

Albania 2013 Report

European Commission

On freedom of expression

In the area of freedom of expression, the Law on audiovisual media was adopted in March, improving substantially the legislative framework for audiovisual media in Albania. The law fails to provide a selection procedure for the governing bodies of the regulator and the public broadcaster that would guarantee their independence. The moratorium on the use of defamation suits by government officials has been observed. Further efforts are required to ensure proper implementation of amendments on defamation and guidelines on setting damages at a reasonable level, in particular through training of the judiciary. The public service broadcaster's subscription fee collection system has not been revised and concern remains over its editorial independence.

Some cases of violence against journalists have been reported. Media continue to be used as a tool to promote political and private economic interests. Public advertising is still not regulated in a way that guarantees transparent and non-discriminatory allocation of funds. The lack of transparency of media financing remains an important challenge. Further efforts are needed, particularly by the State Labour Inspectorate, to ensure proper enforcement of labour rights, particularly the right for media workers to be covered by a formal employment contract. Protection from arbitrary dismissal is crucial to prevent self-censorship. The capacity of journalists' trade unions remains weak. Professional and ethical standards in journalism require strengthening. Privacy concerns in reporting need to be addressed, including in the case of minors and vulnerable groups. Further efforts are needed to ensure that reader/viewer complaints are dealt with in an effective and impartial manner.