

KOSOVO



MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX 2018

Tracking Development
of Sustainable
Independent Media
Around the World



KOSOVO

AT A GLANCE

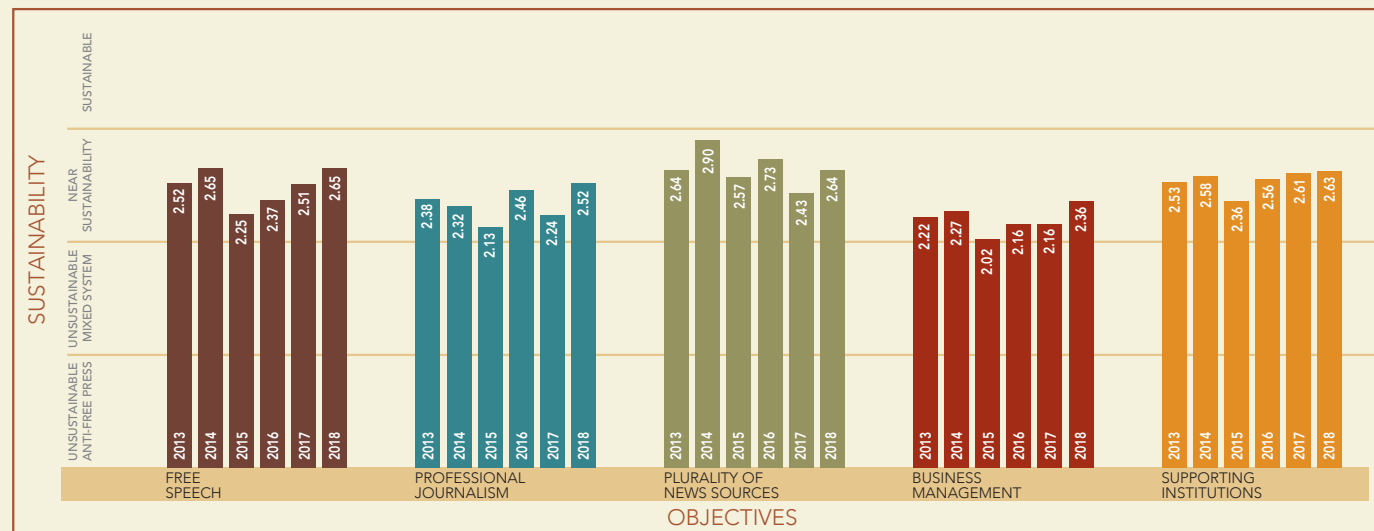
GENERAL

- **Population:** 1,895,250 (July 2017 est. CIA World Factbook)
- **Capital city:** Pristina
- **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Albanians 92.9%, Bosniaks 1.6%, Serbs 1.5%, Turk 1.1%, Ashkali 0.9%, Egyptian 0.7%, Gorani 0.6%, Romani 0.5%, other/unspecified 0.2% (CIA World Factbook, 2011 est.)
- **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 95.6%, Roman Catholic 2.2%, Orthodox 1.5%, other 0.07%, none 0.07%, unspecified 0.6% (CIA World Factbook, 2011 est.)
- **Languages (% of population):** Albanian (official) 94.5%, Bosnian 1.7%, Serbian (official) 1.6%, Turkish 1.1%, other 0.9% (includes Romani), unspecified 0.1% (CIA World Factbook, 2002 est.)
- **GNI (2016–Atlas):** \$6.65 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2016)
- **GNI per capita (2016–PPP):** \$3,850 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2016)
- **Literacy rate:** N/A
- **President or top authority:** President Hashim Thaci (since April 7, 2016)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- **Number of print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print—5 daily newspapers; Radio Stations—82; Television Stations—20 (IMC, 2015)
- **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Koha Ditore is the leading newspaper, followed by Kosova Sot (Index Kosova, December 2015)
- **News agencies:** Kosovo Live, Kosovo Press, Economy Online
- **Broadcast Ratings:** RTK (40%), KTV (37%), RTV21 (36%), Klan Kosova (18%); Radio Dukagjini (4.2%), Radio Blue Sky (2.1%), Radio Kosova (2%), Radio 21 (1.9%) (Index Kosova, December 2015)
- **Internet usage:** 80.5% of households have Internet access (Regulatory Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications, December 2015)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: KOSOVO



SCORE KEY

Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1): Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2): Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

Near Sustainability (2-3): Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

Sustainable (3-4): Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

Scores for all years may be found online at <https://www.irex.org/msi>



Every objective for Kosovo increased this year and it remains in the middle of the near sustainable category at score of 2.56. The most significant increase was in the professional journalism objective with increasing production quality of programming and 24 hour news channels. Business management remains the lowest category, although the score increased by .20 this year as many media outlets rely on advertising or international donors for revenue.

