



LATVIA

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Introduction

Latvia, one of the three Baltic States, has developed its independent media system and media culture following more than 50 years of Soviet occupation. The country regained its independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As of early 2025, Latvia's population stood at 1.86 million ([Lv.lv., June 2, 2025](#)).

In 2025, Latvia's economic performance continued to mirror the trends observed in 2024, shaped by persistent geopolitical tensions and broader global uncertainty. Although inflation stabilized in 2024, overall economic activity remained subdued due to unfavorable external conditions. Latvia's GDP declined by 0.4% ([LSM, \(28.02.2025\)](#)).

The advertising market reflected this economic slowdown, amounting to EUR 92.9 million in 2024 ([LRA, 2025](#)). Compared with 2023, the market volume increased by 7.4%, partly driven by the 2024 European Parliament election campaign and other political advertising in the first half of the year. Press advertising continued to decline, with newspaper advertising decreasing by 18.4% and magazine advertising by 4.3%. Television advertising, by contrast, increased by 3.3% and retained the largest share of the domestic advertising market at 38.7%. Advertising on local internet portals remained nearly unchanged (+0.4%), while radio, despite a gradual decline in listening time, continued to grow, with advertising investments increasing by 8.8% in 2024.

In the field of media regulation, several important developments took place. In 2024, the Latvian government adopted the Latvian Media Policy Guidelines (2024–2027) ([Latvijas Vēstnesis, 04.10.2024.](#)), which emphasize the creation of an independent media environment free from political or economic interference and self-censorship, ensuring that "citizens have easy and direct access to information about media owners." In 2025, a major public service media reform was implemented, merging *Latvian Television* and *Latvian Radio* into a single organization - Latvian Public Media ([SEPLP, 02.02.2025.](#)). The reform also introduced a significant increase in public media funding over three years, from 0.10% of GDP in 2025 to 0.12% in 2027.

Latvia has established relatively effective direct state support for the media sector through the Media Support Fund ([SIF, 2025](#)), operating since 2018 to promote high-quality journalism. In 2024, the Fund's budget reached EUR 4.35 million. The Ministry of Culture ([KM, 22.07.2025.](#)) also began implementing the priorities outlined in the EU Media Freedom Act, particularly regarding journalist safety and state advertising practices.

Media consumption of Latvia's population patterns demonstrate high engagement with digital platforms – 87% of residents use social media daily, 86% watch television, 79% listen to radio, and 62% read newspapers ([NEPLP, 2024](#)). The most popular platforms are WhatsApp (77%), Facebook (65%), YouTube (64%), Instagram (35%), and TikTok (30%).

Latvian society remains ethnically diverse ([OSP, 2025](#)): 64% of residents identify as Latvian, 23% as Russian, around 9% as Belarusian, Ukrainian, or Polish, and 5% belong to other nationalities. Ethnic and linguistic diversity has significantly influenced Latvia's media structure. Since independence, the media landscape has operated within linguistically segmented audiences ([Rožukalne & Skulte,](#)

2025), with Latvian- and Russian-language media maintaining distinct journalistic cultures and editorial approaches.

The language issue, together with ongoing efforts to strengthen the use of Latvian in the public sphere and counter the long-term effects of Soviet-era Russification, has played a major role in shaping contemporary media policy. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Latvia banned previously popular Russian state-controlled television channels and restricted hundreds of websites deemed to pose a threat to national security due to the dissemination of war propaganda and disinformation. The discussion about the Russian media audience has been fueled by the planned ban on public media from creating content in the Russian language from January 1, 2026, as part of the National Security Concept ([Latvijas Vēstnesis, 28.09.2023.](#)).

Outlets and Owners

The Latvian sample includes 23 media organizations representing all major segments (compared to 14 media companies in the 2023 study) (Table 1). Particular attention has been given to changes in Russian-language media ownership and to influential regional and local outlets not previously covered in monitoring. Several media have been included based on their digital influence, especially through VLOP accounts.

All selected media maintain a significant presence in the digital environment; therefore, their main classification is determined less by format and more by the core business of their owners or by the most influential titles from the audience's perspective. This segmentation approach presents certain methodological challenges, as most Latvian media operate across multiple segments - particularly in the digital sphere.

The 2025 study comprises six web-only media, including two news portals from Latgale (the eastern region of Latvia); seven newspaper-based organizations whose content is also available online (two publish in Latvian, three in Russian and two are regional outlets); and two magazines. Among the magazines, only IR (AS *Cits Medijs*) is recognized as a producer of publicly oriented, analytical, and investigative journalism with a notable role in shaping public opinion. The second magazine "Kas Jauns?" [What's Up!] was selected for its news site [jauns.lv](#) and VLOP-related influence (*jaunsTV*), representing the Rīgas Viļņi magazine publishing group.

The radio sector is represented by public media (with six channels), the Russian-language station Baltkom, and the regional Kurzemes Radio (Western part of Latvia). The television sector includes four major players: two public media channels, the international company *All Media Baltic*, the national broadcaster TV Latvija (which also owns regional Latgale Regional Television), and – added for the first time – SIA Helio Media. The latter produces TV content and is connected to the telecommunications, internet, and streaming company TET (formerly Lattelecom), 51% owned by the Latvian state. This example illustrates the emergence of new, powerful actors in the media sector – companies not originally established with the primary goal of producing journalistic content.

