



**Director of the Government Communication Office Calls for Citizens to Publicly Denounce Media "Manipulators" – No. 97/2020**

(<https://fom.coe.int/alerte/detail/70141162;globalSearch=false>)

Slovenia is a staunch defender of democratic principles and values and, in this respect, of the freedom and independence of the media and journalists and condemns any attacks on professional journalism, journalists or the media.

We stress that objective and impartial media reporting is of utmost importance at a time when there is a growing phenomenon of misleading or fake news in the public domain, which threatens the democratic development and pluralism of society – these are constitutionally protected values of the Republic of Slovenia and fundamental values of the Council of Europe. That is why the Government of the Republic of Slovenia strives to ensure the conditions for free and independent journalism. In Slovenia, the freedom of the media and, in particular, journalistic autonomy and editorial independence are specially protected by the Mass Media Act.

However, we would like to stress that the media and journalists, due to the nature of their work and mission, have an extremely important and socially responsible role to play, which, if not carried out professionally, impartially and objectively, can undermine democratic principles and values. When talking about guaranteeing media freedom, it is necessary to consider this area comprehensively, including in terms of the responsibility of the media and journalists to respect professional and ethical standards of journalistic work and the transparent ownership and pluralism of the media in a particular country. This is the only way to ensure the diversity and credibility of information in the public domain, which in turn strengthens trust in the media, preserves pluralism of opinion and strengthens democracy.

Between March 2020 and today (November 2021), the Government of the Republic of Slovenia has not adopted any legal act or decision to harm or jeopardise the free operation of the Slovenian media and journalists or to interfere with the editorial policy of any media outlet. On the contrary, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government helped the media with emergency financial measures (providing a basic monthly income, paying social and health insurance contributions, co-financing the salaries of media workers who were temporarily laid off, providing an allowance for work in hazardous conditions to Radiotelevizija Slovenija, etc.).