Market research is lacking, but tools like Google analytics can provide some data for the media to promote themselves to advertisers and donors.

In the evening hours of December 22, 2017, after the Christmas holiday had already begun, 43 members of Parliament from the ruling coalition signed a request to call for an extraordinary session to repeal the law on the Specialist Chamber and Specialist Prosecutor's Office. The law was adopted in 2015 to establish a Hague-based war crimes court and to prosecute suspected Kosovo Albanians for crimes against civilians during and after the 1999 war. High-level politicians, mostly from the ruling parties, feared their names could be on the list of suspects. Eventually, this government-backed initiative failed after two main opposition parties boycotted it, leaving it without the necessary quorum. The United States and European Union representatives warned Kosovo leaders that reneging on its agreement with Western allies to hand over suspected war criminals could globally isolate Kosovo. Ruairí O'Connell, the United Kingdom's ambassador to Kosovo, called it "the most dangerous night" since the end of the war.

Although the attempt to dissolve the Special Court took both the international community and the local public by surprise, given the history of the members of the new government formed after the June elections, it could have been anticipated. Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj voted against the law in 2015 when he was a member of the opposition. Haradinaj's election was preceded by a vote of no confidence initiated by opposition parties earlier in May. That motion triggered extraordinary parliamentary elections a month later, which brought

tremendous changes in the composition of Parliament. The opposition party Vetevendosje, which has received extensive coverage in previous MSI reports for organizing massive and often violent street protests, doubled its number of seats in the Parliament. However, the party remained in opposition, since a larger pre-election coalition, composed of 12 political parties, won the right to form the government. Eventually, in September 2017, Parliament elected Haradinaj as the new prime minister.

A month later, in October, regular local elections were organized in 38 municipalities in Kosovo, which also brought certain changes to the political map of Kosovo. For example, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), which had dominated many municipalities, held on to power in only five of them; meanwhile, the Alliance for Kosovo Future (AAK), which used to rule in just a few municipalities, won in eight. Although no physical incidents were reported during campaign season, a brutal "anticampaign" was organized in the media, especially on social media. Fake news originated from all camps. The number of new portals disseminating false information through social media intensified, confusing many Internet users who were unable to distinguish between established online outlets and the fake ones. The Press Council of Kosovo has processed a record 63 complaints for false reporting and found ethics violations in 50 of them. Most were serious violations of reporting standards and were intentionally committed by the media during the election season.

**OBJECTIVE 1:
FREEDOM OF
SPEECH**

2.65

Although Kosovo is far from becoming a full member of the EU, its EU orientation has resulted in the adoption of a legal framework in line with EU and international standards. Legislation in Kosovo regarding media freedoms, freedom of expression and information, and human rights is aligned with global standards. However, there are regular attempts to introduce new legislation or to amend existing laws to reverse this progress. For example, this year, there was an attempt to criminalize libel again, which is currently a civil issue. A large public outcry followed, and the proposal failed. Still, despite a solid legal framework, obstacles emerge when it comes to fair and equal implementation of such legislation. This has become particularly evident with regard to the legal treatment in the cases of attacks against journalists. In 2017, two well-known investigative journalists were subjected to physical attacks; many others received threats or were subjected to public humiliation. Police investigations and judiciary procedures do not always treat such cases with urgency. However, when high-profile politicians are threatened, state authorities are quick to react.

The Association of Kosovo Journalists recorded more than 20 cases of assaults against journalists in 2017. The inflammatory language used by politicians toward journalists is also on the rise. In one of his first press conferences, Prime Minister Haradinaj, unsatisfied with comments and questions raised by journalists, told them to “go to school and read more.” A few days later, he apologized for the inappropriate language, saying that he was

under “enormous stress.” Milaim Zeka, a member of Parliament from the ruling coalition, used even stronger language against journalists. In one of his speeches in Parliament, he criticized journalists for labeling people as “criminals” on TV shows, referencing both Vehbi Kajtazi from the investigative online newspaper Insajderi and the television show host Adriatik Kelmendi. Kajtazi authored an investigative story that names Zeka as the mastermind of a fraud scheme. The story alleges that Zeka and his business partner received money from more than 900 Kosovans for employment visas for seasonal work in Germany and led to Zeka’s arrest. The Kosovo special prosecutor is investigating him for possible participation in organized crime.

