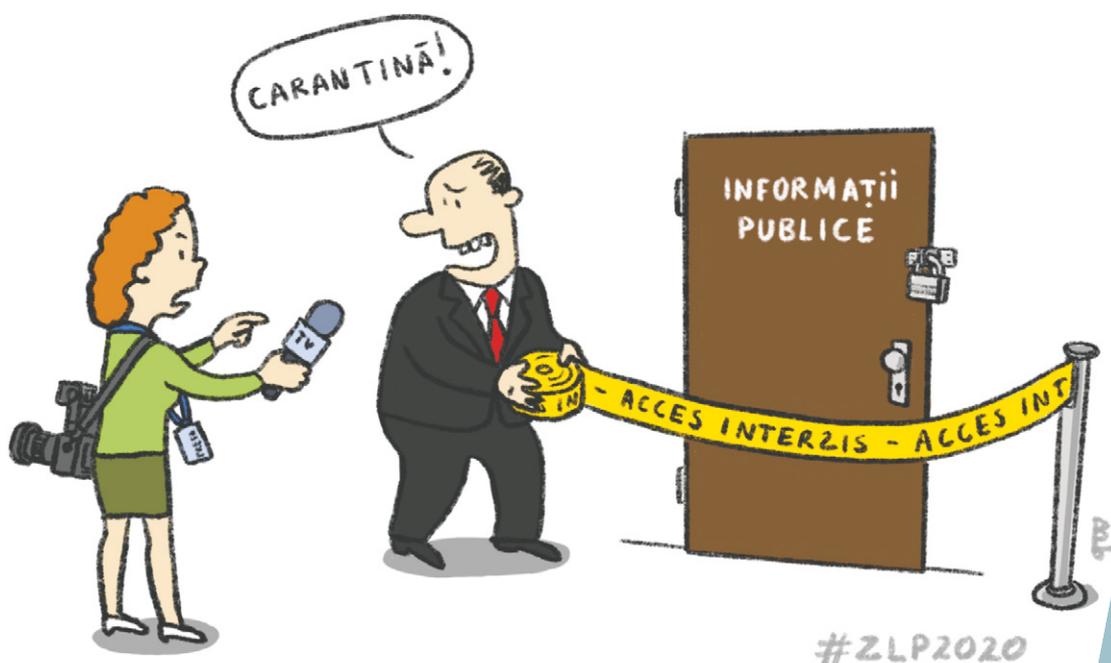


# 2020 MOLDOVAN PRESS STATUS INDEX

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## Abbreviations

<b>AMSC</b>	Audiovisual Media Services Code
<b>BC</b>	Broadcasting Council
<b>IJC</b>	Independent Journalism Center
<b>MPSI</b>	Moldovan Press Status Index
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernment organization
<b>PSRM</b>	Socialist Party
<b>SCJ</b>	Supreme Court of Justice

# 1. MOLDOVAN PRESS STATUS INDEX

## METHODOLOGY

This report presents the Moldovan Press Status Index (MPSI) for 2020 as determined by a panel of 14 national experts convened by the Independent Journalism Center (IJC). The MPSI methodology investigates seven indicators to determine the status of the media:

- ▶ Legal framework;
- ▶ Political context;
- ▶ Economic environment;
- ▶ Professional environment;
- ▶ Quality of journalism;
- ▶ Information security from a media perspective;
- ▶ Security of journalists and of media outlets.

The index consists of 15 open-ended statements about the 7 indicators with 5 options for completing each statement. Each option is assigned a value of 0 to 4 with 0 representing the worst outcome and 4 the best.

The 2020 MPSI panel comprised 2 lawyers; 3 media managers representing all types of media; 3 representatives of relevant nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and 6 journalists, 1 from the Transnistrian region, 1 from the Autonomous Territorial Region of Gagauzia, 1 from the Press Council, 1 from the audio-visual sector, 1 from print media, and 1 from online media (Annex 1). Each expert individually completed the survey (Annex 2).

Individual scores for each of the seven indicators are calculated and can be used to target areas that need improvement. The overall MPSI value for the year is the average of the scores for each of the 15 statements. The scores are interpreted as follows:

**60 – 50:** good

**49 – 39:** relatively good

**38 – 28:** serious problems

**27 – 17:** critical

**16 – 0:** very critical

## 2. THE ASSESSMENT OF THE EXPERTS IN 2020

### 2.1. Indicator I: Legal Framework

The experts awarded the first indicator an average of 26.66 points which means that the situation is critical. It is, in fact, the lowest score for this indicator in the five-year history of the MPSI (Table 1).

**Table 1: Assessment of the Legal Framework for Moldovan Media from 2016 to 2020**

Indicator	Statements	Score Totals				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
I. Legal Framework	1.1. Media legislation is sufficient, sufficient for the most part, sufficient to a large extent, sufficient to a small extent, insufficient.	30	28	29	32	30
	1.2. Media legislation is compliant with international standards, compliant for the most part, compliant to a large extent, compliant to a small extent, non-compliant.	31	30	31	31	30
	1.3. The legislation is applied correctly every time, very often, often, seldom, never or almost never.	25	24	23	21	20
<b>Score Averages:</b>		<b>28.66</b>	<b>27.33</b>	<b>27.66</b>	<b>28.00</b>	<b>26.66</b>

The experts thought that the media legislation is sufficient to only a small extent. This was especially clear in 2020 when the presidential election took place amid the pandemic crisis. Previous general local and parliamentary elections had raised a number of issues with the electoral legislation, including with election coverage, but the authorities did not address them in 2020. New laws were not adopted nor were the laws in force amended or adjusted to

ensure consistent rules for all types of media.

The panel highlighted deviations from international standards in two amendments to the Audio-visual Media Services Code<sup>1</sup> (AMSC) that were made less than two years after the code entered into force: the amendment canceling the prohibition on re-

<sup>1</sup> <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%8Bretransmisia-emisiunilor-militare-%C8%99i-informativ-analitice-din-rusia-%C8%99i-alte-%C8%9B%C4%83ri-poate-fi>

broadcasting propagandistic audiovisual programs from countries that had not ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television and the amendment excluding the mandatory quota for European programming in audiovisual media services. These last-minute amendments were passed during the mandate of the former president of Moldova by an unofficial parliamentary majority of the Socialist Party (PSRM) and the Pentru Moldova platform of Sor Party members and Pro Moldova defectors. They almost destroyed the AMSC which had succeeded in including European audiovisual policies in the national legal framework.

The correct interpretation and application of media law is also still a serious problem. In 2020 the courts inconsistently interpreted and applied the law regarding access to information, mostly to the disadvantage of applicants for information. When the Administrative Code came into force, uncertainties about how it would provide for and protect the right to access to information became apparent. Both information providers and information applicants have since faced difficulties in determining which legal provisions apply. Moreover, the judiciary has made contradictory rulings on violations. For example, on 17 June 2020<sup>2</sup> the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) upheld an appellate court ruling noting the “obsolete” and “not applicable” character of the Law on Access to Information—the only one of its kind in the country—but reversed its decision on 28 October and stated that the Law on Access to Information did apply.<sup>3</sup> A lack of transparency in providing information of public interest by public authorities, especially central authorities, was also noted. In addition, media work became more difficult when the time for obtaining such information was tripled to 45 days on 18 March by the Commission for Emergencies. The number of refusals to provide information also increased; the most frequently cited reason was protection of personal data. An analysis of the administrative practices of the National Center for Personal Data Protection highlighted their unbalanced approach which is why the courts canceled several of their decisions sanctioning journalists.

