

All these critical junctures had a significant impact on the development of the media in Slovakia, as they opened the social and media system to change, whether positive (opportunities) or negative (risks), with a consequent impact on deliberative communication and democracy.

The advent of online news since 2000 (the first online newspaper was SME since 1994) as a pendant to print has, on the one hand, made it more accessible to information, but on the other hand has caused a decline in print media sales. For this reason, it was necessary to monetize online media. The news media are still struggling with this problem, as the free online media continue to win the fight for the reader’s attention.

Since about 2004, social media have been emerging in Slovakia, which, in contrast to ‘traditional’ media, represent a new interactive communication space. Social media, thanks to their freedom and interactivity, have become very popular and influential in all areas of social life. On the other hand, what can be seen especially during the pandemic is the spread of hate speech and disinformation.

In 2008, the economic crisis also affected Slovakia and, of course, many media outlets, which, due to their financial difficulties, were bought and influenced by various Slovak oligarchs. On the one hand, it is positive that the media managed to survive financially, but on the other hand, they had to adapt to the ideological or political orientation of these new owners.

These tendencies deepened in relation to the corruption case called ‘Gorilla’, which erupted in 2011. The affair was associated with the Penta financial group, which established a wide range of mutually beneficial relationships with politicians and thus gained financial commissions from the privatization of strategic companies. Subsequently, the company wanted to get the public’s approval, so it started to acquire some media, such as the elite daily SME. In response to these changes, there was a wave of resistance and some journalists left SME and founded its direct competitor, Denník N.

In 2018, journalist Ján Kuciak was assassinated. This event shook the Slovak public and resulted in the forced change of the country’s Prime Minister and the unexpected results of the 2020 parliamentary election.

In the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 infection broke out in Slovakia, which has persisted ever since. The pandemic also brought a 'boom' of various disinformation, including hoaxes and conspiracies. In general, the narrative prevailed and still prevails, which is also supported by the current Slovak government, that this disinformation is spread by social media and some 'alternative' media. On the other hand, the so-called mainstream media have received significant financial support from the government for vaccination advertising, which may cast doubts on their impartiality and objective information about the pandemic. However, research on mediated information about the pandemic in Slovakia is still ongoing, so this juncture in the development of the media in Slovakia cannot yet be definitively assessed.

Critical junctures in media development in Slovakia are also related to individual research domains of the project:

**A. Legal and Ethical Regulation.** In this domain, there is a noticeable lagging in terms of legislation, specifically media law, digital communication technologies, online media and social media. New media laws are currently being prepared in Slovakia, the aim of which is to transform Slovak media legislation, modernize it and update it for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main priority of the reform is to help journalists carry out their work freely and safely, which can be another impetus to promote deliberative communication. The key topics in this new legislation include transparent media ownership, source protection, equal rights and obligations for television, radio, print and online media, and online video platforms.

Within the ethical area of the domain, it can be said that every major media outlet has a code of ethics. These ethical codes and their particular regulations are more flexible than the existing legal regulation. For this reason, the regulation of the behavior of journalists on social media is currently being implemented into the codes of ethics.

The biggest risks of this domain in Slovakia include the slow reaction of the government to the existence and operation of new types of media (online, on-demand services, podcasting, etc.), a small media market with a small audience and globalization and media concentration represented by media conglomerates and media owners.

On the other hand, the greatest opportunities include a greater diversity of views and production of media and digital content, and a new media legislation that is supposed to be more comprehensive, normative and able to cover several types of media.

**B. Journalism Domain.** The Journalism domain is strongly influenced by the current state of the development of human rights in Slovakia, in particular freedom of expression and the right to free access to information. In 2000, the Act No. 211 Coll. on Free Access to Information was pushed. These rights are guaranteed by law, but in 2018 Slovakia was shaken by the murder of Ján Kuciak. After this tragic event, the safety of journalists began to be discussed more in the media. In addition to the protection of health and life, it is also the financial security of the journalist that has become riskier with the advent of digital and social media. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were significant reductions of staff in the media.

Digitalization in Slovakia has been extraordinarily influenced by digital and especially social media. Journalists, as well as the general public, can discuss a variety of topics on social media, which promotes deliberative communication. On the other hand, hate speech has spread disproportionately, which, on the contrary, does not support deliberative communication. During the pandemic, various disinformation was disseminated through social media, including hoaxes and conspiracies, which extremely polarized society in Slovakia. However, the pandemic is still ongoing in Slovakia and more time and further theoretical and empirical research will be needed to assess the positive or negative role of the mainstream media in informing about the pandemic.

Within this domain, the greatest risks are considered to be: low level of journalistic freedom, insufficient public acceptance of the journalistic profession and insufficient financial evaluation of journalists.