Days after Kajtazi ran his article, he was physically attacked; the perpetrators were never identified. Earlier in the year, the director of Insajderi and a colleague of Kajtazi, Parim Olluri, was also beaten by unknown assailants while he was accompanied by his wife. Again, the police never found the attackers. In some cases, journalists receive indirect threats. For example, a public official working in the General Auditor’s Office blackmailed Saranda Ramaj, an investigative journalist from the daily newspaper Koha Ditore. The official pressured Ramaj’s parents to stop her reporting. Ramaj had found serious violations in a public tender that is linked to the General Auditor’s Office. Despite the threats and violence, all three journalists have received awards naming their work as some of the best anticorruption stories.

Access to information is a civil right that is guaranteed by law. However, several obstacles still remain. There is a general lack of institutional information easily accessible to journalists and the public. Financial reports in particular are hard to find and are not always available on the websites of public institutions. The majority of information has

to be sought directly from institutions, which are not always receptive to cooperating with journalists. In addition, not all outlets are treated the same. Generally, smaller and more niche media outlets face more challenges in securing interviews and accessing documents and information. Many of these institutions have press officers and public relations officials, but most public government institutions have either internal regulations that bar officials from speaking to the media without obtaining permission from the highest levels or no clear guidelines on how the communication should take place. Generally, only partial information is provided. Responses to

Legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information.
FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS

- ▶ Legal and social protections of free speech exist and are enforced.
- ▶ Licensing of broadcast media is fair, competitive, and apolitical.
- ▶ Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries.
- ▶ Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare.
- ▶ State or public media do not receive preferential legal treatment, and law guarantees editorial independence.
- ▶ Libel is a civil law issue; public officials are held to higher standards, and offended parties must prove falsity and malice.
- ▶ Public information is easily accessible; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- ▶ Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- ▶ Entry into the journalism profession is free, and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

follow-up questions are rare, and there are delays in providing access to documents.

One positive development is the Prime Minister's Office's initiative to revise the government's communication strategy. Called the "Concept Document on the Government Public Communication Service," the aim of this document is to address the current flaws and drawbacks in the communication between the government and the media. During 2017, several meetings were organized with civil society organizations and media representatives to help cultivate new strategies. One issue discussed is the persistent problem of press officers and officials not attending meetings where issues, policies, and programs are being discussed, which in turn prevents them from being able to communicate messages to the press properly. During one of the public consultations on the concept document, members of the media discussed two particular issues: a more open data approach to increase transparency and more consistent and systematic press conferences across all government ministries. The government approved the document in late December.

The Independent Media Commission (IMC), a public body overseen by Parliament, licenses television, radio, and cable providers. A steering board elected by Parliament selects IMC members; the election of board members is mostly based on party affiliations rather than on professional merit. The IMC is also responsible for managing the transition from analog to digital broadcasting, of which no concrete steps have been taken this year.

Print and online media are not required to go through any licensing procedures, although they are registered either as business enterprises operating under the auspices of Kosovo Business Registration Agency within the Ministry of Trade and Industry or as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) under the

Ministry of Public Administration.

With regard to market entry, Kosovo has no legal restrictions greater than those of other non-media businesses, and media organizations are not burdened with taxes higher than those for other private businesses. Media outlets actually enjoy certain tax breaks, such as the value-added tax on technical equipment and materials. Entry into the journalism profession is free, and the government imposes no licensing restrictions. The government does restrict the number of journalists from one outlet who can report on government events, forcing the same reporter to attend all government events and prohibiting others from covering them if the registered reporter is unavailable. The law does not restrict access to international news and news sources.

Many of these institutions have press officers and public relations officials, but most public government institutions have either internal regulations that bar officials from speaking to the media without obtaining permission from the highest levels or no clear guidelines on how the communication should take place.

The Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK) is the only public medium and consists of four TV channels, two radio stations, and one online portal. RTK continues to receive state funding, although the law initially only planned for funding for a temporary period until a subscription fee was implemented. The temporary period has already ended, but there is not mechanism in sight to replace state funding. Panelists said state funding makes the public media more prone to direct government influence. Although

a steering board selected by Parliament oversees RTK, its appointees are mostly selected based on party preferences. Panelists mentioned dozens of cases in which high-level media professionals have somehow not made it past the interview phase. This year, Parliament dismissed a member of the board after evidence emerged that she had violated the law by keeping another position in a public office.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

2.52

Traditional media, like television and newspapers, tend to adhere more to professional standards, but this is not necessarily true for online media, particularly given the continuous shift of mainstream media to online platforms. This transition has been a contributor to a deterioration of professional standards and practices overall. Increasingly, media are publishing single-sourced articles and stories, and personal statements, mostly given through Twitter or Facebook, are being published as stand-alone articles. This is leading to stories and reports that lack context and comprehensive analysis, and they often lack fact-checking.

With the election year, fake news and fake media increased, leading to a high number of citizen complaints over false reporting. The Press Council of Kosovo, a self-regulatory body composed of representatives from print and online media, processed a total of 63 complaints of false reporting in 2017. The council found that in 50 cases, there were clear violations of ethical standards. Of the complaints, 29 were against the daily newspaper Kosova Sot, and 13 others were directed at the

Journalism meets professional standards of quality.

PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM INDICATORS

- ▶ Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced.
- ▶ Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards.
- ▶ Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.
- ▶ Journalists cover key events and issues.
- ▶ Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption.
- ▶ Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming.
- ▶ Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient.
- ▶ Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

online newspaper Express. Panelists believe that if Kosovo had a better justice system, media organizations could not afford to publish false information intentionally.

Respect of copyrights has not improved from last year. Many outlets republish articles without prior request or approval for content sharing. This is particularly common among online media. One exception is Kallxo.com, an online media outlet that has become a member of the International Fact-Checking Network.

In general, there is a widespread perception that self-censorship is engrained in media professionals. Many media outlets have political affiliations, and journalists working for certain media end up self-censoring in order to abide by the political editorial positions of the media they choose to work for.

When it comes to financial security and

sustainability, many journalists continue to lack adequate implementation of their work contracts or lack contracts altogether. Throughout the private media sector, journalists' salaries are low, and for many reporters, salaries are not always paid on time. At some media outlets, journalists are also not allowed to freelance for other outlets, further diminishing the chance of a higher income. Such financial instability seems to have turned the profession into an launchpad for another career. The pay levels in public media are significantly higher compared to the private media, in part because the public media receives around €10 million (\$12.4 million) each year from the state budget, in addition to income secured through advertisements. Conversely, the budget of private media with national coverage is believed to be between €2 and 3 million (\$2.5 million and \$3.7 million).

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In mainstream media, there is a lack of beat journalists who specialize in one subject. In general, bigger mainstream media outlets might have around two to three journalists who cover a particular field (for example, health or the economy), but it is not a widespread practice across the media landscape. In general, journalists usually cover key events and issues, and, because of technological advancements, most key events are broadcast live. During the election, for example, reporters provided live coverage from polling stations.

Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and informational programming in television. News programs contain sufficient information on daily local, national, and international news. Cable providers now have space for channels that provide news round-the-clock, like Arta TV. There have been improvements in the equipment and facilities for gathering, producing, and distributing news; as such, the number of stations offering programming in high definition has increased. At the local level, however, community media often lack proper financial investments and have lower-quality programming.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

2.64

In general, the media environment across Kosovo is quite diverse, both in terms of channels and content. There are public and commercial radio stations and television channels, as well as private newspapers (although they are in decline), news agencies, cable providers, and online news sites. The variety of news sources allows people to check one against the other. There are also numerous cable providers that include a diverse array of channels, including ones from different countries. In terms of content, there are many perspectives and angles, but that does not necessarily ensure high-quality discussions and debate. In general, there is also a lack in the diversity of topics across mainstream media, which continue to overemphasize trivial issues, in particular focusing on individual political leaders and political parties and groups, rather than on policies, issues, and programs.

The law does not restrict citizens' access to

domestic and international media. There are no restrictions from the government in terms of accessing certain Internet features or social networks. In fact, cable and Internet penetration has increased rapidly. According to the Regulatory Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications, 80.5 percent of Kosovo households have Internet access. Panelists suggested that with audiences increasingly moving to online platforms and outlets to consume information, there is a greater need for more media literacy programs, activities, and initiatives. The phenomenon of fake news and online portals with the sole purpose of publishing misleading information about individuals or groups is particularly evident during election season, including

Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news.

PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS

- A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists.
- Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs.
- Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
- Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted.
- A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.
- State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
- Broadcast ratings, circulation figures, and Internet statistics are reliable.
- Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media.

in 2017 during both parliamentary elections and local elections. The number of new portals disseminating false information through social media intensified, and many Internet users are unable to distinguish between an established online outlet and the fake ones. The need to educate the public on how to identify and verify which outlets are fake is of extreme importance, panelists said.

The public broadcaster continues to remain politically influenced, generally catering to the parties in power. While the public broadcaster's legislation, rules of conduct, and code of ethics all define its responsibility as serving in a bipartisan way on behalf of the public interest, it remains highly politicized, serving more as a mouthpiece for the government. Panelists said that as long as the public broadcaster is financed from the state budget, it would not enjoy full editorial and institutional independence.

Most private media produce their own news and programming. This also holds true for community media, whose main focus is on local news and developments. Some online news sites, however, tend to rely heavily on content from mainstream media and news agencies. KosovaPress and Ekonomika Online are the largest independent news agencies. While panelists believe they offer good services, their main focus is on daily news as well as coverage of officials' daily agenda, not investigative reporting. However, private media published several investigative pieces this year, including one on the chief prosecutor of Kosovo Aleksander Lumezi, who is accused of fraud. Reporters found archival documents suggesting Lumezi may have falsified his bar exam, although he has denied such allegations.

Transparency in private media ownership has not improved from last year. Most people find it hard to locate information on who owns various

outlets. Still, there are some mechanisms citizens can use to find out more about media ownership. For example, private television channels, radio stations, and cable providers are required to register their owners' data with the IMC, while print outlets and online news sites are required to register their owners' data with the Ministry of Trade and Industry. NGO media are also required to provide ownership

Because of the diversity in media outlets, citizens can find coverage of a broad spectrum of social issues, such as those concerning gender, religion, and sexual orientation. Although there is no resistance from the media to cover and debate these issues, they are often associated with negative comments on social media.

information to the Ministry of Public Administration, but ownership and editorial information are missing from the websites of online media. Ownership transparency is one of the few effective ways the public can verify the credibility of an outlet. As such, the Press Council has requested that all of its members publish an impressum, a document that would include information about ownership, newsroom editorial team, and contact information. This was presented as a condition of membership on the council, where more than 90 percent of the members are online media. However, a number of outlets have still yet to respond.

Because of the diversity in media outlets, citizens can find coverage of a broad spectrum of social issues, such as those concerning gender, religion, and sexual orientation. Although there is no resistance from the media to cover and debate these issues, they are often associated with negative

comments on social media. Religion in particular receives a lot of public attention, with the debate over whether a grand mosque should be built in Pristina receiving many comments.

Minority media are also available. RTK 2, for example, is a public channel that broadcasts only in Serbian. Other local outlets also broadcast in Serbian, including Radio Kim, which is located in a Serb-populated municipality. RTK1 also provides broadcasting time to other minority groups, such as the Turkish and Roma communities. Most mainstream media are based in Pristina, but they provide local news as well, with some even boasting local correspondents. International news is always included in the daily news, in national media as well as in local media.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

2.36

Media sustainability remains a grave concern. The majority of media outlets do not necessarily have sound financial models that would allow them to sustain themselves and remain independent. Public media has guaranteed state funding, which gives it a financial advantage over private media, in addition to being able to sell advertising time. To avoid impeding the development of the commercial media sector, public media is allowed to sell six minutes of advertising airtime per hour, half of the allowance for commercial media. Despite its generous income, the public broadcaster possesses a high public debt and is often accused of mismanagement of its funds.

The government provides no subsidies for private

media. Private media primarily rely on advertising revenue, while NGO media have to apply regularly for funding from international donors. Cable providers and news agencies, meanwhile, rely on subscription fees. Print media depends on advertisements for its income. Online outlets'

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financial situations are varied; some are efficient and self-sustaining enterprises thanks to high page clicks. Community media survives because of project-based financing, with international donors and some local funders supplying the money.

Market research is underdeveloped and rarely used to enhance advertising revenues. This is also true for broadcast ratings and circulation figures, which, primarily, each individual media outlet compiles and largely for internal use. The majority of media outlets seek out advertisers on an individual basis, rather than through advertising companies. Smaller, more niche media have difficulties accessing such advertisers. The national and local governments are among the biggest advertisers in Kosovo, although panelists noted that government advertising is not distributed fairly. Other major advertisers include private banks, insurance companies, and real estate companies.