Although journalists suffered multiple violations

of their right to information or were intimidated, the experts noted that they did not invoke Article 71 of the Contravention Code (on violating legislation on access to information and petitions) or articles 180 and 180<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code (intentionally violating the law on access to information; intentionally hindering media; intimidation for criticism), adding that national law provides opportunities for addressing complaints in reasonable terms and in favor of media representatives.

A problem with the correct application of media law in Article 70 of the Contravention Code was the sanctioning of journalists for defamation by the police instead of by the courts. If left in the hands of people who act in bad faith and have influence on officials—local police officers in particular—this can become a ready mechanism for exerting pressure on media representatives. A solution would be to assign the courts the exclusive power to apply administrative sanctions for contraventions.

In 2020, the Broadcast Council (BC) played the role of sounding board for the authorities. In particular, the panel noted the following:

- ▶ the scandalous decision of the former Chair of the BC<sup>4</sup> (demand that information be endorsed before broadcasting) that outraged not just the journalistic community but all of society;
- ▶ the refusal of those in charge of managing the pandemic to organize press conferences;
- ▶ the inappropriate coverage of the presidential election by most of the media and the lack of response from the Central Electoral Commission and the BC;
- ▶ the unlawful broadcasting of paid electoral advertising by the national public broadcaster;
- ▶ the lack of transparency in appointing three new BC members as well as a new BC Chair.

The courts of first instance, the Court of Appeals and the SCJ canceled most BC decisions in the end, not necessarily because service providers hadn't committed any violations but because the BC had

<sup>2</sup> [‘Lawyers for Human Rights’ Association and Tataru Ana v. Public Services Agency \(2020\), SCJ, court case No. 3ra-554/20.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [http://jurisprudenta.csj.md/search\\_col\\_civil.php?id=58571&fbclid=IwAR0RUrcTma-KyDtQo4CEysB8C8jzSoNokZNej3-nG700ekiV3c2kVNXpROuw](http://jurisprudenta.csj.md/search_col_civil.php?id=58571&fbclid=IwAR0RUrcTma-KyDtQo4CEysB8C8jzSoNokZNej3-nG700ekiV3c2kVNXpROuw)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=121081&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121081&lang=ro)

failed to observe basic procedural rules (failure to state reason/incorrect legal classification of the action/applying the wrong sanctioning mechanism, etc).

The experts also stressed that although the authorities had had the National Concept for Media Development since the middle of 2018, they had not taken the actions required for its implementation.

## *Intermediate conclusions*

In summary, in 2020 the national media legal framework did not get any of the new laws it needed and was not adjusted as needed. The amendments to the AMSC were ill-timed, dangerous and contrary to community standards. While laws on the freedom of expression were applied relatively consistently in lawsuits, the rest—particularly new audiovisual legal regulations—were implemented poorly and imperfectly. These circumstances dramatically reduce the capacity of the media to accomplish its social mission in a democratic state.

## 2.2. Political Context

**Indicator II** rated 11 points a situation that is very critical (Table 2).

**Table 2: Assessment of the Political Context for Moldovan Media from 2016 to 2020**

Indicator	Statement	Score Totals				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>II. Political Context</b>	<b>2.1.</b> The political situation is favorable for the media, it is favorable for the most part, mostly favorable, favorable to a small extent, unfavorable..	14	19	20	17	11
<b>Score Average:</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>

The experts emphasized the political instability in 2020 and its damaging repercussions for the regular functioning of the media. The main factors in their opinion were the fragile parliamentary majority and the lack thereof; the inadequate response of the authorities to the pandemic crisis; the agricultural crisis caused by a severe drought and election fever triggered by the presidential election. They highlighted the following:

- ▶ the authorities' lack of openness with the independent press, especially their selective attitude toward providing information of public interest;
- ▶ former President Dodon's encouraging politicians in May to take the press to court for broadcasting "fake news" (he initiated dozens of court actions in the past year and a half);
- ▶ Dodon's pressure on investigative journalists when he sued *Ziarul de Garda* for the article "The President's Luxury Holidays" [*Vacanțele de lux ale președintelui*];<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ when PSRM MPs took RISE Moldova journalists to court following their investigation titled "Deployment" [*Desantul*] about political con-

sultants from the Russian Federation spotted at PSRM headquarters in Chisinau during the presidential election;

- ▶ denigration of the former Prime Minister addressed to media outlets, especially PRO TV, after World Press Freedom Day that was condemned by the late Ombudsman Mihai Cotorbai and by a media NGO that asked the current Prime Minister to apologize in public and to fire Communication Advisor Vitalie Dragancea;<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ Information and Security Service's blocking of dozens of Internet sites on the grounds that they would broadcast fake news about the pandemic;
- ▶ using the BC as a "political weapon" to control criticism on particular television stations (TV8, PRO TV, Jurnal TV, BTV);
- ▶ intimidation of local station Albasat TV by the management of Apa Canal Nisporeni;
- ▶ groundless claims by the Rezina District President about unfair coverage of meetings of the city council by regional station Elita TV;
- ▶ the decision by the court in Tiraspol to withdraw

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-justitie/stop-fals-igor-dodon-din-nou-se-incurca-in-ci-fre-cu-cate-institutii-media-se-judeca-presedintele/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-condamn%C4%83-atacurile-lansate-de-c%C4%83tre-prim-ministrul-republicii-moldova-ion>

the license of private company LinkService, the only electronic competition for the InterDnestr-Com monopoly in the Transnistrian region;

- ▶ accusations against and the detention of blogger Boris Babaian for more than 8 months, a critical voice against the authorities in the Transnistrian region.

This unfavorable political context perpetuated the practice of politically affiliated media inadequately

informing voters during the presidential election. In this context, the experts noted that according to Promo-LEX Association, hate speech during the 2020 election increased by over 40% compared with the previous year.<sup>7</sup> The situation was even more critical as some of those hate messages were echoed by leading government officials.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://promolex.md/19403-raport-discursul-de-ura-si-instigare-la-discriminare-in-spatiul-public-si-in-mass-media-din-republica-moldova-in-cadrul-campaniei-electorale-pentru-alegerile-prezidentiale-din-15-noiembrie-2020/?lang=ro>

## *Intermediate conclusions*

The political context for the media in 2020 deteriorated compared with previous election years. The government transformed several influential media outlets into sounding boards for its own messages, and the administration and parliament launched orchestrated attacks on independent media outlets that damaged their working conditions.

## 2.3. Economic Environment

**Indicator III** averaged 15.5 points marking the condition as very critical. It was also the lowest score for this indicator in the five-year history of the MPSI (Table 3).