The constitution-guaranteed freedom of expression and the right to information and other legal regulations, the pluralistic functioning of the media environment, a well-developed system of journalists' education and the existence of the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists can be considered as opportunities.

**C. Media Usage Patterns.** At the turn of the century, traditional media such as television, radio and the press dominated. Although online media had already existed, they could not yet compete with the traditional ones, because they only explored the online space and, moreover, Slovakia's Internet coverage was very weak. In 2003, only 15.8% of the population used the Internet regularly, 40.6% had already heard and knew about it but did not use it, and the remaining 27.6% had no information about using the Internet. There were 4.53 million Internet users in Slovakia in January 2020 and 4.64 million Internet users in January 2021 (out of a total population of 5.45 million). For deliberative communication, the credibility of the media is very important. The Median.sk agency regularly conducts media research on a long-term basis. The results show that there are no major differences in the credibility of print and online media (online newspapers). Respondents have the least trust in information on social media. The public television and radio RTVS and the news television TA3 have long been considered the most credible media in Slovakia. However, according to the Reuters Institute for Digital News, the credibility of the media in Slovakia is declining and in 2020 it fell by 5 points. According to the non-governmental organization INEKO, the print media and then public radio and television contribute the most to democracy.

The increased risks of the examined domain include a decline in media credibility from 33 (2019) to 28 (2020) points, necessary payments for some media content available online and media ownership by oligarchs with clear ideological and political intentions.

Opportunities include good Internet penetration in Slovakia and the credibility of the public broadcaster RTVS and the news media channel TA3.

**D. Media-Related Competencies.** Media literacy research has a tradition of more than 15 years in Slovakia. Until 2010, most research activities focused on the position and problems of traditional mass media (television, radio, the press) and their anchoring in a social and individual context. Only marginal attention has been paid to the media competencies of media users. After 2010, research and publications aimed at digital media and online communication gradually increased. However, in the analysis of the corpus of bibliographic outputs in Slovakia, we also identified a significant risk, which is the majority focus on the theoretical or normative approach. Still, without empirical approaches and examination of the current state in the population, this domain is limited by missing knowledge on the media practice. If there is empirical research, it is focused mainly on children and youth. Exceptionally, research is also carried out on the media competencies of seniors. Further research was conducted on the teaching of media literacy in schools and the media competencies of teachers.

The biggest risks in the given domain include the absence of research to determine the cognitive abilities of media users and the connection between theoretical and empirical approaches.

Opportunities include plenty of scholars who have great potential to research the media competencies of media users.

In **conclusion**, it can be summarized that in Slovakia, in terms of legislation and ethics, good conditions are created for the development of media and deliberative communication. It also supports the system of education of journalists and media education in schools. On the other

hand, the greatest risks to the media and deliberative communication are political influences and the influences of media owners, which can negatively affect media content. Risks also include job instability, weaker financial rewards for journalists and the current polarization of the media, and society as a whole, which is driven by disinformation about the pandemic.

