Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 16264
27 September 2025

Media freedom in decline in Albania

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Ms Albana VOKSHI and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Article 10 of European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) guarantees freedom of expression. Free and independent media is the cornerstone of democracy and public accountability. Silencing the press through violence against journalists, imposition of self-censorship, harassment and forced media closures constitutes a clear indicator of authoritarian tendencies and represents a serious threat to democratic governance.

Recent developments in Albania are deeply concerning, including repeated threats and acts of violence against journalists; attempts to restrict their free access to premises of parliament and independent filming of its proceedings; continued criminalisation of defamation in the Penal Code; the closure or sequestration by State institutions of three national broadcasters in the last decade (Agon Channel, Ora News, Focus Media Group). In August 2025, police forces surrounded the headquarters of Focus Media Group (News24, BalkanWeb, Panorama, and Gazeta Shqiptare), cut electricity, and denied some 200 journalists access to their workplaces despite a court ruling in their favour. Military units seized journalists' computers and investigative files, endangering both their safety and the protection of their sources. To date, the authorities have refused to return the confiscated computers, which contain documentation from several investigations into corruption involving high-level officials and organised crime.

The election observation mission of 11 May 2025 of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) found that Albania's media environment was highly constrained by concentrated ownership, political influence, editorial interference, widespread self-censorship, thereby undermining pluralism and depriving citizens of diverse information.

The Parliamentary Assembly should prepare a report on this issue and call on the Albanian authorities to end intimidation and interference, decriminalise defamation, and guarantee unhindered access for journalists. Silencing independent media is incompatible with Albania's obligations as a member State of the Council of Europe and poses a serious threat to its democratic future and its path towards European integration.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

VOKSHI Albana, Albania, EPP/CD
ABRAHAM Knut, Germany, EPP/CD
BAKOYANNIS Dora, Greece, EPP/CD
BASTOS Regina, Portugal, EPP/CD
BERGAMINI Deborah, Italy, EPP/CD
BRICO Christophe, Monaco, EPP/CD
CARVALHO Ricardo, Portugal, EPP/CD
CASTEL Laura, Spain, UEL
DALLE Benjamin, Belgium, EPP/CD
GALLES Paul, Luxembourg, EPP/CD
LEYTE Carmen, Spain, EPP/CD
MULLEN Rónán, Ireland, EPP/CD
PASQUIER-CIULLA Christine, Monaco, EPP/CD
PETRUSHEVSKA Marija, North Macedonia, EPP/CD
ROBLES Gonzalo, Spain, EPP/CD
SACHEVA Denitsa, Bulgaria, EPP/CD
SOBOLIEV Serhii, Ukraine, EPP/CD
STAMATIS Georgios, Greece, EPP/CD
SYRENGELA Maria, Greece, EPP/CD
TORNARITIS Nicos, Cyprus, EPP/CD

1. EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left