**Table 3: Assessment of the Economic Environment of Moldovan Media from 2016 to 2020**

Indicator	Statements	Score Totals				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>III. Economic Environment</b>	<b>3.1.</b> Media outlets are economically independent, to a large extent, to an average extent, to a small extent, are not independent.	15	18	15	16	15
	<b>3.2.</b> Media outlets are editorially independent, to a large extent, to an average extent, to a small extent, are not independent.	22	18	17	20	16
<b>Score Averages:</b>		<b>18.50</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15,5</b>

The experts noted that a healthy, sustainable press requires regulating ownership and ensuring fair competition; preventing dominant positions in forming public opinion; preparing sufficient, qualified managers; and establishing economic policies in support of media. Their assessment highlighted the insufficiency of the legal and economic framework for managing media—especially print and online media—that has resulted in disorganized development and the over-representation of media outlets in the capital city compared with rural areas. This is further reflected in the following:

- ▶ shortages of skilled managers;
- ▶ the lack of a coherent training policy for media managers;
- ▶ the absence of a functional institutional framework to ensure fair competition and prevent dominant positions in forming public opinion;
- ▶ a lack of policies encouraging internal and external investment in media development;
- ▶ a lack of transparency in managing media overall and its economic aspects in particular;

- ▶ a lack of legal support for media, particularly local/regional outlets which leads to their demise during crises thus limiting access to information;
- ▶ delays and failure in managing the transition to digital terrestrial TV;
- ▶ the lack of a functional national body to coordinate management policies for media.

The experts cited the case in which Law No 86 on Not-for-Profit Organizations adopted in June 2020 was invoked to restrict media outlets founded by NGOs from providing free or paid services to candidates in elections thus limiting their opportunities to earn income from paid political advertising. On 8 October the Constitutional Court decided against this policy.<sup>8</sup>

Although a draft advertising law was voted in the first reading in 2018, the law itself was not passed in 2020, and the provisions currently in force aren't working properly. For instance, the Competition Council has the mandate to annually assess the media market to prevent or address potentially domi-

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.constcourt.md/ccdocview.php?tip=hotariri&docid=745&l=ro>

nant positions, but it is not fulfilling this obligation. Thus, as the experts noted, we do not know the real situation in the market. Although at the end of 2020 the Independent Media House appeared in the advertising market aiming to sell advertising only in the independent press, several experts were skeptical about its success because according to the principles of a market economy, it is the audience of a media outlet that matters for an ad provider, not its independence.

There is an organization that measures the audiences of audiovisual media service providers in Moldova, but only 29 outlets (23 television and 6 radio stations) out of almost 120 can afford to pay the fees. The experts emphasized that none of the local television broadcasters could measure their audiences. High fees also played a role in assigning slots in national digital multiplex A in 2020. The idea of a “social package” of channels in the first multiplex was compromised when it became obvious that the financial capacity of the applicants for slots prevailed over media diversity.

The experts concluded that *Casa Radio* [Radio House] and *Casa Presei* [Press House] both had unused production facilities that were very costly for the state to maintain. The Press House is still scheduled for refurbishment while refurbishing Radio House doesn't make sense as half of its capacity is not being used.

In 2020, print media had to cope with additional problems because the national postal service Posta Moldovei temporarily suspended the distribution of newspapers citing the need to prioritize getting pen-

sions and social benefits to citizens during the pandemic, and newspaper stalls also had to shut down because of the pandemic. Under these circumstances, publishing newspapers made no economic sense, but the authorities showed no concern about the resulting lack of information for citizens or about the potential bankruptcy of the publications.

The experts concluded that editorial independence remains an issue and that many media outlets are politically affiliated because in the current economic conditions, the majority of them can neither gain nor strengthen their financial independence by any other means. There are attempts by some outlets to implement funding models that are gaining popularity around the world—including fund raising from readers—notably the *CU SENS* media project and the Agora portal. Such practices deserve to be encouraged and developed.

The panel remarked that although the AMSC contains provisions that should contribute to the editorial independence of the national public broadcaster, they do not work. An insufficient legal framework is therefore not the problem, rather obsolete administrative reflexes are blameworthy. This was obvious when the public provider did not object to the BC's wrongful decision<sup>9</sup> during the presidential election obliging it along with other outlets to provide free airtime at a time chosen by those in power. The experts therefore believed that guarantees enshrined in the law are not enough for editorial independence.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.audiovizual.md/files/D.%2025-158%20din%2001.10.2020%20-%20Cu%20privire%20la%20timpul%20de%20emisie%20gratuit%20acordat%20concur%C8%9Bilor%20electorali%20C3%AEn%20scopul%20expunerii%20programelor%20electorale%20C8%99i%20inform%C4%83rii%20aleg%C4%83torilor%20de%20c%C4%83tre%20furnizorii%20nationali\\_0.pdf](http://www.audiovizual.md/files/D.%2025-158%20din%2001.10.2020%20-%20Cu%20privire%20la%20timpul%20de%20emisie%20gratuit%20acordat%20concur%C8%9Bilor%20electorali%20C3%AEn%20scopul%20expunerii%20programelor%20electorale%20C8%99i%20inform%C4%83rii%20aleg%C4%83torilor%20de%20c%C4%83tre%20furnizorii%20nationali_0.pdf)

## Intermediate conclusions

The economic crisis intensified by the pandemic, drought and social and political instability had a severe impact on the work and development of media businesses. The lack of or precarious nature of their economic independence affected their editorial independence.

## 2.4. Professional Environment

**Indicator IV** averaged 27 points which means that the situation was critical like it was in 2017 and 2018 (Table 4).

**Table 4: Assessment of the Professional Environment of Moldovan Media from 2016 to 2020**

Indicator	Statements	Score Totals				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>IV. Professional Environment</b>	<b>4.1.</b> The process of media professionalization is sufficient, is sufficient for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, is insufficient.	40	30	31	33	30
	<b>4.2.</b> Media professionalization is efficient, efficient for the most part, largely efficient, efficient to a small extent, inefficient.	23	24	23	24	24
<b>Score Averages:</b>		<b>31.50</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28,5</b>	<b>27</b>

The experts agreed that the basic elements needed to enhance professionalism are present in Moldova. They highlighted the multitude of possibilities and opportunities for training staff and appreciated the ongoing efforts of media NGOs to organize and provide training, workshops and traineeships. Nevertheless, despite the fact that educational institutions prepare many specialists every year, media outlets spend months looking for qualified ones. At issue is the discrepancy between the actual, specific needs of the media market and the educational programs preparing future professionals. Educational institutions have been slow to adjust to new professional demands and requirements in the age of digital information and artificial intelligence. University teaching staff are neither adequately prepared nor paid enough to motivate them to change how future professionals are taught. In addition, sporadic partnerships between faculties and media NGOs are usually short term and cover only narrow segments of the university curriculum. The School of Advanced Journalism is a viable alternative for all those who want to practice this profession, but it is having a harder and harder time finding a sufficient number of students partly because of the migration of young people out of the country.

The experts concluded that there is no faculty/course in Moldova that focuses specifically on rigorously educating media managers which is a serious deficiency for a country with hundreds of media outlets. In addition, teachers and students have not organized remote education during the pandemic, so the number of graduates in the field has suffered. In addition, graduates with good theoretical knowledge who start to work in politically affiliated media outlets soon conform to editorial standards that are in conflict with universally accepted professional ethical norms. As a first step in addressing this situation, graduates are required to commit to observing the Journalist's Code of Ethics in their future work. The effects of this initiative will be observed over time.