## References

- Act No. 308/2000 Coll. on Broadcasting and Retransmission.
- Act No. 468/1991 Coll. on Operation of Radio and Television Broadcasting.
- Audit Bureau of Circulations. (2022). <http://www.abcsr.sk/aktualne-vysledky/archiv-vysledkov/>
- Baacke, D. (1996). Media Competency as a Network: Reach and Focus on a Concept That Has Economic Activity. *Virtually Media in Media Practice*, 20 (78), pp. 4-10.
- Bajaník, L. (2020). Slovenská televízia v rokoch 1991 - 1992. In *Otázky žurnalistiky*, 63 (3-4), pp. 107-123.
- Biziková, L. (2015). *Škola, učiteľ/ka a mediálna výchova. Analýza výsledkov dotazníkového prieskumu. Štátny pedagogický ústav.*
- Botík, M., Miščíková, R. & Vojčík, P. (2004). *Mediálne právo*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius.
- Brečka, S. (2007). Slovenský novinár v novom mediálnom prostredí. In *Mediálne kompetencie v informačnej spoločnosti: Zborník z vedeckej konferencie s medzinárodnou účasťou konanej v dňoch 12. a 13. apríla 2007* (pp. 256-259). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Brečka, S. et al. (2009). *Od tamtamov po internet*. EUROKÓDEX.
- Buckingham, D. (2007): *Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture*. Polity Press.
- Bulganová, D. (2020a). Fact-Checking as a Key Competence in Infodemia. In Kvetanová, Z., Bezáková, Z. & A. Madleňák (Eds.), *Marketing Identity 2020: COVID-2.0* (pp. 54-61). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Bulganová, D. (2020b). Truth in the Context of the Internet. In Kvetanová, Z. & M. Solík (Eds.), *Megatrends and Media 2020: On the Edge* (pp. 30-40). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Čavojová, V., Panczová, Z. & Zavacká, M. (2020). *Fámy, konšpiracne teorie a dezinformácie očami spoločenských vied*. Slovenská akadémia vied.
- Čábyová, L. (2008). Spoločenská zodpovednosť médií. In Soukalová, R. (Ed.), *KOMEDIA: (KO) jako KOoperace, KOexistence, KOedukace, KOLize, KOrrelace ... Ko jako Komunikace, Komerce, Kompetence, Kompatibilita, Komparace: Sborník konferenčních příspěvků z 2. ročníku mezinárodní konference* (pp. 15-18). Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra.
- DennikN. (2022). <https://dennikn.sk/minuta/1745238/>
- Digital News Report 2020. (2020). <https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2020/slovakia-2020/>
- Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2021: Slovakia (2021). <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/redirection/document/80599>
- Etický kódex novinára. (2011). <http://www.ssn.sk/eticky-kodex-novinara/>
- Etický kódex pre komunikáciu na internete. (2018). [https://www.rtvs.org/media/a542/file/item/sk/0002/eticky\\_kodex\\_nx1Y4.pdf](https://www.rtvs.org/media/a542/file/item/sk/0002/eticky_kodex_nx1Y4.pdf)
- Fichnová, K., Wojciechowski, P. & Mikuláš, P. (2014). Social Networking Services in the Preferences of Slovak, Czech and Polish Youth. In *Marketingová a mediální komunikace dnes III.* (pp. 9-36). Verbum.
- Filo, J., Ivanič, P. & Luppová, S. (2011). *Myslime kriticky o médiách*. Slovenské centrum pre komunikáciu a rozvoj.



- Follrichová, M. (2013). Printové médiá v digitálnom veku a vysokoškolská príprava žurnalistov. In *60 rokov vysokoškolského štúdia žurnalistiky na Slovensku* (pp. 158-171). Stimul.
- Gálik, S. & Gáliková Tolnaiová, S. (2015). Influence of the Internet on the Cognitive Abilities of Man. Phenomenological and Hermeneutical Approach. *Communication Today*, 6 (1), pp. 5-15.
- Graca, M. (2020). Technologies as a Tool in the Fight against Hoax. In Kvetanová, Z., Bezáková, Z. & A. Madleňák (Eds.), *Marketing Identity: COVID-2.0* (pp. 89-98). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Gregussová, M., Tomková, J. & Balážová, M. (2010). *Dospievajúci vo virtuálnom priestore. Záverečná správa z výskumu*. Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie.
- Gregussová, M. & Drobný M. (2013). *Deti v sieti*. eSlovensko.
- Greguš, L. & Budová, D. (2020). Súčasné televízne spravodajstvo a gatekeeping v kontexte Slovenskej republiky. In Hudíková, Z., Škripcová, L. & N. Kaňuková (Eds.), *Quo Vadis Mass Media* (pp. 59-72). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Greguš, L. (2020). Deepfake a jeho riziká v kontexte (televízneho) spravodajstva – Iný pohľad na realitu. In Kvetanová, Z. & M. Graca (Eds.), *Megatrendy a médiá 2020: On the Edge* (pp. 34-45). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Hacek, J. (2020). *Nové médiá - aktuálne výzvy dneška Ján Hacek*. Comenius University in Bratislava.
- Hacek, J. (2020). *Otvorené zdroje a dáta pre novinárov na Slovensku*. Comenius University in Bratislava.
- Hacek, J. (2020). *Práca novinára s otvorenými zdrojmi a dátami*. Stimul.
- Harcup, T. (2014). *Dictionary of Journalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Hatala, P. & Greguš, L. (2020). Vplyv televízneho spravodajstva na vnímanie reality. In Ungerová, M., Švecová, M. & T. Darázs (Eds.), *ŠVOAUK 2020: Sekcia masmediálnej komunikácie* (pp. 23-38). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Hekelj, M. (2017). Súčasný stav mediálnej výchovy na základných školách v Košickom kraji In S. Pakhomova (Ed.), *Communication Towards the Prosperity of the Slovakia-Ukraine Cross-Border Region (COPESU)* (pp.72–77). Uzhhorod National University.
- Hladíková, V. (2018). The Current State and Level of Knowledge of the Young Generation in the Context of Study of the Impact of the Internet and Digital Media on Education. In A. Kusá, A. Zaušková & L. Rusňáková (Eds.), *Marketing Identity: Digital Mirrors Part II.* (pp.109-117). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Hladíková, V. & Hulajová, L. (2016). The Phenomenon of Internet Addictive Behaviour among Slovak Youth. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 12 (6), pp. 143-153.
- Hladíková, V. (2019). Reflection of Digital Media and Internet Influence on Selected Cognitive Functions of Students in Educational Process. In P. Madzík (Ed.), *The Poprad Economic and Management Forum 2019* (pp. 227-240). Verbum.
- Hlavčáková, S. (2013). 60 rokov vysokoškolského štúdia žurnalistiky na Slovensku. In *60 rokov vysokoškolského štúdia žurnalistiky na Slovensku* (pp. 9-61). Stimul.
- HNonline. (2022). *Najobjektívnejšie televízne spravodajstvo mala v minulom roku RTVS*. <https://strategie.hnonline.sk/media/2304162-najobjektivnejsie-televizne-spravodajstvo-mala-v-minulom-roku-rtvs>
- Hradiská, E., Brečka, S. & Vybíral, Z. (2009). *Psychológia médií*. Eurokódex.
- Hudíková, Z. & Habiňáková, E. (2018). *Radio Broadcasting and Radio Production: Specialized Academic Textbook in English*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- IABmonitor online. (2020). *Domains*. <https://rating.gemius.com/sk/tree/112>
- Janková, M. (2020). *Prevencia a riešenie šikanovania a kyberšikanovania v základných a stredných školách z pohľadu koordinátorov prevencie* (pp. 1-40). CVTI.



