

POLICY BRIEF NO. 1

# AI, Media and Democracy

*Safeguarding Democratic Values in the Age of Algorithmic Media: Challenges and Recommendations for Albania*

April 2026

## KEY MESSAGES

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already changing the way news is produced, shared, and consumed all over the world, and Albania is no exception. However, the country's media is not necessarily prepared for these changes, and neither is it engaged in a proper professional debate of these aspects. Albanian society, including media, is politically polarized, disinformation is far from rare in the information landscape. At the same time, the media still operates against a legal background that has yet to address AI in terms of media impact and conduct, while newsrooms have not actively engaged in adopting internal ethical guidelines on AI use. At the same time, Albania is legally committed — as part of its EU accession process — to align with the EU's new AI rules. This means action cannot be delayed. Policymakers, media organizations, civil society, and technology platforms all have a role to play in making sure AI serves Albanian democracy rather than undermining it.

## 1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence is no longer a technology of the future; rather, it has become increasingly present in our lives, as well as part of the media routine. In this respect, even though the extent to which AI is used to produce information is unknown, it can safely be said that it is already shaping this information that Albanian receive in some form. The most obvious impact is through algorithms on social media platforms deciding which stories appear at the top of people's feeds. At the same time, newsrooms can certainly benefit and widely use AI tools in various ways. Now they can write articles in a matter of seconds, generate realistic content of images and sounds that never happened in real life, or create images of events that never happened. It would also be unfair not to mention the variety of useful things that AI could be used for: it can help journalists check facts faster, spot patterns in large sets of data, or translate content into other languages and other time-consuming tasks previously done by newsroom staff.

In this context, the question is not whether AI will affect Albanian media — it already does and journalists are employing it in various forms. The question is whether Albania is making any progress in facilitating a proper environment for ethical and responsible use of AI in the media. More specifically, there is need for rules, institutions, and practices that guarantee that AI is used responsibly, transparently, and in ways that strengthen rather than weaken public information and democratic life. This policy brief looks at what is happening with AI in Albanian media today, why it matters for democracy, and what needs to change for the future.

## 2. The Albanian Media Landscape: What We Are Starting From

In order to consider what needs to change, a thorough review of the current problems is necessary in terms of the existing media landscape. This context presents significant challenges accumulated through the years, and AI advent can further exacerbate some of the existing problems.

### 2.1 A Media Environment Built on Division

Albanian media is deeply divided along political lines, with most major television channels and news websites having some influence from the two main political actors in the country. The high degree of ownership concentration that exists in the country further accentuates this structural polarization in the media landscape. Regular media ownership studies and other recent analysis indicates that the "traditional media market seems to be highly concentrated in terms of ownership, market revenue, and audience share, thus affecting the plurality of information: in the free-to-air TV market specifically, four major owners reach a combined audience share of approximately 86.94%, presenting a "high audience concentration risk," (Media Ownership Monitor, 2023)

The interdependence of media owners from political and business interests certainly affects the freedom of journalists to be independent," often forcing them to retreat into self-censorship as a routine part of their duties. This environment makes the risks associated with AI significantly worse. When AI tools are deployed to maximize engagement, they tend to reward content that is emotionally charged or sensationalist. This aligns with existing "market pressure to follow similar trends in reporting... prioritizing speed of publication and sensationalism over professional standards and ethics" (Our Media, 2025).

Furthermore, the lack of transparency in the rapidly expanding online sector presents a major challenge for accountability. While there is no transparency on the number, ownership, and operating manner of online media outlets operating in Albania, the lack of obligations to register and formalize the landscape makes it impossible to have accurate statistics or transparency. This opacity, combined with a pervasive tendency to copy-paste content, a lack of verification of information, and overall favoring of clickbait content, facilitates the easy spread of inaccurate information. In such a polarized and under-regulated landscape, irresponsible use of AI might deteriorate existing social and political divisions rather than strengthen democratic discourse and values.

Albanian journalists themselves are well aware of this problem. Research has found that disinformation is widely seen among Albanian media professionals as a direct threat to democracy and to the future of journalism as a profession (Çela, 2023, cited in Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026). Yet the structural conditions that enable disinformation — polarized ownership, weak editorial independence, and the absence of strong self-regulatory standards — have not changed significantly in recent years.