Professionalization training for journalists continued online during the pandemic. While it may be less effective than in-person training, the experts noted that journalists from rural areas who previously couldn't get to training sessions in the capital because of staff shortages were able to attend.

In 2020, the campaign to sign the Code of Eth-

ics continued; the number of signatories reached 133.<sup>10</sup>

The experts applauded the work of professional associations during the pandemic, especially the IJC that soon after the state of emergency was declared established a crisis cell<sup>11</sup> and provided support to journalists and media outlets using all possible

means. The cell mostly focused on two areas: recommendations regarding journalists' work under novel circumstances (remote work, journalists' security and securing equipment, providing accurate information and fighting disinformation and conspiracy theories, economic activity) and advocacy for access to information of public interest related to the epidemiological situation in the country and the management of the pandemic.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/page/lista-semnatarilor>

<sup>11</sup> <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/cum-reu%C8%99it-celula-de-criz%C4%83-jurnal%C8%99tilor-s%C4%83-solidarizeze-breasia-pe-timp-de-pandemie>

## *Intermediate conclusions*

Professionalization faced new challenges in 2020 mainly caused by the pandemic, but issues previously identified in particular areas, including education and observing ethics, were not resolved either.

## 2.5. Quality of Journalism

**Indicator V** averaged 26.33, a critical situation similar to that in previous years (Table 5).

**Table 5: Assessment of the Quality of Journalism in Moldovan Media from 2016 to 2020**

Indicator	Statements	Score Totals				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>V. Quality of Journalism</b>	<b>5.1.</b> External pluralism exists, it exists for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, there's no external pluralism.	37	36	37	34	36
	<b>5.2.</b> Internal pluralism exists, it exists for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, there's no internal pluralism.	28	27	28	26	25
	<b>5.3.</b> The media is of quality, for the most part, largely, to a small extent, it is not of quality.	19	18	17	18	18
<b>Score Averages:</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27.33</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26,33</b>

In the experts' view, media types, institutions and contents are relatively diverse, but they are not evenly disbursed geographically. Most are based in the capital city, and none is based in multiple rural locations. With respect to audiovisual media, the experts remarked that the BC could develop external pluralism if it encouraged participation in broadcast frequency competitions by some media services not currently represented in the market instead of persisting with their hard-to-explain rationale for awarding licenses for services that are already plentiful. The never-ending transition to digital terrestrial TV isn't pushing things in the right direction either. Because of exorbitant fees, national multiplex A was still not complete in 2020. One can therefore deduce that what matters most is not the diversity of broadcasters in the multiplex, but rather the broadcasters' capacity to pay.

The experts emphasized that media convergence poses yet another risk to external pluralism. The consolidation of holding companies affiliated with former President Igor Dodon (Primul in Moldova TV and Accent TV) and with some leading members of the PSRM (NTV Moldova and Exclusiv TV) continued.

Two other holding companies—one governed by Vlad Plahotniuc, the former leader of the Democratic Party (Prime TV and Publika TV) and the other by Ilan Sor, leader of the Sor Party (Televiziunea Centrala that changed its name to TV6 and Orhei TV)—continued to function, despite the fact that their patrons were residing out of the country.

The experts remarked that statistically speaking, one might think that external pluralism was sufficiently developed in Moldova. There are newspapers; magazines; radio and television stations; on-line portals; and local, regional, national and international press. There is general, news and thematic media content. Media products are available in Romanian, Ukrainian, Russian, Gagauzian, Bulgarian, and Romani. Nevertheless, the assessors warned that this external pluralism is only apparent and does not convey the advantages that genuine media pluralism would. There are factors that are eating into the essence of external pluralism and that aren't going away due to the absence of adequate and consistent media development and strengthened public policies. Specifically, those factors are the following:

- ▶ ongoing decrease in the number of print media outlets;
- ▶ viable politically affiliated media while media pluralism remains a foreign concept;
- ▶ covering the same few events, usually in the capital city;
- ▶ social media sites and platforms such as privesc.eu overtaking editorial searches for subjects and field trips;
- ▶ journalism turning into office work;
- ▶ information picked up from anywhere and re-distributed without checking facts.

The experts believe that internal pluralism is in even worse shape. It is hard to find any appetite for diversifying media products by broadening the range of topics, genres, formats, audiences or protagonists. As a rule, media opts for a political agenda rather than for a public one ignoring topics that citizens are interested in. Certain subjects are covered only if there are financial incentives from donors. In terms of journalistic genres, preference is given to news and comments while short stories, feuillets, pamphlets and new synthetic genres (multimedia products, longreads, podcasts) are scarce. Geographical topics that were already quite narrow before 2020 narrowed even further because of the travel restrictions amid the pandemic and featured the same few protagonists going from one media outlet to another.

Providers of linear audiovisual media services can at least diversify their media products by offering the non-linear services provided for in the AMSC. This

new law was enacted two years ago, but the BC hasn't shown any interest in this issue; in fact, audiovisual media pluralism has not appeared on the agenda of any of the meetings of the BC since it was established.

The experts believed there is a direct link between true external/internal media pluralism and the quality of journalism. In addition to the usual factors that have an impact on the quality of media products, 2020 introduced two new ones: the presidential election and the pandemic. The latter has also affected the technical quality of the sounds and images media service providers had to develop remotely, but there were also positive effects:

- ▶ Journalists acquired skills for working remotely.
- ▶ They got better at using technical equipment.
- ▶ They consulted their archives, something rarely done before.
- ▶ They explored the meaning of symbolic pictures/footage more deeply.

Altogether, these effects enhanced professionalism and allowed the rather quick resumption of ordinary working rhythms thrown off balance in the first weeks of the state of emergency.

Independent mass media continued to provide quality products during those hard times helping to curtail the infodemic and to counter the conspiracy theories that flooded the media space. As in other election years, on the other hand, party-affiliated media extensively engaged in political propaganda and hate speech to the detriment of honest, high-quality journalism.

## *Intermediate conclusions*

There is a diversity of media outlets in Moldova, but there is also an obvious lack of balance in terms of types, especially in terms of their geographic location. Internal media pluralism continues to degenerate because of the political affiliation of some key outlets and because of the economic crisis overlaying the pandemic.

The quality of media in the country deteriorated in 2020 because of fake news, disinformation and hate speech, phenomena that grew worse during the November presidential election and that did not improve after it. Public policies aimed at developing and strengthening true media pluralism are required.

## 2.6. Information Security from the Media Perspective

**Indicator IV** averaged 20.5 points. In fact, the security of the national media space is and has been in a critical condition since 2016 (Table 6).