- Janků, J. (2006). Kultúra a nekultúra novinárskych prejavov. In Matúš, J. & H. Pravdová (Eds.), *Mediá na prahu tretieho tisícročia* (pp. 127-130). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Janků, J. (2007). Mediá a politika. In Magál, S., Mistrík, M. & D. Petranová (Eds.), *Mediálne kompetencie v informačnej spoločnosti* (pp. 253-255). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius.
- Jenča, I. (2004). Novinári a zdroje informácií. In Olekšák, P. (Ed.), *Vývoj žurnalistiky na Slovensku po 17. novembri 1989* (pp. 57-68). Catholic University in Ružomberok.
- Jenča, I. (2014). Kríza autoregulácie ako dôsledok krízy žurnalizmu. In Petranová, D. & N. Vrabec (Eds.), *Perspektívy ochrany mediálneho publika – Megatrendy a mediá 2014* (pp. 103-111.) University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Jenča, I. et al. (2009). *Metodiky novinárskej tvorby*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Jurczyk-Romanowska, E. et al. (2019). *Vietos nustatymu grįstas žaidimas kaip šiuolaikinis, originalus ir novatoriškas senjorų okymo(si) metodas*. Fundacija Pro Scientia Publica.
- Kačínová, V. (2019). *Fenomén fake news, hoaxov a konšpiračných teórií v kontexte mediálnej výchovy*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Kačínová, V. (2019). From a Reductionist to a Holistic Model of Digital Competence and Media Education. *Communication Today*, 10 (2), pp. 16-27.
- Kačínová, V. (2020). The Topic of Media-Disseminated Mis-Information and Dis-Information as an Integral Part of General Education in Slovakia. *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 3 (1), 18–31.
- Kačínová, V. (2018). Media Competence as a Cross-Curricular Competence. *Communication Today*, 9(1), pp. 38-57.
- Kačínová, V. (2015). *Teória a prax mediálnej výchovy: Mediálna výchova ako súčasť všeobecného školského vzdelávania*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Kačínová, V. & Kolčáková, V. (2013a). *Súčasný stav začlenenia mediálnej výchovy do obsahu vzdelávania na stredných školách na Slovensku: Záverečná správa z výskumu*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Kačínová, V. & Kolčáková, V. (2013b). *Súčasný stav začlenenia mediálnej výchovy do obsahu vzdelávania na základných školách na Slovensku: Záverečná správa z výskumu*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Kapec, M. (2020). Dezinformácie počas koronakrízy. In Hudíková, Z., Škripcová, L. & N. Kaňuková (Eds.), *Quo Vadis Mass Media* (pp. 121-127). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Kerecman, P. (2009). *Sloboda prejavu novinára a ochrana pred jej zneužitím*. Slovenský syndikát novinárov.
- Kol'ko štát vybral? (2020). <https://cenastatu.sme.sk/kv-osv-rtvs/2020/>
- Koronavírus a Slovensko. (2020). <https://korona.gov.sk/>
- Koronavírus, pandémia – Data & Insights z Kantar's Media Division. (2020). [https://static.markiza.sk/a542/file/item/sk/0000/kantar\\_coronavirus\\_pandemic\\_data\\_and\\_insights\\_slovensko\\_2020\\_04\\_14.fFko.pdf](https://static.markiza.sk/a542/file/item/sk/0000/kantar_coronavirus_pandemic_data_and_insights_slovensko_2020_04_14.fFko.pdf)
- Krajčovič, P. (2017). Dezinformácie a mediá v čase pandémie. In Z. Kvetanová & M. Graca (Eds.), *Megatrendy a mediá 2020: On the Edge* (pp. 56-61). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius.
- Kravčák, P. (2008). Presnosť ako kritérium kvality zverejňovania spravodajských obsahov slovenských televízií. In Olekšák, P., Rončáková, T. & I. Gazda (Eds.), *Kvalitatívna a kvantitatívna analýza spravodajských relácií slovenských mienkotvorných televízií* (pp. 130-132). Catholic University in Ružomberok.
- Kvetanová, Z., Kačincová Predmerská, A. & Švecová, M. (2021). Debunking as a Method of Uncovering Disinformation and Fake News. In Višňovský, J. & J. Radošinská (Eds.), *Fake News Is Bad News: Hoaxes, Half-truths and the Nature of Today's Journalism* (pp. 59-78). InTechOpen.

