

# Press Freedom in Romania: Regulation, Realities, and Expectations in the Context of Adopting New European Regulations

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*Part of the freedom of expression, press freedom is guaranteed in Romania by the fundamental law. After the repeal, in 2012, of the press law adopted during the communist period, no new press law has been adopted. There have been initiatives in this regard, but the opposition from journalists, who feared the introduction of restrictions on press freedom, has been stronger. Although Romanian legislation is, as stated, aligned with European standards, in reality, the freedom of the press in Romania has been subject to some criticism. Reports from international organisations, such as Reporters Without Borders, have highlighted various issues, such as political pressures on journalists, self-censorship in the media, and excessive concentration of ownership in the media industry. The adoption of new European regulations could bring significant changes to the field of press freedom in Romania. Such regulations could impose higher standards for protecting journalists against political pressures and could promote transparency and pluralism in the media. In consequence, the adoption of new European regulations is expected to bring significant benefits for press freedom in Romania, strengthening the role of a free press in democratic society and contributing to the protection of citizens' fundamental rights to information and media pluralism.*

**Keywords:** *Press freedom; Political pressure on journalists; European regulations; Right to information and media pluralism*

## Introduction

"Expression" and all aspects related to ensuring its freedom actually represent the social dimension of the human being. It is the way in which an individual builds and defines themselves in relation to others, not just in relation to themselves<sup>1</sup>. Communication and the expression of thoughts are not merely possibilities; they also constitute essential conditions for human existence and the functioning of an organised society, structured according to historically established criteria of civilization. For this reason, freedom of expression is considered a natural right, recognised as such since the earliest constitutional documents.

From a constitutional law perspective, freedom of expression is a fundamental right with a complex content and represents one of the greatest values of civil liberty.

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<sup>1</sup>Andreescu (2018).

The exercise of this right inevitably also involves responsibilities, freedom of expression, at least from a legal point of view, not being absolute or intangible. It can be subject to conditions, limits, restrictions that naturally arise from the limits of man's social existence in relation to his peers. The social dimension of the human being is always defined from a legal point of view, because it can be included within quantifiable limits and determined by the legal order.

This perspective helps us understand that freedom of expression is essential to an individual's ability to participate fully in social life. It allows individuals to express their thoughts, beliefs and emotions, thereby contributing to the collective discourse that shapes society's values and norms. The legal framework governing this freedom must balance the individual's right to express himself with the need to protect the rights and dignity of others. This balance is crucial for maintaining social harmony and upholding the principles of a democratic society.

Freedom of expression has a complex legal content that includes: a) freedom of opinion; b) freedom of information; and c) freedom of the press<sup>2</sup>.

Freedom of the press is an essential foundation of a democratic society, ensuring not only transparency and accountability, but also fair and balanced information to citizens. Through a free and independent press, the actions of the government and other institutions of power are monitored, thus contributing to the prevention of abuses and corruption. In addition, a free press allows for diversity of opinion and public debate, crucial elements for a healthy democracy.

In Romania, this concept has evolved significantly, passing through various stages of transformation, especially after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, because, during the communist period, the press in Romania was strictly controlled by the state, freedom of expression being non-existent, the guidelines imposed by the Romanian Communist Party governing the activity of journalists.

After the Revolution of 1989, Romania began the transition to democracy, and the press gained a greater degree of freedom.

This research aims to provide a clear picture of the status of press freedom in Romania, a subject of particular importance for Romanian and European democracy, as well as the provisions of the new European Regulation on press freedom, known as the European Mass Media Freedom Law (European Media Freedom Act - EMFA), analyzing the impact of these new European regulations on press freedom in Romania.

## **Freedom of the press in Romania. Regulation**

After the repeal of the Press Law of the Socialist Republic of Romania no. 3/1974<sup>3</sup> by Law no. 95/2012, no new media law was adopted<sup>4</sup>, although there have been attempts to do so, as a result of opposition from journalists who

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<sup>2</sup>Andreescu & Puran (2023) at 290.

<sup>3</sup>Although it was only repealed in 2012, the law no longer applied, having fallen into disuse.