**Table 6: Assessment of Information Security from the Perspective of Moldovan Media from 2016 to 2020**

Indicator	Statements	Score Totals				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>VI. Information Security from the Media Perspective</b>	<b>6.1.</b> There are local media outlets in the information space that contribute fully, for the most part, largely, to a small extent, not at all to strengthening information security.	23	19	21	20	21
	<b>6.2.</b> There are foreign media outlets in the information space that do not harm, harm to a small extent, largely, for the most part, seriously harm information security.	21	16	17	24	20
<b>Score Averages:</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>17,50</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20,5</b>

According to the experts, the key risks for information security in 2020 were fake news, manipulation and disinformation. The fake news campaigns that spread across the country were based on two major factors: the COVID-19 pandemic and the presidential election. The scarce availability of objective information on the pandemic served as fertile ground for the emergence and spread of rumors, frightening messages, and conspiracy theories that could spark social panic. The presidential election campaign was riddled with misinformation, sometimes from Russian politicians, aimed primarily at pro-European candidates. Influential television stations such as NTV Moldova, RTR Moldova, Primul in Moldova, REN TV Moldova, TNT Moldova and CTC Moldova continued to rebroadcast programming from the Russian Federation, some of which was propagandistic. Not only did this contribute to information insecurity, it exacerbated it.

The experts remarked that the urgency to ensure the security of the national media space so it can take a stand against foreign manipulation and disinformation has been on the table for many years, but

in practical terms the authorities have not undertaken any measures likely to halt foreign propaganda, particularly that spread by the Russian Federation. The anti-propaganda law was less than ideal when it entered the national legal framework as it addressed only fake news and manipulation spread on Russian informative, analytical, political and military programs. Then, amendments to the law at the end of the year eliminated even this provision, opening the door to clearly propagandistic audiovisual programs. Early in 2020, Russian businessman Igor Chaika, an associate of former President Dodon's brother, became the beneficial owner of stations Primul in Moldova TV and of Accent TV.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, his Media Invest Service SRL company is managing the mail.ru and ok.ru social media networks in Moldova, clear evidence of how present and influential this Russian implant into national information space has become.

Service packages continue to be dominated by Russian TV stations in the networks of the three main providers in the market. Despite the fact that some

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-sociale/confirmat-oficial-igor-ceaika-este-coproprietar-al-posturilor-primul-in-moldova-si-accent-tv/>

of the programs rebroadcast and some of the media services included in the distributors' packages are at complete variance with AMSC requirements and undermine media security in Moldova, the attempts of the BC to change things have been neither sufficient nor efficient. The experts voiced concern that in addition to the danger it poses to information security, extensive rebroadcasting of foreign media products distorts the advertising market and deters investments in local media production.

The experts appreciated the abundance of Romanian language online news portals that daily contribute to strengthening information security; however, the presence of certain anonymous online outlets

“specializing” in the production and dissemination of fake news cannot be ignored. While print press has a less significant role to play in media security, it must still be protected.

The panel declared that information security is an extremely complex subject and advocated national studies and analyses by well-known experts from the country and from abroad to make recommendations for efficiently applying the Action Plan for Implementing the National Information Security Strategy. They were convinced such studies and recommendations would raise the quality of local media products which would help strengthen the security of the national media space.

### *Intermediate conclusions:*

Moldovan media information space remains insecure. The situation grew worse in 2020 during the pandemic and the presidential election and deteriorated further after the anti-propaganda law was amended. Government authorities did not concern themselves with information security during 2020, and BC attempts to change things did not have the outcomes desired.

## 2.7. Security of Journalists and Media Outlets

**Indicator VII** averaged 29.5 points, signaling critical problems for journalists in 2020 just as in the two preceding years (Table 7).

**Table 7: Assessment of the Security of Journalists and Moldovan Media Outlets from 2016 to 2020**

Indicator	Statements	Score Totals				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>VII. Security of Journalists and Media Outlets</b>	7.1. Media outlets operated securely in all cases, in the absolute majority of cases, in most cases, in some cases, in conditions of insecurity.	33	27	28	28	29
	7.2. The work of journalists entailed no consequences, minor consequences, consequences of average severity, serious consequences, very serious consequences.	39	33	31	31	30
<b>Score Averages:</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>29,5</b>	<b>29,5</b>

The experts noted that the work of journalists on duty is protected by law. Article 10(4) of the AMSC provides that once notified, the Broadcasting Council is to hold public hearings to examine cases of threats, pressure or intimidation that could hinder or effectively restrict the free practice of the profession of journalism or the work of media service providers. Despite this provision, the frequent cases of obstructing journalists' work throughout 2020 were not on the agendas for BC public sessions. On the contrary, A. Ursu-Antoci, who became Chair of the BC, remarked in an August meeting that television broadcasters must be put their places and stop criticizing government institutions or parties. The experts also recalled another public session in which several BC members including then chair D. Vicol made serious allegations of a retaliatory nature about the lack of impartiality and objectivity at TV8. Those allegations culminated in a sanction for the station that was later annulled by the courts.

Although Moldova no longer witnesses the liquidation of media outlets and the seizure of newspaper circulations, unlawful sanctions and the intimidation of journalists remain routine. In 2020, TV8,

ProTV and BTV got the court to annul BC decisions to fine them.<sup>13</sup> In the magistrates' opinion, the sanctions applied were unlawful. Note, however, that most institutions sanctioned do not go to court because they either do not want to quarrel with the regulatory authority or they do not trust the judicial system.

The national public television broadcaster Moldova 1 and Moldpres State News Agency reported cyber attacks in 2020. Moldova 1 claimed that it was subject to a "Satana" ransomware attack that caused the loss of some of their archives in the News Department. The management claimed that they contacted the Prosecutor's Office for Combating Organized Crime and Special Cases several times requesting that they hold the offenders accountable, but its requests were rejected as the prosecutors believed that there wasn't sufficient data to start an investigation.

Regarding journalists' security, the experts stated there were multiple cases in which high-level government officials and government authorities

<sup>13</sup> <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%8Btv8-pro-tv-chi%C8%99in%C4%83u-%C8%99i-btv-au-ob%C8%9Binut-%C3%AEIn-Instan%C8%9B%C4%83-anularea-sanc%C8%9Biunilor-aplicate-de-ca-dup%C4%83v>

threatened, assaulted or intimidated media representatives in the line of duty. This happened to reporters from NordNews.md (Balti); Albasat TV (Nisporeni); *Znamea* newspaper (Ciadar-Lunga); TV8, Jurnal TV and PRO TV (Chisinau); and newsmaker.md portal (Chisinau).

In the Transnistrian region, journalists Nicolae Paholnitchi, Viorica Tataru, Andrei Captarenco and Catalin Gorla were assaulted by government forces, and employees of the State Protection and Guard Service exceeded their duties by preventing reporters from doing their jobs at several public events in which government officials participated. Also, Larisa Calic, author of a compilation of interviews with young people who had completed their military service, was accused of extremism.

A Jurnal TV reporter and a Pro TV cameraman covering a farmers' protest in front of the Parliament building in Chisinau were victims of a tear gas

strike along with some of the protesters.

The experts noted that newsrooms and journalists cover sensitive issues at their own risk and understand that the state won't protect them as it should, as reprehensible cases of harming media continue to be ignored by law enforcement bodies. Still, the majority of those dissatisfied with the work of media outlets do use legal tools to challenge articles or take advantage of the right to reply. This is the case for *Ziarul de Garda* and RISE Moldova publications that are the subjects of multiple lawsuits. The experts warn, however, that it is necessary to keep a close eye on these lawsuits because they could also turn into tools for intimidating media outlets that don't have the capacity to hire good lawyers or to cope with such pressure.