## 2.2 AI in Albanian Newsrooms: What the Evidence Actually Shows

AI is a topic that has been part of the public discourse in Albania, especially by the government. In fact, the government has promoted AI-powered tools and has declared ambitious AI goals in its draft National AI Strategy 2025–2030. On September 2025 Albania became the first country in the world to appoint the first AI Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Diella. However, apart from general legislation and government strategy, the situation on the ground in newsrooms is less clear and AI use and readiness in the media newsrooms remains still a topic to be explored.

A major study conducted by the Department of Journalism and Communication at the University of Tirana in 2025 gives us details on the current situation. Researchers surveyed 236 journalists and conducted 23 in-depth interviews with reporters, editors, and editors-in-chief across Albanian television channels and online news portals (Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026).

*Survey finding: Less than 9% of Albanian journalists reported using AI tools 'almost always', while around 15% use them 'rarely'. The majority do not use them systematically at all. The most common uses reported include translation, writing short news summaries, generating headlines, and checking images. Source: Çipuri & Luarasi (2026).*

The picture that emerges is one of very limited, cautious, and largely individual use of AI. Most journalists who do use AI tools rely on free, publicly available applications — not professional, dedicated tools. Newsrooms themselves have not invested in AI infrastructure, and very few have any internal training programmes or editorial guidelines for how AI should or should not be used.

There is also a significant trust problem. When asked about their attitude toward using tools like ChatGPT in their journalistic work, over 46% of Albanian journalists surveyed said they consider it a form of plagiarism. Only around 5% said they are satisfied with AI-generated outputs. Many journalists mentioned concerns about the lack of control over information, the risk of bias in AI systems, and the fear that AI could be used to serve commercial or political interests (Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026).

At the same time, it is clear that this is changing fast. Several journalists interviewed said they believe AI adoption will soon become unavoidable, even if they personally resist it now. One journalist told researchers: 'Soon, the work itself will be dictated by AI. Journalists will no longer be able to distinguish whether the news is true or generated by AI.' Whether this prediction proves accurate or not, it reflects a widespread sense of uncertainty and unease about where things are heading.

### 2.3 Missing Legal Framework, Weak Reflection on AI in Newsrooms

In this context, it is clear that there is a near-total absence of rules governing AI in Albanian media, from the policy and legal point of view. Albania does not have a comprehensive AI law yet. The closest thing that exists is a government decision from July 2024 that approved a set of technical standards for the use of AI — but this document applies only to the public sector (government ministries and agencies), does not cover private media organizations, and has no enforcement mechanism or penalties for violations (Bode & Xhaferaj, 2026). Albania's current regulatory situation 'remains programmatic rather than legislative, guided by principles but lacking a horizontal AI law harmonised with the EU AI Act' (Bode & Xhaferaj, 2026).

The Audio-Visual Media Authority (AMA), which is Albania's main media regulator, currently has no legal power to regulate how AI-generated content is produced or distributed. Its mandate was designed for a pre-AI world of traditional broadcasting, and it has not been updated to address algorithmic content distribution, synthetic media, or automated news production. However, through bilateral agreements, AMA has cooperated with TikTok regarding removal of harmful or illegal content, upon public complaints, and is also in contact with the other main social network platforms. This model could also be used to analyze potential problems related to AI content or AI use regarding content published in these social networks.

One of the first steps in addressing AI use in the media newsrooms has been the drafting and publication of the ethical guidelines for the use of AI in Albanian media, an initiative started by Albanian Media Institute and a group of experts, and in cooperation with the Albanian Media Council in the consultation phase with media outlets. This is the first document of its kind in the country. These guidelines call on media organizations to be transparent about when they use AI, to ensure human editorial oversight of all AI-generated content, to prevent disinformation, and to protect audience privacy. (Albanian Media Institute, 2024). However, the guidelines are voluntary, and media self-regulation in the country, despite the progress made in the last years, is still a very challenging process, due to the way that media landscape functions in the country and the political, economic, and professional constraints it operates under.

### 2.4 Training: A Necessity for Newsrooms and for Individual Journalists

One of the clearest findings from the research on Albanian newsrooms and AI use is the need for training for the working journalists, in a more organized and comprehensive manner. About 56% of surveyed journalists reported attending training or courses on digital journalism and AI — but the vast majority of these were self-organized, and offered by specific organizations or projects, and not provided by their employers (Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026).