<sup>4</sup>For developments see Tabacu & Draghici (2006) at 168-170

believed that new regulation on the matter would affect independence and freedom of expression<sup>5</sup>.

Currently, in Romania, press freedom is regulated by a series of laws and regulations aimed at protecting the right to information, ensuring the transparency and independence of the media, as well as preventing abuses.

In art. 30 of the Constitution of Romania from 1991 Republicated<sup>6</sup>, freedom of expression has been enshrined as a fundamental right of citizens, guaranteeing them the freedom to express their thoughts, opinions and beliefs freely, through speech, writing, images or other means of communication<sup>7</sup>. However, the fundamental law also regulates the limits of freedom of expression<sup>8</sup>, which "cannot be absolute, but is subject to the principles of legal and moral responsibility and liability"<sup>9</sup>.

Art 31 of the Romanian Constitution regulates the right to information, correctly informing the public opinion representing an obligation of the mass media. For this purpose "public radio and television services are autonomous. They must guarantee any important social and political group the exercise of the right to broadcasting time. The organisation of these services and the parliamentary control over their activity are regulated by an organic law"<sup>10</sup>.

The jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights on the freedom of the press is extensive and has had a significant impact on the way this right is protected and interpreted in the member states of the Council of Europe. The Court established through its rulings important principles that contribute to the protection and promotion of press freedom, among which we mention: freedom of expression is valid not only for information or ideas that are favorably received or considered harmless, but also for those that offend, shock or disturb the state or any other segment of the population<sup>11</sup>; the limits of acceptable criticism are wider when it comes to politicians, who must tolerate a higher level of criticism<sup>12</sup>; ordering the disclosure of the journalist's source constitutes a violation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, emphasizing the importance of

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<sup>5</sup>Cercelescu (2015).

<sup>6</sup>(1) The freedom of expression of thoughts, opinions or beliefs and the freedom of creations of any kind, through live speech, through writing, through images, through sounds or through other means of public communication, are inviolable. (2) Censorship of any kind is prohibited. (3) Freedom of the press also implies the freedom to establish publications. (4) No publication can be suppressed. (5) The law may impose on mass media the obligation to make public the source of funding.

<sup>7</sup>Arbetman & O'Brien (2005) at 445-462.

<sup>8</sup>Art. 30 Constitution of Romania para. (6) Freedom of expression cannot prejudice the dignity, honor, private life of the person, nor the right to one's own image.

(7) Defamation of the country and the nation, incitement to war of aggression, national, racial, class or religious hatred, incitement to discrimination, territorial separatism or public violence, as well as obscene manifestations, contrary to good morals, are prohibited by law. .

(8) The civil liability for the information or for the creation brought to public knowledge rests with the editor or creator, the author, the organizer of the artistic event, the owner of the means of multiplication, of the radio or television station, under the conditions of the law. Press offenses are established by law.

<sup>9</sup>For developments see Andreescu & Puran (2020) at 6.

<sup>10</sup>Art. 31, para. 5 of the Romanian Constitution.

<sup>11</sup>*Handyside v the United Kingdom* [1976] ECHR 5493/72.

<sup>12</sup>*Jersild v Denmark* [1994] ECHR 15890/89.

protecting journalistic sources to ensure the free flow of information of public interest<sup>13</sup>.

Thus, the Strasbourg Court has significantly contributed to defining and protecting press freedom in Europe. The Court's jurisprudence has established that freedom of the press is essential in a democratic society and that any restriction on this freedom must be necessary, proportionate and clearly justified. The Court also emphasised the importance of protecting journalistic sources and tolerating a high level of criticism, particularly of politicians and other public figures.

The Constitutional Court of Romania often refers to the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, especially with regard to the principle of proportionality.

Over time, the Constitutional Court of Romania had an essential role in the interpretation and application of freedom of expression. Through its decisions, the Court clarified the limits and restrictions of this right, ensuring a balance between freedom of expression and other constitutional values, such as the right to dignity and national security<sup>14</sup>.

The Constitutional Court recognised the importance of press freedom in a democratic society and protected the rights of journalists to carry out their work without undue interference from the state or other entities. In numerous judgments, the Court emphasised the need for freedom and independence of the press, rejecting any attempt at censorship or control over it.