Overall, the experts believed that independent media did not enjoy cyber, economic, legal or physical security to a proper extent.

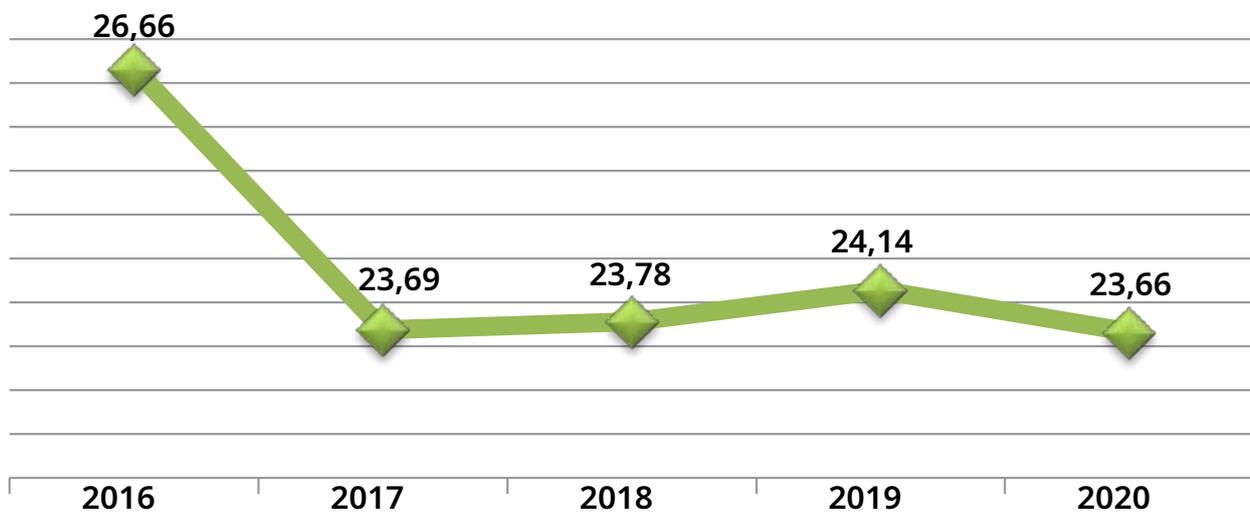
## *Intermediate conclusions*

In 2020, media outlets and journalists on duty did not enjoy the degree of security provided for in the legal framework in force. If responsible authorities take no measures to combat cyber attacks, they could become worse. Broadly speaking, media security in 2020 was characterized by lawsuits against and the obstruction of media professionals. The attitude of the authorities, including state leaders, toward the independent press has encouraged behavior that must be repudiated.

# GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The 2020 MPSI overall score was 23.66 points which indicates Moldovan media is in a critical condition. This is the lowest score awarded since the MPSI began as is shown in the following figure and in Annex 3. Political instability and the economic crisis on top of the pandemic directly and gravely impacted the work of the media during the year.

MPSI scores from 2016 to 2020



**INDICATOR I:** *The legal framework* scored **26.66 points**, denoting a critical condition caused on the one hand by the government's lack of concern about improving the legislation and on the other hand by the frequently inadequate application of legal provisions in force.

**INDICATOR II:** *Political context* scored **11 points**, signifying that the situation was very critical. In fact, this statement got the lowest score of all the 15 statements in the 2020 assessment. Key media outlets were extensively exploited as tools for political influence throughout the year, particularly during the presidential election campaign. Some politically affiliated media outlets engaged in information wars against the opposition, civil society and independent media outlets.

**INDICATOR III:** *Economic environment* averaged **15.5 points** which is indicative of a very critical condition for the media. The health emergency exacerbated the economic crisis, devastating the under-developed advertising market even further. In addition, the need to work remotely and to ensure sanitary conditions generated addition expenses.

**INDICATOR IV:** *Professional environment* scored **27 points**, the upper limit of a critical condition. The lack of training for future professionals that meets labor market requirements and media sector expectations and professional ethical breaches persisted. The many challenges of the Information Age were further aggravated by social networks that can generate paradigm shifts in journalism demand; new approaches are required.

**INDICATOR V:** *Quality of journalism* averaged **26.33 points** which indicates a critical condition. The apparent diversity of media outlets does not mean there is genuine external media pluralism. Only a few news organizations offer diverse media products and generally take over foreign content instead. Moldovan media space is home to honest outlets but also to party-affiliated media and to anonymous websites that deliberately produce and disseminate fake news.

**INDICATOR VI:** *Information security from the media perspective* scored **20.5 points**, maintaining its critical condition as in previous years. Terrestrial frequencies that are national public assets continue to be used to the detriment of the national interest as the local audiovisual space continues to be invaded by foreign media products, some of which are clearly toxic. Not only did the authorities not curtail such practices in 2020, they in fact encouraged them by inappropriately amending the audiovisual legislation.

**INDICATOR VII:** *Security of journalists and media outlets* scored **29.5 points**, which means the situation is marked by critical problems. Unjustified lawsuits were again brought against media outlets in 2020—especially against those that published journalistic investigations—which could be characterized as attempts to intimidate them. There were numerous threats and verbal assaults and even skirmishes involving journalists who were doing their jobs. In addition, journalists' personal security was certainly affected by the pandemic, but with no pertinent statistics at hand, it is impossible to tell how much it has affected the health of those working in the media sector.

To sum up, the political context and the economic environment both deteriorated dramatically in 2020, significantly negatively affecting the work of media institutions in the country.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ The Parliamentary working group dedicated to improving mass media legislation should resume its work and should make the proper implementation of the national mass media development concept a priority.
- ▶ The influence of politics on the media should be curtailed by broadening the independent media sector. Every abuse politicians commit against the media should be reported to the public. Solidarity among journalists to achieve their shared goal of expelling political interference from media work should be strengthened.
- ▶ Public legal and economic policies to ensure fair, transparent competition among media outlets and to protect them from bankruptcy and dissolution should be implemented. New practices for monetizing media content should be mastered and instituted. The transparency of media funding sources should be promoted in every way as an important factor in securing media credibility.
- ▶ The current gap between what the media market demands and what educational institutions preparing journalists offer should be eliminated by holding annual conferences to engage stakeholders and decision makers. Establishing and achieving common objectives should be the norm.
- ▶ Genuine media pluralism should be developed in line with new legal requirements, including by encouraging new, thematic audiovisual media services at the local/regional level and by tapping into the potential of non-linear media services. Investments in diversifying media products offered to the public should be supported and encouraged.
- ▶ Institutional capacity and the professional skills needed to avoid, expose and counteract propaganda, disinformation and fake news should be strengthened. In addition, mandatory instruction in critical thinking and media literacy should be introduced throughout the education system.
- ▶ Any threat or act of aggression against the media should be denounced. The response of law enforcement bodies to such acts should be carefully monitored and communicated to the public.