This creates a deeply unequal and fragile situation. The journalists who happen to be curious about AI and proactive about their own development may pick up useful skills. But those who are not, or those working in smaller outlets without resources, are being left behind. Journalists in the study highlighted the particular challenges facing older colleagues: 'Some journalists feel insecure when using new technologies and AI algorithms, expressing the need for specialized training,' noted one TV journalist interviewed (Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026).

The Albanian Media Institute's ethical guidelines also call for continuous training of journalists and editorial staff, noting that training should address both the capabilities and limits of AI technology and the ethical issues that arise from its use (Albanian Media Institute, 2024). Without systematic investment in this training — at both the institutional level and through journalism education — the risk is that AI adoption in Albanian newsrooms will happen in an ad-hoc, uncontrolled, and potentially damaging way.

### 3. The Main Threats: How AI Can Harm Democracy in Albania

Understanding the specific ways in which AI can damage democratic life in Albania is essential for designing effective responses. Analyzing the relationship between AI and democratic stability in Albania is vital for building resilience. These are tangible developments in the current media sector that AI is beginning to accelerate, requiring proactive attention.

#### 3.1 Algorithms That Reward Outrage and Punish Accuracy

Social media platforms use AI-driven algorithms to decide what content to show each user. These algorithms are designed to maximize engagement — meaning they show people content that keeps them on the platform as long as possible. In practice, research consistently shows that content which triggers strong emotions — particularly anger, fear, and indignation — spreads further and faster than accurate, measured reporting.

This is clearly a global problem and one of the main topics related to future of journalism and information. However, in the existing Albanian context, irresponsible use of AI can further exacerbate some of the problems Albanian media landscape already faces. In a deeply polarized landscape, emotionally charged partisan content is already readily available. Algorithmic systems amplify it, creating a feedback loop: the more extreme and emotionally provocative the content, the more it is shared, the more engagement it generates, and the more it is promoted by the algorithm. The result is an information environment where, as researchers put it, disinformation is 'structurally advantaged' over verified journalism.

An overwhelming majority of journalists worldwide believe that AI is increasing the risk of misinformation. Albanian journalists are no exception: they consistently identify disinformation as one of the biggest threats both to journalism as a profession and to democratic functioning in the country (Çela, 2023, cited in Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026).

#### 3.2 Deepfakes and Synthetic Media: Fake Content That Looks Real

Generative AI — the type of AI that creates new content from scratch — has made it dramatically easier and cheaper to produce fake audio, video, and images that are virtually indistinguishable from genuine material. A 'deepfake' is a piece of video or audio that has been manipulated using AI to show a person saying or doing something they never actually said or did.

Albania has already had experience with manipulated audio recordings being used for political purposes. Generative AI makes this type of manipulation much faster, cheaper, and harder to detect. In a media environment where audiences already distrust much of what they see, a convincing deepfake of a politician making a damaging statement could spread rapidly before it is debunked — with serious consequences for electoral processes and public trust.

*The Albanian Media Institute's guidelines specifically address this risk: 'The development of AI has made it easier to manipulate audiovisual content. This has raised concerns, especially regarding content known as deepfake. Media must be careful in using these technologies and ensure that any modification of content is transparent to audiences, avoiding misinterpretations.'* (Albanian Media Institute, 2024)

The EU's new AI law directly tackles this issue. Article 50 of the EU AI Act requires that when AI is used to generate or manipulate content that could mislead audiences — including realistic synthetic video or audio —

this must be clearly disclosed. As part of its EU accession, Albania will need to implement rules of this kind (Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026; Bode & Xhaferaj, 2026).

### 3.3 Low-Quality AI Content Flooding the Information Space

AI tools make it very easy to produce large volumes of content quickly and cheaply. While this can be useful for legitimate journalism, it also creates serious risks. Irresponsible and unethical use of AI tools in this regard might lead to a devaluation of information, disorienting the public and making it less interested about the truth. Websites that generate enormous quantities of AI-written articles — often with little or no human editing — can flood the information space with repetitive, low-quality, or simply inaccurate content. These ‘content farms’ can crowd out credible journalism in search engine results and make it harder for citizens to find reliable information.

There is also a more subtle risk: even well-intentioned use of AI in newsrooms can lead to the homogenization of content. Because AI systems learn from existing data, they tend to produce output that resembles what has already been published. Albanian journalists themselves raised this concern: there is a danger that heavy reliance on AI leads to less diversity of perspectives, less original analysis, and more repetition of the same narratives (Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026; Albanian Media Institute, 2024). In a small media market like Albania, where there are already limited resources for original investigative reporting, this risk might be particularly significant.