Law no. 504/2002 on the audiovisual sector amended and supplemented by Emergency Ordinance no. 192/2022, which aimed to transpose the provisions of Directive (EU) 2018/1808<sup>15</sup> into national legislation, regulates the activity of broadcasting radio and television programs, establishing the conditions for granting audiovisual licenses and the responsibilities of broadcasters.

Law no. 544/2001 on free access to information of public interest establishes the right of any person to request and obtain information of public interest from public authorities and institutions.

Law no. 148/2000 on advertising regulates advertising activity, including in the mass media, ensuring the protection of consumers against misleading and abusive advertising.

Law no. 190/2018 on measures to implement the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulates the protection of personal data and private life in the electronic communications sector, also having implications on the media's activity.

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<sup>13</sup>*Bladet Tromsø and Stensaas v. Norway* [1999] ECHR 21980/93.

<sup>14</sup>Decision of the Constitutional Court no. 51/1999 (Official Gazette no. 262 of 9 June, 1999); Decision of the Constitutional Court no. 205/2000 (Official Gazette no. 702 of 28 December, 2000).

<sup>15</sup>Romania was sent, on 19 May 19, 2022, to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) by the European Commission for failure to fulfill the obligation to transpose the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (Directive (EU) 2018/1808), aiming modernizing the rules regarding audiovisual media services in the context of technological developments and the digital market, improving the protection of minors and consumers, as well as ensuring a pluralistic and diversified media landscape. At the end of 2022, the Government of Romania adopted Emergency Ordinance no. 192/2022 for the amendment and completion of the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002.

The journalist's code of ethics is a set of ethical and professional norms that journalists are encouraged to follow in order to ensure fair and responsible journalistic practice.

Also, the national regulation of press freedom is guaranteed by decisions and regulations issued by the National Audiovisual Council (CNA) which include detailed rules regarding program content, advertising, protection of minors and other aspects specific to audiovisual.

### **Challenges faced by Press Freedom in Romania Today**

Although there is a legal framework that protects freedom of expression and media independence, in practice the situation is complex. Various international<sup>16</sup> and local reports highlight issues such as:

1. Exercising political pressure on some media institutions, through various methods: direct or indirect funding, editorial control, pressure on journalists. For example, on January 6, 2022, Radio Europa Liberă published an investigation under the signature of journalist Cristian Andrei, in which the sums of money pumped in 2021 into some television and online publications by certain political parties were revealed<sup>17</sup>. In 2023 there was a doubling of the 2021 budget, with the money coming from the public subsidy granted to parliamentary parties for the press and propaganda category<sup>18</sup>. Political influence on the media undermines the credibility of media institutions and journalism in general, and the public becomes skeptical of the impartiality and truthfulness of the information presented. Also, political control of the media reduces the diversity of opinions and perspectives available to the public, which can lead to a partial and one-sided information.
2. Certain politicians or businessmen with political connections directly or indirectly own media institutions, which allows them to control editorial lines and influence the public agenda. The commercial factor also has an influence on the editorial lines. For example, the publications owned by Ringier in Romania, Libertatea and GSP, faced an interference of this factor in the editorial process. The measures taken by the Ringier management were to close the GSP print shop and fire the editor-in-chief<sup>19</sup>. This situation prompted a deputy belonging to the Renew Europe political group to formulate and address a

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<sup>16</sup><https://rsf.org/en/country/romania>

<sup>17</sup><https://www.g4media.ro/o-presa-platita-sa-taca-sau-sa-tipe-la-ordinul-marilor-partide-pe-banii-tai.html>

<sup>18</sup><chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://cji.ro/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Starea-mass-media-din-Romania-in-pragul-anului-super-electoral-2024-1.pdf>, accessed on 11.06.2024

<sup>19</sup><https://romania.europalibera.org/a/indepenta-pres%C4%83-ringier-pacanele-finantare/32624708.html>

priority question for for written answer to the Commission<sup>20</sup>. To the questions posed: Is the Commission aware of the problems in Romania mentioned above and how does it assess the situation?, respectively Does the Commission intend to take measures in this matter or initiate a dialogue with the Romanian authorities about the situation of press freedom in Romania? the answer was that it was precisely the increase in the number of cases of unjustified interference in editorial decisions determined by economic or political interests in Europe that led the Commission to adopt, in 2022, the proposal for a European law on media freedom to promote the internal market in the media sector, thus strengthening the freedom and pluralism of the media. Also, the close monitoring of media pluralism and freedom in Romania within the rule of law mechanism will be continued by the Commission.