International companies operating in Kosovo, such as banks and insurance companies, tend to produce better ads in comparison to local companies. Nevertheless, all commercial spots must comply with the rules established by the IMC and related laws. As the public broadcaster, RTK creates business plans, while private media are not legally

obligated to do so. Marketing is also not transparent for private media, although public media is required by law to provide audit reports.

There is no systematic and credible independent market research, which prevents media outlets from using such data to better position themselves in the market. However, individual media outlets do conduct market research for internal use and to help attract advertising companies. Relevant Internet statistics can also be easily checked thanks to Google analytics and similar Internet services such as Alexa.

Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

- ▶ Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses.
- ▶ Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources.
- ▶ Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market.
- ▶ Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets.
- ▶ Independent media do not receive government subsidies.
- ▶ Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences.
- ▶ Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced.

**OBJECTIVE 5:
SUPPORTING
INSTITUTIONS**

2.63

The Association of Kosovo Independent Electronic Media represents private media by protecting the interests of most broadcast outlets. There is nothing similar, however, for print or online media. Professional journalist associations exist and aim to protect journalists' rights and promote quality journalism, in both the Albanian and Serbian communities. The main group is the Association of Kosovo Journalists (AGK), which is particularly vocal in its efforts to monitor and condemn attacks against journalists. This year, AGK has also been more active in organizing street actions and protests, as well as conducting trainings for journalists and researching the media environment in Kosovo. However, AGK is not a typical trade union that would advocate for and safeguard the rights of journalists in the workplace.

Print and online outlets can raise their concerns to the Press Council of Kosovo. The council, however, is mostly focused on ensuring that its members uphold ethical standards. Around 90 percent of its members are online media, which is a significant change from its original intent to serve print media. The council needs to review its statute and rules of procedure, the panelists said. Its main working documents and guidelines need to be amended and expanded to include the specificities of dealing with complaints directed at online media. Emerging issues with online media include where to publish corrections, where to publish complaints, how to deal with photo copyrights, and what are the regulations regarding video content.

Overall, NGOs support freedom of speech and independent media. However, over the past couple

of years, there has been a decrease in research and publications produced by NGOs that examine different aspects of media freedoms. For example, in the past there were studies of media coverage and analysis, studies of whether government advertising is disseminated properly and fairly across all media, and studies on potential funding sources for the public broadcaster.

University journalism programs are offered in the public University of Prishtina and in private colleges, but only in Albanian. The public university offers degrees in journalism only at the bachelor level; postgraduate programs have been suspended because of the lack of academic staff. In addition, the University of Prishtina lacks the technological infrastructure (computer lab, equipment for media production, etc.) that would benefit the program and enable students to learn and practice their skills. The journalism department at the University of Prishtina

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did host an international conference on May 3, 2017, coinciding with World Press Freedom Day, which brought a large number of academics and researchers from across the globe together for three days. This was a great learning opportunity for students.

There are also a number of independent trainings, programs, seminars, and conferences on journalism and media organized by public and private universities, as well as by local and international NGOs. A few of them have focused on the opportunities and challenges resulting from rapid technological changes. They predominantly attract

Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media.
SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:

- ▶ Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services.
- ▶ Professional associations work to protect journalists' rights.
- ▶ Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- ▶ Sources of newsprint NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- ▶ Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist.
- ▶ Printing facilities are in private hands, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- ▶ Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- ▶ Information and communication technology infrastructure sufficiently meets the needs of media and citizens.

journalism students and working journalists. Working journalists, however, often do not attend trainings, either because of a lack of personal interest or a lack of support from employers.

There is no government pressure to control or monopolize media distribution, nor are there government restrictions on importing and purchasing materials the media need to do their work. Finances remain the major constraint. Despite relatively low budgets, most media organizations have embraced the digital revolution. Many outlets provide live coverage of events and live streaming on their YouTube channels. Overall, the information communications and technology infrastructure in the country meets the needs of the media industry.

List of Panel Participants

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Shkelqim Hysenaj, president, Association of Kosovo Journalists, Pristina

Besa Luci, editor in chief, Kosovo 2.0 Blog, Pristina

Visar Hoti, program director, TV Tema, Ferizaj; representative of the Kosovo Association of Independent Electronic Media

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Flutura Kusari, media law expert, Pristina

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