### 3.4 The Problem of Secrecy: Audiences Don’t Know What Is AI and What Is Not

Transparency of its own operations and conduct has not been the strongest point of Albanian media landscape in the last 30 years. Its practice of use of AI tools to generate content makes no exception. In fact, in the current moment, one of the most fundamental ethical problems with AI in media is the question of transparency: when content is produced with the help of AI tools, should audiences be told? The answer, from an ethical and increasingly from a legal standpoint, is clearly yes. But this is not happening consistently in Albanian media.

The Albanian Media Institute’s guidelines are clear on this point. They specify that AI-generated or AI-assisted content should always be clearly labeled for audiences, using visible indicators such as ‘produced with the assistance of AI’ or ‘automated content’. They also say that media organizations should publish clear policies explaining how and why they use AI, and that audiences should have easy ways to ask questions or make complaints about AI-generated content (Albanian Media Institute, 2024).

Research shows that when audiences discover that a media outlet has used AI without telling them, it damages trust significantly. A study conducted in Germany found that people who read news from an outlet that used AI-generated content trusted that outlet less — and were less willing to pay for its content or engage with its advertising (Nanz et al., 2025, cited in Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026). In Albania, where media trust is already very low, the undisclosed use of AI risks making a bad situation even worse.

### 3.5 AI as a Tool for Political Manipulation

Perhaps the most politically dangerous application of AI in the media context is its use by political actors to manipulate public opinion, in times of election especially. AI-powered tools allow highly targeted political messaging — where different audiences receive completely different messages, tailored to their particular fears, interests, or identities. This ‘micro-targeting’ is effectively invisible: the general public, journalists, and regulatory bodies cannot easily see what messages are being sent to whom.

In countries where democracy is fragile, AI can be used as a weapon. Research from Turkey found that AI was simultaneously enabling journalists to do better work and providing authoritarian actors with powerful new tools for manipulation and control (Çoban, 2025, cited in Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026). Albania, with its history of media ownership linked to political interests and its intense political polarization, faces this same dual reality.

AI also enables the production and distribution of coordinated inauthentic behavior at scale: fake social media accounts, automated comment sections, bot networks that make fringe views appear mainstream. These tools

are already used in Albanian political communication. As AI becomes more sophisticated and accessible, the potential for abuse grows.

### 3.6 Eroding Trust

Finally, the impact that improper use of AI can have on public trust on media and information also has to be taken into account. Thanks to technological development's nature, AI is expected to become better at producing fake content and disseminating it among the public. This can lead to the phenomenon of the so-called the 'liar's dividend': where genuine, authentic information is dismissed as potentially fake, while actual fabrications are circulated as real. This confusing situation both disinforms the public and lowers media credibility, creating a situation where it is increasingly overwhelming to find out the truth and seek some accountability from the involved parties.

While situation in Albanian information landscape is still far from this point, still Albanian journalists are acutely aware of this tension. They describe a profession under pressure — caught between the need to embrace new technologies and the imperative to protect the professional standards that make journalism trustworthy and socially valuable. Researchers have described this as a constant 'ping-pong' between individual journalists' commitment to professional values and the structural pressures pushing toward faster, cheaper, AI-assisted production (Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026).

## 4. Recommendations

The problems described above are serious, but they are not inevitable, and they are part of the current challenges most countries in the world face. Other countries — including EU member states — are working to establish frameworks that allow AI to be used beneficially in media while protecting against its harms. Albania needs to do the same, also in view of its EU accession commitments. The recommendations below are addressed to the institutions and organizations that have the power to make change happen. They are based on evidence from Albanian newsrooms, international best practice, the requirements of the EU AI Act, and guidance developed specifically for the Albanian context (Bode & Xhaferaj, 2026; Albanian Media Institute, 2024; Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026).