A free and independent press is essential for the proper functioning of democracy. When the media is influenced by the political or commercial factor, its role as a "watchdog" of democracy is compromised, and the transparency and accountability of the rulers are affected.

### 3. Pressure, harassment and intimidation of "inconvenient" journalists.

In December 2023, journalists took to the streets to join human rights activists protesting in front of the General Prosecutor's Office in support of Emilia Șercan, a journalist who received numerous death threats and was subjected to smear campaigns for her investigations into the academic plagiarism of high-ranking officials<sup>21</sup>. As stated in the Reporters Without Borders 2023 Report, in Romania "the safety of journalists remains a matter of concern, as they are often the target of attacks, threats and intimidation. In the high-profile harassment and defamation campaign against the reporter Emilia Șercan, the authorities not only did not do justice, but were also suspected of complicity. Surveillance remains a problem as intelligence services seek to gain more power and influence amid the war in Ukraine and other international conflicts."<sup>22</sup>.

Organisations such as Reporters Without Borders and Freedom House have repeatedly expressed concerns about the harassment of journalists in Romania and called on the authorities to take measures to protect press freedom.

In the 2022 Rule of Law Report<sup>23</sup>, the European Commission included Romania in the high-risk group regarding press freedom, concerns being expressed regarding the operation and budget of the National Broadcasting Council. Other findings concern the lack of transparency regarding the broadcasting of paid content by political parties outside election campaigns and cases of threats, harassment and physical violence against journalists.

<sup>20</sup>[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2023-002942\\_RO.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2023-002942_RO.html)

<sup>21</sup><https://romania.europalibera.org/a/raport-reuters-presa-digitala/32998176.html>

<sup>22</sup><https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/raport-presa-romania-reporteri-fara-frontiere-4531989>,

<sup>23</sup>[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2e95c008-037b-11ed-acce-01aa75ed71a1.0010.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2e95c008-037b-11ed-acce-01aa75ed71a1.0010.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

The 2023 Report states that Romania has not made progress in terms of editorial independence.

### **The Main Provisions of the European Regulation on Media Freedom**

Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services within the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (hereinafter the Regulation), in force of 7 May, 2024, "is a legislative framework designed to protect and promote media pluralism and independence in the European Union. It was adopted to address a number of challenges and issues facing the media sector in the European Union. Considering the unique role of media services, the protection of media freedom and pluralism, as two of the main pillars of democracy and the rule of law, are essential features of a functional internal market of media services. The main reasons for the adoption of the Regulation included: the existence of concerns about the excessive concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few entities, which may limit pluralism and diversity of viewpoints; divergences between national media regulations that can create obstacles to the efficient functioning of the EU internal market; guaranteeing media transparency, an essential aspect to ensure accountability and public trust; protecting journalists and their sources from harassment, intimidation and reprisals; ensuring the autonomy and functioning without political or economic interference of regulatory authorities; adapting to new technological and digital challenges as a result of the rapid development of digital technologies and online platforms, a situation that raises new issues related to content regulation and user protection.

The adoption of the Regulation reflects the EU's commitment to protect and promote a pluralistic, transparent and independent media landscape, essential for the democratic functioning of society and for the protection of citizens' fundamental rights.

The regulation establishes common rules for the proper functioning of the internal market of media services and establishes a European Committee for media services, while protecting their independence and pluralism.<sup>24</sup>,"

One of the essential aspects of European law is the protection of the independence of publishers, who play a crucial role in ensuring a free and diverse press.

The main measures and provisions of the Regulation aim at Transparency of media ownership: Member States have an obligation to ensure transparency of media ownership, allowing the public and authorities access to clear and up-to-date information about who owns and controls media institutions.