- Langerová, M. (2014). *Mediálna výchova hrou pre rodičov*. OZ Žabky a Dubnický technologický inštitút.
- Lessenski, M. (2021). Media Literacy Index 2021 Double Trouble: Resilience to Fake News at the Time of Covid-19 Infodemic. Open Society Institute – Sofia.
- Madro, M. et al. (2015). *INstantnE-participatívny výskum IPčko.sk s tínedžermi*. Ipčko.sk
- Makroš, J. (2019). *Sila rozumu v bláznivej dobe (Manuál kritického myslenia)*. N-Press.
- Markíza, Expres a Nový čas sú najsledovanejšie slovenské médiá. (2020).  
<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/media/2244029-markiza-expres-a-novy-cas-su-najsledovanejsie-slovenske-media>
- Mediálne výdavky 2021: Do reklamy najviac investoval Lidl*. (2021).  
<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/marketing/20003473-medialne-vydavky-2021-do-reklamy-najviac-investoval-lidl>
- Mesežnikov, G. & Bartoš, J. (2020). *Infodémia na Slovensku 2020. Dezinformačno-konšpiračná scéna v období COVID-19*. Inštitút pre verejné otázky.
- MÉRTÉK MEDIA MONITOR (2021). *Four Shades of Censorship. State Intervention in the Central Eastern European Media Markets*. Mérték.
- Mičuda, D. (2020). Hranice pravdy – Hoax ako nástroj dezinformácií v mediálnom prostredí. In Kvetanová, Z., Piatrov, I. & M. Martovič (Eds.), *Marketing Identity 2020: COVID-2.0* (pp. 110-118). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Mináriková, J. (2012). Verejnoprávna televízia v mediálnom systéme Slovenskej republiky. In Kaňka, P. (Ed.), *Autor – Vize – Meze – Televize* (pp. 156-162). Česká televize, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů.
- Mináriková, J. & Hurajová, A. (2018). *TV and Broadcasting: Basic Outlines and Current Position: Specialized Academic Textbook in English*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Mináriková, J., Blahút, D. & Višňovský, J. (2020). Hi-Tech and Eye-Catching Alike: Information in the Multiplatform Era. *European Journal of Media, Art & Photography*, 8 (2), pp. 118-126.
- Ministerstvo kultúry SR (2009). *Koncepcia mediálnej výchovy v Slovenskej republike v kontexte celoživotného vzdelávania*.  
<https://www.zodpovedne.sk/index.php/sk/component/jdownloads/finish/1-knihy-a-prirucky/8-koncepcia-medialnej-vychovy-v-slovenskej-republike-v-kontexte-celozivotneho-vzdelavania?Itemid=0>
- Mistrík, M. (2007). K otázkam verejnoprávneho rozhlasového a televízneho vysielania. *Slovenské divadlo: Revue dramatických umení*, 55 (3), pp. 343-348.
- Mrvová, I. (2022). *Národný paywall Piano po piatich rokoch končí*.  
<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/media/842346-piano-po-piatich-rokoch-konci>
- N Magazín (2017). *Klamstvá a konšpirácie: Príručka pre stredné školy*. NPress.
- N Magazín (2017). *Kritické myslenie*. <https://a-static.projektn.sk/2017/11/casopis-kriticke-myslenie-low.pdf>
- Newman, N. et al. (2022). <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk>2020-06>
- Newman, N. et al. (2021). *Digital News Report 2021*.  
[https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/Digital News Report 2021 FINAL.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/Digital%20News%20Report%2021%20FINAL.pdf)
- Nikoltshev, S., Cappello, M., Blázquez, F.J.C. & Valais, S. (2016). *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28*. European Audiovisual Observatory. <https://rm.coe.int/media-literacy-mapping-report-en-final-pdf/1680783500>
- Olekšák, P. & Kravčák, P. (2008). Objektívita a manipulácia v televíznom spravodajstve. In Olekšák, P., Rončáková, T. & I. Gazda (Eds.), *Kvalitatívna a kvantitatívna analýza spravodajských relácií slovenských mienkotvorných televízií* (pp. 124-129). Catholic University in Ružomberok.