#	Recommendation	Lead Actor(s)
R1	<p><b>Create a National Strategy for AI and Media</b></p> <p>The government should develop a clear national strategy specifically addressing AI in the media sector. This strategy should set out rules, timelines, and responsibilities for implementing AI governance in media. It should be developed with input from media organizations, journalists, civil society, and the public — not just government agencies. Albania's Draft AI Strategy 2025–2030 commits to aligning with the EU AI Act but has not yet been translated into concrete action (Bode &amp; Xhaferaj, 2026).</p>	<i>Council of Ministers, Ministry responsible for Digital Transformation</i>
R2	<p><b>Consider the Power to Regulate AI Content</b></p> <p>Parliament should consider legislation expanding the Audio-Visual Media Authority's mandate to cover AI-generated and AI-assisted media content, including content distributed through online platforms and social media. AMA needs both the legal authority and the resources to do this work effectively. Currently, it has neither (Bode &amp; Xhaferaj, 2026).</p>	<i>Parliament, AMA</i>
R3	<p><b>Make AI Labels Mandatory</b></p> <p>When media organizations use AI to produce or significantly edit content that is published as news or information, they should be legally required to say so clearly. The Albanian Media Institute has already provided a model for how this can work — labels like 'produced with the assistance of AI' or 'automated content' should become a standard, enforceable</p>	<i>Parliament, AMA, Media Outlets</i>

	<p>requirement (Albanian Media Institute, 2024). The EU AI Act's Article 50 requires exactly this, and Albania will need to adopt equivalent rules as part of accession.</p>	
<b>R4</b>	<p><b>Require Media Organizations to Have AI Policies</b></p> <p>Every Albanian media organization should be required to adopt and publish a clear internal policy on how AI is used in its newsroom. This should include: what AI tools are permitted, what human oversight is required before AI content is published, how errors will be corrected, and how staff will be trained. The Albanian Media Institute's guidelines provide a starting point for what these policies should contain (Albanian Media Institute, 2024). Research shows that most Albanian newsrooms currently have no such policies at all (Çipuri &amp; Luarasi, 2026).</p>	<p><i>Media Outlets, Albanian Media Council, AMA</i></p>
<b>R5</b>	<p><b>Create a Body to Monitor AI and Media Integrity</b></p> <p>A dedicated monitoring body — ideally led by civil society and independent of government — should be established to track the use of AI in Albanian media, identify cases of deepfake content or AI-driven manipulation, and publish regular public reports. This body should have access to data from online platforms and should coordinate with AMA, the Commissioner for Information and Data Protection, and the Ombudsman. SCiDEV's analysis highlights the current absence of any coordinated oversight mechanism as a critical gap (Bode &amp; Xhaferaj, 2026).</p>	<p><i>Civil Society Organizations, AMA, International Donors</i></p>
<b>R6</b>	<p><b>Demand Transparency from Online Platforms</b></p> <p>The Albanian government should actively support, both domestically and through EU accession channels, requirements that large online platforms share data with researchers and regulators about how their algorithms work and what content they amplify. Without this data, it is impossible to properly understand or respond to algorithmic manipulation of Albanian public discourse. The EU's Digital Services Act already requires this of large platforms.</p>	<p><i>Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, AMA</i></p>
<b>R7</b>	<p><b>Invest Seriously in Journalist Training on AI</b></p> <p>Media organizations, journalism schools, and government should all invest in systematic, ongoing training for journalists on how to use AI ethically and effectively. Currently, 56% of Albanian journalists are seeking this training on their own time, without support from employers (Çipuri &amp; Luarasi, 2026). The Albanian Media Institute specifically recommends continuous training that covers both technical capabilities and the ethical issues involved (Albanian Media Institute, 2024). The EU AI Act's Article 4 — which requires promoting AI literacy — applies from February 2025 and is binding on Albania as part of accession.</p>	<p><i>Ministry of Education, Media Organizations, Journalism Schools, International Partners</i></p>
<b>R8</b>	<p><b>Protect Elections from AI Manipulation</b></p> <p>The Central Election Commission should develop specific rules on the use of AI in electoral campaigns. At minimum, these should require disclosure when AI is used to produce campaign materials, ban the use of deepfake content depicting real politicians, and prohibit micro-targeting of voters using AI tools without transparency. The CEC has itself begun using AI in electoral processes — for vote counting, footage analysis, and chatbots — and these applications should also be subject to risk assessment and public transparency (Bode &amp; Xhaferaj, 2026).</p>	<p><i>Central Election Commission, Parliament</i></p>

## 5. Albania's EU Commitments: What the Law Already Requires

This is not just a question of good intentions. Albania has specific legal and political commitments that make action on AI in media an obligation, not just a choice.

The EU's Artificial Intelligence Act — the world's first comprehensive AI law — entered into force in July 2024. It applies different rules to different types of AI systems depending on how much risk they pose. For AI used in media, the most relevant rules fall under the category of 'limited risk' AI systems, which includes AI tools that generate or manipulate media content. These systems must meet transparency requirements: audiences must be informed when content has been created or significantly altered by AI, especially when there is a risk of disinformation (EU AI Act, Article 50). Some prohibitions — such as the ban on AI systems that manipulate people through subliminal techniques — also apply directly to AI used in media and political communication.