According to art. 6 of the Regulation, "*media service providers make available to the recipients of their services, in an easily and directly accessible way, updated information regarding the name of the owner or of their direct or indirect owners with holdings that allow them to exert influence on the operation and on the process strategic decision-making, including the direct or indirect*

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<sup>24</sup>Art. 1 of the European Media Freedom Act.

*ownership of a state or a public authority or entity" as well as "the total annual value of public funds for state advertising that have been allocated to them and the total annual value of advertising revenues received from the authorities or public entities from third countries".*

This measure aims to prevent excessive concentrations of power and influence, which can affect editorial independence, transparency of media ownership being an essential element of the Regulation.

The provision aims to ensure that citizens, regulators and other interested parties have access to clear and up-to-date information about who owns and controls media outlets. This is crucial for maintaining media pluralism, preventing concentrations of power and protecting editorial independence.

Media pluralism is essential to a healthy democracy, ensuring public access to a diversity of opinions and perspectives. Transparency of media ownership helps maintain this pluralism by providing a clear picture of the diversity of information sources.

Media ownership information must be easily accessible to the public. This can be done by publishing this data on the websites of media outlets and on the platforms of national regulatory authorities.

Media outlets are also required to periodically update information about their owners to reflect any changes in ownership structure. This includes changes in ownership, mergers, acquisitions or sales of shares. Updates must be made within a reasonable period of time, established by law, to ensure that the information available to the public is always up to date.

Responsibility for monitoring compliance with these transparency obligations rests with national regulatory authorities. They must establish effective mechanisms for the collection, verification and publication of information about media ownership, also having the role of investigating and sanctioning possible violations of transparency obligations.

Transparency of media ownership, as set out in the Regulation, is a fundamental pillar for ensuring a diverse and independent media landscape. By imposing clear disclosure obligations and ensuring public access to this information, the law helps prevent the concentration of power, protect pluralism and increase public trust in the media. Effective implementation and strict monitoring of these provisions are essential to the success of this legislative initiative.

State advertising must be distributed in a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory manner. In this way, the use of public funds to influence or control the editorial content of the mass media is prevented.

The allocation of state advertising will be done according to clear criteria, which ensure that no publisher is disadvantaged or favored on political grounds.

Funding procedures for public media service providers, based on transparent and objective criteria established in advance, guarantee public media service providers adequate, sustainable and predictable financial resources, corresponding to the fulfillment of their public service mission and the protection of editorial independence.

Independence of the Boards of Directors: The Regulation proposes that the



members of the boards of directors of media institutions be selected based on their competences and not on political criteria. The procedure for appointing the members of the administrative boards must be transparent, open, effective and non-discriminatory, using transparent, objective, non-discriminatory and proportional criteria established in advance at the national level. This is essential to maintain independent and professional management, and board members must be protected against external influences, including political or economic pressure.

Protection of journalists and publishers: European law includes measures to protect journalists and publishers against harassment and intimidation. These measures include legal protection and access to resources to combat threats, so that journalists and publishers have the freedom to carry out their work without fear of repercussions.

Editorial independence: The law emphasises the need for editors-in-chief and publishers to have full control over editorial content, without interference from owners or other external entities. Editorial decisions must be made freely within the established editorial line of the media service provider.

At the same time, publishers must be protected against any attempts to influence editorial content, including through specific regulations prohibiting undue interference.

Protecting the independence of publishers is essential for freedom of expression. This allows journalists to investigate and report without constraints, contributing to transparency and accountability in society, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the law contributes to maintaining and promoting media pluralism, thus giving the public access to a wide range of opinions and perspectives, increasing trust in the media.

To ensure that journalistic sources and confidential communications are effectively protected, member states cannot, according to the provisions of art. 4 para. 3 of the Regulation, to take, except in an exceptional manner<sup>25</sup>, none of the following measures:

- a) compel media service providers or their editorial staff to divulge information related to journalistic sources or confidential communications or that could identify them or compel any persons who, because of their usual or professional relationship with a media services provider or with its editorial staff, could hold such information, disclose it;
- b) to detain, sanction, intercept or investigate media service providers or their editorial staff or subject them or their commercial or private premises to surveillance or search and seizure, in order to obtain information related to journalistic sources or confidential communications or that could identify them, or detain, sanction, intercept or investigate