- Oprala, B. (2019). Médiá a zodpovednosť. Ako noviny pristupujú k informovaniu svojich čitateľov? In Čábyová, L., Bezáková, Z. & D. Mendelová (Eds.), *Marketing Identity 2019: Offline Is the New Online* (pp. 131-151). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Orban, K. (2004). *Kresťanské médiá na Slovensku a ich vývoj do roku 2000*. Obzor.
- Orban, K. (2010). Náboženské vysielanie vo verejnoprávnych médiách na Slovensku a ich vplyv na identitu Slovákov. In Hrehová, H. (Ed.), *Transformácia identity človeka v slovenskej spoločnosti* (pp. 169-190). Trnava University.
- Petranová, D. & Vrabec, N. (2015). *Mediálna gramotnosť dospeléj populácie v SR*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Petranová, D. & Vrabec, N. (2013). *Persuázia a médiá*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Petranová, D. (2013). *Mediálna gramotnosť seniorov*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Petranová, D. & Burianová, L. (2014). Potential of Digital Technologies Use in the Formal Pre-Primary Education. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 10 (suppl 1), pp. 263-276.
- Poláková, E. (2007). *Úvod do problematiky mediálnych kompetencií*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Pravdová, H. (2004). *Systém a organizácia práce v periodickej tlači*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Pravdová, H., Radošinská, J. & J. Višňovský. (2017). *Koncepty a praktiky multiplatformovej žurnalistiky. Slovensko v sieťach digitálnych diaľnic*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius.
- Pravdová, H. (2020). COVID -19 and the Threat of Periodical Press Mortality. In Z. Kvetanová & M. Solík (Eds.), *Megatrends and Media. On the Edge* (pp. 613-621). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius.
- Prehľad platov: Médiá, reklama, PR. (2021). <http://www.naseplaty.sk/prehľad-platov/media-reklama-pr.html>
- Prostináková Hossová, M. & Košťalová, Ž. (2021). Current State of Cyberbullying in Selected Educational Institutions in Slovakia. In M. Prostináková Hossová, J. Radošinská & M. Solík (Eds.), *Megatrends and Media: Home Officetainment* (pp. 270-286). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Radošinská, J. & J. Višňovský (2016). Transformations of Public Sphere in the Era of Digital Media. *European Journal of Science and Theology* 12 (5), pp. 85-96.
- Radošinská, J., Kvetanová, Z. & J. Višňovský. (2020). To Thrive Means to Entertain: The Nature of Today's Media Industries. *Communication Today*, 11 (1), pp. 4-21.
- Radošinská, J. & Višňovský, J. (2013). *Aktuálne trendy v mediálnej kultúre*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Rankov, P. (2002). *Masová komunikácia, masmédiá a informačná spoločnosť*. LCA.
- Rankov, P. (2006). *Informačná spoločnosť: Perspektívy, problémy, paradoxy*. LCA.
- Real HDP Per Capita. (2022). [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg\\_08\\_10/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_08_10/default/table)
- REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS – Slovakia (2021). <https://rsf.org/en/country/slovakia>
- Rončáková, T. (2011). *Žurnalistické žánre*. Verbum.
- Rončáková, T. (2015). The Relationship of Young Slovak Catholics to the Media. *Communication Today*, 2 (2), pp. 62-76.
- Rončáková, T. (2019). *Žurnalistické žánre*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Verbum.
- Rončáková, T. (2020) Dialóg - alebo barikády? Čo podľa slovenských novinárov viac prospieva náboženským posolstvám vo verejnom diskurze. (Dialogue or baricades? What does help to religious messages in public discourse according to Slovak journalists?). In P. Koudelková (Ed.).