## Annexes to the 2020 MPSI

### Annex 1. Table MPSI

Indicators	Statements	Score
<b>I. Legal framework regulating the media</b>	1.1. The media legislation is sufficient, sufficient for the most part, sufficient to a large extent, sufficient to a small extent, insufficient.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	1.2. The media legislation is compliant with international standards, compliant for the most part, compliant to a large extent, compliant to a small extent, non-compliant.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	1.3. The legislation is applied correctly every time, very often, often, seldom, never or almost never.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
Total indicator I:		
Rationale for the score		
<b>II. Political context</b>	2.1. The political situation is favorable for the media, it is favorable for the most part, mostly favorable, favorable to a small extent, unfavorable.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	Total Indicator II:	
Rationale for the score		
<b>III. Economic environment</b>	3.1. Media outlets are economically independent, to a large extent, to an average extent, to a small extent, are not independent.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	3.2. Media are editorially independent, to a large extent, to an average extent, to a small extent, are not independent.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
Total Indicator III:		
Rationale for the score		
<b>IV. Professional environment</b>	4.1. The process of mass media professionalization is sufficient, it is sufficient for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, it is insufficient.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	4.2. The media professionalization is efficient, efficient for the most part, largely efficient, efficient to a small extent, inefficient.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
Total Indicator IV:		
Rationale for the score		

Indicators	Statements	Score
<b>V. Quality of journalism</b>	5.1. External pluralism exists, it exists for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, there's no external pluralism.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	5.2. Internal pluralism exists, it exists for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, there's no internal pluralism.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	5.3. The media is quality, quality for the most part, largely, to a small extent, it is not quality.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
Total Indicator V:		
Rationale for the score		
<b>VI. Information security from the media perspective</b>	6.1. There are local media outlets in the information space that contribute fully, for the most part, largely, to a small extent, not at all to strengthening information security. .	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	6.2. There are foreign media outlets in the information space that do not harm, harm to a small extent, largely harm, harm for the most part, seriously harm information security.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
Total Indicator VI:		
Rationale for the score		
<b>VII. Security of the media and of journalists</b>	7.1. Media outlets operated securely in all cases in an absolute majority of cases, in most cases, in some cases, in conditions of insecurity.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
	7.2. The work of journalists entailed no consequences, minor consequences, consequences of average severity, serious consequences, very serious consequences.	4, 3, 2, 1, 0
Total Indicator VII:		
Rationale for the score		
Total score:		

## Annex 2. Explanatory table

Statements	Explanations
<p><b>1.1. The media legislation is sufficient</b></p>	<p>There are regulations for the work of all types of media: print, audiovisual, online; central, regional, community, international; public and private; news media, general media and specialized media; there are regulations regarding freedom of expression, editorial independence, access to information, defamation, protection of journalists and information sources, decision-making transparency, protection of personal data, security of the media space, protection of children, protection of people with hearing and visual impairments, etc.</p>
<p><b>1.2. The media legislation is compliant with international standards</b></p>	<p>The regulations are permissive, clear, accurate, guarantee an appropriate environment for the media mission, freedom of expression and access to information of public interest; no amendments to legislation against standards and best international practices were made, etc.</p>
<p><b>1.3. The legislation is applied correctly in all cases</b></p>	<p>Decision makers (Parliament, government, judicial authority, BC, Supervisory Board, Council of Observers of Gagauzia Radio Televisionu etc.) comply with the legislation, transparency and react promptly and effectively to all cases of violations of legislation; there is neither interference in, nor pressure on the media, there are no cases of refusal by state authorities to provide information of public interest requested, no abusive withdrawal of accreditation and no censorship; licenses and authorization in audiovisual sector are granted/withdrawn according to the law; BC, Supervisory Board, Council of Observers of Gagauzia Radio Televisionu members and the administration of providers for audiovisual media services are appointed as prescribed by the law, etc.</p>
<p><b>2.1. The political situation is favourable for media activity</b></p>	<p>A stable or unstable political situation did not prevent the media from fulfilling its natural mission; no pressure either on journalists or on media outlets, was exerted by any political factors (people or parties); political factors did not use state institutions to put pressure on journalists and media outlets (police investigations, arrest or apprehension for investigation, seizure or copying data from computers, seizure or copying some documents, wiretapping, etc.); the political situation did not lead to political partisanship or information wars involving the media, etc.</p>
<p><b>3.1. The media outlets are economically independent</b></p>	<p>The economic legislation contains separate provisions for media businesses; the legislation sets out special limits for ownership and/or audience concentration; the economic situation favors financial independence; there are media managers able to ensure appropriate economic and financial conditions for the proper functioning of the media outlets; public media are funded adequately, sufficiently and securely; competition on the media and advertising markets is fair and allows for dynamic media development; the competitive environment helps the media to cover expenses, mostly from advertising, making printed copies and/or media products, collaborations, co-productions, etc.; advertising is paid for and is accessed according to the ratings;</p>

Statements	Explanations
	<p>there are anti-monopoly mechanisms; media invests in development, including upgrading of the media products; abusive dominant positions in the advertising market are not allowed; there is no pressure on journalists and media outlets from companies or business people manifested through offering or cancelling advertisement contracts, establishing conditions for signing contracts of non-disclosure of information or dismissal of journalists, etc.</p> <p>NOTE: As a rule, an abusive dominant position means that an owner holds more than 1/3 of the market or that 3 owners cumulatively hold more than 50% of the market.</p>
<p><b>3.2. The media outlets are editorially independent</b></p>	<p>Media outlets, regardless of funders, are editorially independent; the owners, patrons, funders do not interfere with the editorial policy; the economic and financial factor is separate from the editorial one; advertisers, sponsors and donors do not impose editorial conditions, etc.</p>
<p><b>4.1. The process of media professionalization is sufficient</b></p>	<p>There are standard elements for professionalization in place: a common body of knowledge (theory and practice of democratic journalism), educational institutions (faculties, courses of different lengths, ongoing training centers, etc); codes of ethics (at the level of journalism and entities, including media outlets); professional associations (employers' associations, trade unions, clubs, NGOs, etc.).</p>
<p><b>4.2. The process of media professionalization is efficient</b></p>	<p>The standard elements are appropriate, functional and provide full yields. The educational institutions are guided by theory and practice of modern journalism; codes of ethics meet international requirements and are observed; professional associations at all levels are effective and serve for the media's benefit.</p>
<p><b>5.1. There is external plurality</b></p>	<p>There is a variety of media: print, audiovisual, online; central, regional/local/community, international; public and private; general media and specialized media. There is an acceptable/reasonable share of all types of media.</p>
<p><b>5.2. There is internal plurality</b></p>	<p>There is a variety of media products (such as journalism genres, topics, geography, protagonists and authors, also taking into account gender balance, etc.) in each media outlet, regardless of its type.</p>
<p><b>5.3. The media is of quality</b></p>	<p>Media products are developed according to legal, professional/ethical and technical norms and are provided appropriately (taking into account the efficiency, attractiveness for the audience; appropriate broadcast time for radio/TV, cable TV packages are in line with Audiovisual Media Services Code). The media does not develop or take propagandistic, misinforming and manipulating material, etc.</p>