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<sup>25</sup>According to art. 4, paragraph 4 of the Regulation, such a measure could only be taken if it is provided for by EU law or domestic law, complies with Article 52 paragraph (1) of the Charter and other legislative acts of the Union, is justified on a case-by-case basis for an imperative reason of public interest and is proportionate and subject to prior authorisation by a judicial authority or an independent and impartial decision-making authority or, in duly justified exceptional and urgent cases, to be subsequently authorized by such authority without unjustified delay.

any persons who, because of their ordinary or professional relationship with a media service provider or its editorial staff, could possess such information or subject them or their commercial or private premises to surveillance or search and seizure, in order to obtain such information;

- c) install intrusive surveillance software on any material, digital device, machine or instrument used by media service providers, their editorial staff or any persons who, by reason of their ordinary or professional relationship with a media service provider or with its editorial staff, may hold information related to journalistic sources or confidential communications or able to identify them.

Such intrusive surveillance software could be installed, in compliance with the conditions provided for in art. 4, paragraph 4 of the Regulation, and the installation should be carried out in order to investigate one of the persons mentioned in letter c) for the offenses listed in Article 2(2) of Framework Decision 2002/584/JHA which are punishable in the Member State concerned by a custodial sentence or security measure of a maximum duration of at least three years; or for other serious crimes punishable in the Member State concerned by a custodial sentence or a custodial security measure of a maximum duration of at least five years, as provided for in the legislation of that Member State.

Where such surveillance measures are taken, Member States have an obligation to ensure that they are periodically reviewed by an independent and impartial judicial or decision-making authority to determine whether the conditions justifying their use are still met.

The Regulation establishes the European Media Services Committee, which replaces the Group of European Regulators for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA), established by Article 30b of Directive 2010/13/EU. The committee is made up of representatives of national regulatory authorities or bodies.

It has an important role in the regulation and supervision of the audiovisual market in the European Union, contributing to ensuring a coherent and efficient framework for audiovisual media services but also in ensuring a fair, transparent media landscape adapted to the needs of contemporary society in the European Union.

The main duties of the Committee include: providing advice and recommendations to the European Commission in relation to regulations and policies related to audiovisual media services, including evaluating and proposing changes to existing directives; monitoring how member states implement and apply European legislation in the media field; facilitating the exchange of information and best practices between national regulatory authorities in the audiovisual field, for a better harmonisation of policies and regulations between member states; assessing the impact of new technologies and trends in the media sector on existing regulations, being able to recommend adjustments or updates to regulations to keep pace with rapid technological developments.

The European Media Services Committee also develops recommendations and good practices for the protection of minors and other vulnerable groups against inappropriate or harmful content in audiovisual media services, supports

measures that promote cultural and linguistic diversity in the audiovisual media sector, in accordance with the values and objectives of the European Union.

In the performance of its duties or in the exercise of its powers, the Committee shall act independently and neither seek nor accept instructions from any government, body, institution or person.

## Conclusions

Uniform implementation of the European Media Freedom Regulation across all member states can be challenging given legislative and cultural differences, with a robust monitoring and enforcement mechanism needed to ensure compliance with the law. National and European authorities must work together to identify and sanction violations, given that media owners and entrenched interest groups may oppose changes that affect their influence.

Regarding the media landscape in Romania, the European Regulation on media freedom could have a significant impact on it. Although Romania has legislation that protects the freedom of the press, the application of the Regulation could bring significant improvements regarding the reduction of political pressures on journalists, by implementing strict measures to protect editorial independence; increasing transparency as a result of establishing the obligation to disclose the real owners of media companies allowing the public to better understand who controls the flow of information.

Also, measures to protect journalistic sources and fair funding could reduce cases of censorship and self-censorship.

The European regulation on media freedom is certainly an important step in protecting and promoting the independence of publishers in the European Union. By establishing clear regulations and promoting media transparency and pluralism, it contributes to creating an environment in which journalists and editors can work free from external influences. Effective implementation and strict monitoring of these provisions will be essential for the success of this legislative initiative. For Romania, it could provide an additional protection framework for journalists and improve the public's access to accurate and diverse information.

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Audiovisual Media Services Directive (EU) 2018/1808

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