- Obraz katolíckej cirkve v českých a slovenských médiách v letech 2015 – 2018*, (pp. 70-88.). Karolinum.
- Sámelová, A. (2019). Vplyv dežurnalizácie na profesionálnu žurnalistiku. In *Fenómén 2019: Súčasná profesionálna žurnalistika a jej reflexie* (pp. 23-36). Comenius University in Bratislava.
- Sámelová, A. (2020). Zmediálnený habitus online človeka. In *QUAERE 2020* (pp. 1355-1359). Magnanimitas.
- SLOVAK SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE (2017). *Učítelia proti dezinformáciám I.* [https://slovaksecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/sspi\\_ucitelia-proti-dezinformaciam.pdf](https://slovaksecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/sspi_ucitelia-proti-dezinformaciam.pdf)
- SLOVAK SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE (2018). *Učítelia proti dezinformáciám II.* [https://slovaksecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/sspi\\_ucitelia-proti-dezinformaciam.pdf](https://slovaksecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/sspi_ucitelia-proti-dezinformaciam.pdf)
- Slovakia Unemployment Rate. (2022). <https://tradingeconomics.com/slovakia/unemployment-rate>
- SME Creative, Michalek, J. pre O2. (2022). *Od modemu k mobilu: Príbeh slovenského internetu má už 25 rokov.* <https://tech.sme.sk/c/20506623/z-luxusu-je-nevyhnutnost-slovaci-pouzivaju-internet-uz-25-rokov.html>
- Správa Policajného zboru o dezinformáciách na Slovensku v roku 2021. (2022). Odbor komunikácie a prevencie Prezídia Policajného zboru.
- Struhárik, F. (2020). *MediaBrífing: Ako pandémie ovplyvnila predaj novín a časopisov na Slovensku.* <https://e.dennikn.sk/2150977/mediabrifing-ako-pandemia-ovplyvnila-predaj-novin-a-casopisov-na-slovensku/>
- Šándorová, V. (2013). *Metódy a formy práce podporujúce kritické myslenie u žiakov zo sociálne znevýhodneného prostredia.* Metodicko-pedagogické centrum.
- Šnidl, V. (2017). *Pravda a lož na Facebooku.* N Press.
- Švecová, M. & Kaňuková, N. (2019). Location-Based Games as a Teaching Method for Seniors in the Field of ICT. L. Elbæk, G. Majgaard, A. Valente & S. Khalid (Eds.), *ECGBL 2019: The Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Game Based Learning* (pp. 713 - 721). University of Southern Denmark.
- Švecová, M., Kaňuková, N. & Kačincová-Predmerská, A. (2019). Digital Skills of Seniors and Their Education in the Area of Trnava City. In M. Đukić et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of 4<sup>th</sup> International Science Conference „European Realities – Movements“, 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019, Osijek* (pp. 255-267). Academy of Arts and Culture J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek.
- Tomková, J. et al. (2015). *Príležitosti a riziká používania internetu deťmi.* Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie.
- Tušer, A. et al. (2010). *Praktikum mediálnej tvorby.* Eurokódex.
- Tušer, A. (2010). *Ako sa robia noviny.* Eurokódex.
- Tušer, A. (2012). *O novinárstve: Publicistika, štúdie, rozhovory.* Eurokódex.
- Úrad pre reguláciu elektronických komunikácií a poštových služieb. (2022). *Dôvody nízkeho využívania internetu v Slovenskej republike.* <https://www.teleoff.gov.sk/dovody-nizkeho-vyuzivania-internetu-v-slovenskej-republike/>
- Veľšic, M. (2012). *Sociálne siete na Slovensku.* Inštitút pre verejné otázky.
- Veľšic, M. (2014). *Digitálna priepasť v generačnej optike.* Inštitút pre verejné otázky.
- Veľšic, M. (2015). *Deti a rodičia v kyberpriestore.* Inštitút pre verejné otázky.
- Veľšic, M. (2016). *Mladí ľudia v kyberpriestore – šance a riziká pre demokraciu.* Inštitút pre verejné otázky.
- Veľšic, M. (2017). *Mladí ľudia a riziká extrémizmu.* Inštitút pre verejné otázky.