Statements	Explanations
<p><b>6.1. There are local media outlets in the information space that contribute to strengthening the information security</b></p>	<p>Most of the audio/TV frequencies are owned by audiovisual media providers under Moldovan jurisdiction; they provide program services that meet pluralism and quality requirements; linear and non-linear program services, according to Audiovisual Media Services Code requirements; media services distributors provide local and foreign TV channels along with program services, according to Audiovisual Media Services Code requirements and cannot undermine the information security of national media. The majority of print media by number and circulation or of online media by number and number of users offers content that meets pluralism and quality requirements with a share of at least 50% of original content.</p>
<p><b>6.2. There are foreign media outlets in the information space that endanger information security</b></p>	<p>Foreign media outlets are extensively present by number and/or influence (audience size) and are broadcast/distributed by individuals or through media under Moldovan jurisdiction; foreign media outlets broadcast/distribute messages affecting the information security of the media and jeopardize/neutralize the messages of domestic pluralist and quality media outlets. Foreign media products promote messages contrary to the interests of information security of the national media space. They broadcast/distribute messages in languages other than the state language. Foreign media outlets use techniques of propaganda, misinformation and manipulation of public opinion.</p>
<p><b>7.1. The media outlets operated securely</b></p>	<p>Regardless of how they did their jobs and accomplished their missions, media outlets were neither threatened nor assaulted. The following are regarded as threats: offensive language against the media and calls and attempts to destroy or liquidate a media outlet.</p> <p>The following are regarded as assaults: physically destroying a media outlet; seizing a print run; seizing/destroying equipment, etc.</p>
<p><b>7.2. The work of journalists did not put their own safety at risk</b></p>	<p>The work of journalists, regardless of how they did their jobs, entailed neither threats nor assaults. The following are regarded as security threats to media representatives: offensive language against them; acts that endanger the physical integrity of the journalist, his/her family and property; death threats.</p> <p>The following are regarded as aggression: quarrels and physical assaults on journalists by beatings/mistreatment or similar actions; seizing or destroying recordings, films, photographic equipment; stalking, seizing/kidnapping a journalist; assassination of a journalist, etc.</p>

## Annex 3: Panel of Experts for the 2020 MPSI Assessment

No	Assessment Experts	Profile
1.	<b>Vasile State</b>	Radio Chisinau, Manager
2.	<b>Dumitru Tira</b>	Realitatea TV, Manager
3.	<b>Alina Radu</b>	Ziarul de Garda, Manager
4.	<b>Tatiana Puiu</b>	Lawyer
5.	<b>Cristina Durnea</b>	Lawyer
6.	<b>Liuba Sevciuc</b>	CU SENS, Journalist
7.	<b>Nicolae Paholnitchi</b>	NewsMaker, Journalist
8.	<b>Maria Parfionova</b>	Gagauziya Radio Televizionu, Journalist (Comrat)
9.	<b>Natalia Porubin</b>	Press Council, Journalist
10.	<b>Veronica Gherbovetchi</b>	TV8, Journalist
11.	<b>Vadim Stirbate</b>	Observatorul de Nord, Journalist
12.	<b>Luiza Dorosenco</b>	Media Centre, Director, (Tiraspol)
13.	<b>Ion Mazur</b>	Association of Independent Press, Head of Department
14.	<b>Lilia Curchi</b>	Environment and Ecotourism Journalists' Association, Executive Director

## Annex 4: MPSI 2020 Experts' Assessments

Indicators and Statements	Individual Experts														Statement and Indicator Totals
	Ex.1	Ex.2	Ex.3	Ex.4	Ex.5	Ex.6	Ex.7	Ex.8	Ex.9	Ex.10	Ex.11	Ex.12	Ex.13	Ex.14	
<b>I</b>															
1.1.	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	3	30
1.2.	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	30
1.3.	1	2	1	2	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>II</b>															
2.1.	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>III</b>															
3.1.	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15
3.2.	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>IV</b>															
4.1.	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	30
4.2.	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	3	1	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>V</b>															
5.1.	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	36
5.2.	2	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	25
5.3.	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>VI</b>															
6.1.	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	21
6.2.	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>VII</b>															
7.1.	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	3	2	29
7.2.	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Expert Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>355</b>

## Annex 5: Summary of MPSI Scores from 2016 to 2020

Indicators	Statements	Total Scores				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>I. Legal Framework</b>	1.1. Media legislation is sufficient, sufficient for the most part, sufficient to a large extent, sufficient to a small extent, insufficient.	30	28	29	32	30
	1.2. Media legislation is compliant with international standards, compliant for the most part, compliant to a large extent, compliant to a small extent, non-compliant.	31	30	31	31	30
	1.3. The legislation is applied correctly every time, very often, often, seldom, never or almost never.	25	24	23	21	20
<b>Score averages:</b>		<b>28.66</b>	<b>27.33</b>	<b>27.66</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26.66</b>
<b>II. Political Context</b>	2.1. The political situation is favorable for the media, it is favorable for the most part, mostly favorable, favorable to a small extent, unfavorable.	14	19	20	17	11
<b>Score average:</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>III. Economic Environment</b>	3.1. The media outlets are economically independent, to a large extent, to an average extent, to a small extent, are not independent.	15	18	15	16	15
	3.2. The media are editorially independent, to a large extent, to an average extent, to a small extent, are not independent.	22	18	17	20	16
<b>Score averages:</b>		<b>18.5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15.5</b>
<b>IV. Professional Environment</b>	4.1. The process of mass media professionalization is sufficient, it is sufficient for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, it is insufficient.	40	30	31	33	30
	4.2. The media professionalization is efficient, efficient for the most part, largely efficient, efficient to a small extent, inefficient.	23	24	23	24	24
<b>Score averages::</b>		<b>31.5</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>V. Quality of Journalism</b>	5.1. External pluralism exists, it exists for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, there's no external pluralism.	37	36	37	34	36
	5.2. Internal pluralism exists, it exists for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, there's no internal pluralism.	28	27	28	26	25
	5.3. The media is of quality, for the most part, largely, to a small extent, it is not of quality.	19	18	17	18	18
<b>Score averages:</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27.33</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26.33</b>
<b>VI. Information security from the Media Perspective</b>	6.1. There are local media outlets in the information space, which contribute fully, for the most part, largely, to a small extent, not at all to strengthening information security. .	23	19	21	20	21
	6.2. There are foreign media outlets in the information space, which do not harm, harm to a small extent, largely, for the most part, fully harm information security.	21	16	17	24	20
<b>Score averages:</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20.5</b>
<b>VII. Security of Journalists and Media Outlets</b>	7.1. Media outlets operated securely in all cases, in the absolute majority of cases, in most cases, in some cases, in conditions of insecurity.	33	27	28	28	29
	7.2. The work of journalists entailed no consequences, minor consequences, consequences of average severity, serious consequences, very serious consequences.	39	33	31	31	30
<b>Score averages:</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>29.5</b>
<b>MPSI Annual Scores</b>		<b>26.66</b>	<b>23.69</b>	<b>23.78</b>	<b>24.14</b>	<b>23.66</b>