Albania's obligation to align with these rules comes from its accession process. When the EU opened negotiations on Cluster 3 (Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth) with Albania in May 2025, it issued a formal Common Position that explicitly invited Albania to 'align with the EU Artificial Intelligence Act' (Bode & Xhaferaj, 2026). This obligation falls under Chapter 10, which covers Digital Transformation and Media — meaning AI governance in media is directly part of Albania's accession agenda.

*The EU Common Position on Albania's accession (2025) states: 'The EU notes Albania's partial alignment with the EU acquis related to digital transformation... the EU invites Albania to align with the EU Artificial Intelligence Act.' This is one of the most explicit external drivers for action on AI governance in the Albanian context. Source: Bode & Xhaferaj (2026).*

Albania's own Draft National AI Strategy 2025–2030 acknowledges these obligations and commits to aligning with the EU AI Act on risk classification, transparency, oversight, and enforcement. But acknowledging an obligation is not the same as fulfilling it. As of early 2026, no laws or regulations had actually been adopted to implement these commitments (Bode & Xhaferaj, 2026).

The SCiDEV working paper also highlights a number of specific gaps that Albania must fill to be ready for the EU AI Act. These include: the absence of a market surveillance authority with competence over AI systems; the lack of a notifying authority to assess AI providers' compliance; no conformity assessment bodies capable of independently auditing AI systems; and no formal mechanism for fundamental rights impact assessments of high-risk AI applications (Bode & Xhaferaj, 2026). While some of these gaps relate primarily to government AI rather than media AI, they reflect a broader institutional deficit that affects the entire ecosystem.

Albania is not starting entirely from zero. The country has passed a series of laws on electronic governance, cybersecurity, personal data protection, and electronic communications that provide a foundation. The National Agency for Information Society (AKSHI) has been identified as a potential coordinating authority for AI governance. And some capacity-building efforts are underway through TAIEX technical assistance missions. But the gap between where Albania is now and where it needs to be is still very large — and the clock is ticking on the accession timeline.

Finally, Albania should consider ratifying the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (2024). This international treaty provides an additional layer of protection for human rights in AI governance that complements the more technical EU AI Act framework. Taking both steps together would give Albanian citizens the strongest possible set of protections against the misuse of AI in public life.

## 6. Conclusions

AI is changing Albanian media faster than Albanian institutions are adapting. Newsrooms have not developed internal ethical frameworks or specific guidelines. Regulators have no tools to oversee AI-generated content. And the legal framework required to govern AI in Albanian media simply does not yet exist.

This matters because the stakes are high. Albania's information environment is already under significant stress from political polarization, misinformation, and low public trust. AI has the potential to make all of these problems dramatically worse — by amplifying disinformation at scale, enabling the production of fake videos and audio designed to manipulate voters, and allowing political actors to target citizens with tailored propaganda that is invisible to public scrutiny.

But AI also offers genuine opportunities. It can help journalists check facts faster, analyze large datasets, detect patterns in public records, and reach wider audiences. The goal is not to reject AI, but to govern it: to make sure it is used transparently, responsibly, and in ways that strengthen rather than undermine the journalism that democracy depends on.

Albanian journalists, despite operating with limited resources and institutional support, still recognize the value of the human dimension in journalism, more specifically verification, context, ethical judgment, and accountability, identifying these values as ones that AI cannot replace (Çipuri & Luarasi, 2026). What they need is an institutional environment that supports and protects these values rather than leaving individual journalists to navigate AI alone.

Albania's EU accession process creates a genuine opportunity to build that environment. The EU AI Act provides a ready-made framework. Political will, institutional investment, and a genuine commitment to making AI serve Albanian democracy, rather than undermine it, are necessary in order to provide a good facilitating environment for the use of AI in the media and information landscape in a responsible manner.

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### About This Policy Brief

This is the first in a planned series of policy briefs on AI, Media and Democracy in Albania. It is aimed at policymakers, media practitioners, civil society organizations, journalism educators, and international partners working on democratic governance in the country. Subsequent briefs in this series will address specific dimensions, including deepfake detection, regulatory design options, platform accountability, and media literacy frameworks.

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