- Virtualno. (2022). *Výročná správa o internete na Slovensku 2021*. <https://virtualno.sk/vyrocnna-sprava-o-internete-na-slovensku-2021/>
- Višňovský, J. (2015). *Aktuálne otázky teórie a praxe žurnalistiky v ére internetu*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius.
- Višňovský, J., Radošinská, J. & A. Predmerská (2015). Digital Journalism: Rethinking Journalistic Practice in the Era of Digital Media. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 11 (6), pp. 57-66.
- Višňovský, J. & Radošinská, J. (2017). Online Journalism: Current Trends and Challenges. In Pena Acuna, B. (Ed.), *The Evolution of Media Communication* (pp. 3-22). InTech Open.
- Višňovský, J. (2017). Paralely digitálneho novinárstva a jeho rozmach v kontexte rozvoja informačných a komunikačných technológií v spoločnosti. In Pravdová, H., Radošinská, J. & J. Višňovský (Eds.), *Koncepty a praktiky multiplatformovej žurnalistiky: Slovensko v sieťach digitálnych diaľnic* (pp. 183-272). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Višňovský, J. & Radošinská, J. (2021). Introductory Chapter: Journalism Facing Both Pandemic and 'Infodemic'. In Višňovský, J. & J. Radošinská (Eds.), *Fake News Is Bad News: Hoaxes, Half-truths and the Nature of Today's Journalism* (pp. 3-11). InTech Open.
- Vrabec, N. (2008). *Mládež a médiá: Mediálna gramotnosť mladých ľudí na Slovensku*. IUVENTA – Slovenský inštitút mládeže.
- Vrabec, N. (2009) On-line generácia – Informácie, komunikácia a digitálna participácia mládeže v informačnej spoločnosti. IUVENTA – Slovenský inštitút mládeže. [http://infolandsr.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/on\\_line\\_generacia\\_publicacia.pdf](http://infolandsr.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/on_line_generacia_publicacia.pdf)
- Vrabec, N. & Petranová, D. (2013). *Nové vzory mládeže v kontexte mediálnej komunikácie* University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Vrabec, N. (2014). *Stratégie rozvoja mediálnej gramotnosti v európskych krajinách*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Vrabec, N. & Petkáčová, P. (2014). Reading Preferences of People with Visual Impairment in the Context of Legislative, Technological and Cultural changes. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 10 (suppl. 1), pp. 241-252.
- Vrabec, N. & Petranová, D. (2014). Media and Information Literacy Policies in Slovakia. In D. Frau-Meigs (Ed.), *PROJECT ANR TRANSLIT and COST "Transforming Audiences/Transforming Societies"*. ANR Translit.
- Vrabec, N. (2015). *Výskum úrovne mediálnej gramotnosti: Prehľad výskumných stratégií*. University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Vrabec, N., Graca, M. & Mazáková, S. (2015). Implementation of Mobile Applications in Education and Possibilities of Their Use in Media Education. In D. Petranová, & S. Magál (Eds.), *Megatrends and Media : Media Farm – Totems and Taboo* (pp.140–153). University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.
- Vrabec, N. (2016). SK – Mapping Media Literacy in Slovakia – National Summary. In M. Capello (Ed.), *Mapping of Media Literacy Practices and Actions in EU-28* (pp. 360–367). European Audiovisual Observatory. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0a387a0a-3e5f-11ea-ba6e-01aa75ed71a1>
- Vrabec, N. (2016). Media Education in Formal Education in Slovakia. In V. Pelle (Ed.), *Developing Media Literacy in Public Education: A Regional Priority in a Mediatized Age* (pp. 60-71). Corvinus University of Budapest.
- WEBNOVINY.SK. (2020). *Mnohé slovenské médiá sa pre koronavírus ocitli na kolenách, žiadajú o pomoc ministerku kultúry*. <https://www.webnoviny.sk/mnohe-slovenske-media-sa-pre-koronavirus-ocitli-na-kolenach-ziadaju-o-pomoc-ministerku-kultury/>
- Wifling, P. (2012). *Zákon o slobodnom prístupe k informáciám*. <https://viaiuris.sk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/publikacia-komentar-infozakon.pdf>



- Yar, L. (2021). *Vyššie 90 percent mladých Slovákov a Sloveniek je na sociálnych sieťach, viac ale zaujímajú dievčatá*. <https://euractiv.sk/section/digitalizacia/news/vyse-90-percent-mladych-slovakov-a-sloveniek-je-na-socialnych-sietach-viac-ale-zaujimaju-dievcata/>
- Zajac, L. (2020). *Falošné správy a hrozby internetu – manuál (nielen) pre seniorov*. [https://transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/TISK\\_Fake\\_News\\_manual\\_WEB.pdf](https://transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/TISK_Fake_News_manual_WEB.pdf)
- Zavřel, A. (2020). *Lži, hoaxy a dezinformácie. Európska komisia bojuje nielen proti koronavírusu*. <https://www.noviny.sk/ekonomika/523304-lzi-hoaxy-a-dezinformacie-europska-komisia-bojuje-nielen-proti-koronavirusu>
- Zákon č. 211/2000 Z. z. o slobodnom prístupe k informáciám. (2000). <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2000/211/>
- Zemková, J. et al. (2018). *Judikatúra vo veciach mediálneho práva*. Wolters Kluwer SK.