Who Owns What

Analysis of ownership structures shows that most media outlets in the sample are nationally owned, although several influential international media companies also operate in Latvia and the wider Baltic region – notably *All Media Baltic*, *Delfi*, and *Tvnet*. Most outlets are organized as limited liability companies, while some function as joint-stock companies (JSC) or have such entities as secondary owners. Public media operate as state-owned capital companies (Table 1, 2).

For the majority of outlets, the primary business activity is media content and service provision. Seven organizations in the sample represent regional media, including two news portals and *Latgale Regional Television* located in the Latgale region of eastern Latvia. Two outlets – newspaper *Kurzemes Vārds* (Word of Kurzeme) (owned by editorial staff via SIA “Kurzemes Vārds”) and *Kurzemes Radio* (owned by JSC “Kurzemes Radio”) – operate in the western region Kurzeme, while *Rīgas Apriņķa Avīze* (Riga Counties Newspaper, owned by owners chain that consist of SIA *Rīgas apriņķa Avīze* and JSC “KNK Mediji”) provides information about municipalities surrounding the capital, Riga. *Re:TV* (owned by a local business person via SIA *Re Media*) serves as an umbrella for multiple regional television and production groups, offering news, entertainment, and cultural programming.

Latvia’s largest commercial news portals (*Delfi.lv*, *Tvnet.lv* owned by Estonian based media corporations) (see details of ownership chains at Table 2) and public service media (PSM) provide also content in Russian. Historically, the Russian-speaking audience in Latvia has been more oriented toward print media (e.g., *MK-Latvija*, *Segodnya*, *Latviyskije Vesti*). Several regional portals – *grani.lv*, *gorod.lv*, and *Latgales Regional Television* – also publish in Russian, reflecting the linguistic composition of the Latgale region, where a large proportion of residents speaks Russian at home. The news portal *mixnews.lv* and its affiliated radio station *Radio Baltkom* (owned by *SIA Krokus F*) likewise produce Russian-language content.

Changes in the availability of Russian television channels have also transformed the structure of Russian-language media ownership in Latvia. For instance, the newspaper *MK Latvija*, previously owned by *SIA Baltic Media Alliance* – one of the companies that distributed several popular Russian Federation-controlled television channels in Latvia – is now owned by *SIA Baltic Technical Service*. *MK Latvija*, a localized version of the Russian newspaper *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, is no longer featured on the Russian publisher’s website. However, according to investigations by journalists ([Barkāns, December 9, 2022](#)) it remains one of the Russian-language newspapers in Latvia that disseminates Russian propaganda narratives and avoids publishing content related to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing war.

The inclusion of *360TV* and *SIA Helio Media* in the sample deserves clarification. *Helio Media*, fully owned by TET (formerly Latvian telecommunication company *Lattelecom*), primarily produces content for entertainment television channels. It was included because, since 2023, the company has begun producing news programming, though at the beginning of this project it outsourced news production to *SIA Brīvdienas*, a television entertainment producer owned by two natural persons. The *360TV* news content is distributed via the digital platform *1188.lv*, which ranks eighth among Latvia’s most-visited internet sites.

At the national level, ongoing discussions about the ownership structure of TET – and by extension, Helio Media – are noteworthy. Currently, the Latvian state, through SIA “*Publisko aktīvu valdītājs Possessor*” (*Possessor*), holds 51% of TET shares, while the Swedish company *Telia*, via its subsidiary *Tilts Communications*, owns the remaining 49% (LSM, July 17, 2025).

In Latvia, municipal involvement in media production has long been a contentious issue. For years, municipalities published free informational leaflets providing journalism-like content, which was distributed to all households within their regions. This practice significantly distorted the local and regional media markets by competing with independent outlets. After extensive public and political debate, amendments to the Law “On the Press and Other Mass Media” (Latvijas Republikas augstākās Padomes un Valdības ziņotājs, 14.02.1991)⁷ were adopted and entered into force on November 18, 2020. These amendments prohibit municipalities from establishing or publishing press or other mass media outlets. Existing municipal media must now be removed from the Register of Mass Media, maintained by the Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia. Despite this reform, the current media sample still includes newspaper *Rīgas Aprīņķa Avīze*, whose second-level owner AS *KNK Mediji* is partially owned by several municipalities: Sigulda Municipality (9.3% of shares) and Mārupe Municipality (6.1%) each hold more than 5% of shares, while Ropaži Municipality and Olaine Municipality each hold less than 5%.

A detailed ownership analysis also identified the presence of politically exposed persons (PEPs) among two media owners. Aivars Lembergs, a well-known politician and a politically elected official, chair of the Board of political party “*Latvijai un Ventspilij*”, represents the Ventspils Development Agency, which owns 5% of AS *Kurzemes Radio*. Aigars Lūsis, Chair of the Council of AS *KNK Mediji* (owner of regional newspaper *Rīgas Aprīņķa Avīze*) and former Secretary General of the political party alliance *Nacionālā Apvienība*, is another identified PEP.

In analyzing Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs)-accounts (attached to media outlets in Table 1), several media companies are included in the sample based on their digital reach and influence. According to their online popularity metrics (e.g., subscriber numbers), the list covers 11 VLOPs operated by seven media organizations. The most popular Latvian news VLOP is *Latvijas ziņas* (Latvian News) (belongs to news site *lz.lv*), whose domain owner remains unidentified, though the portal’s ownership structure is known. Similar inclusion criteria apply to *mixnews.lv* and *Radio Baltkom*, both Russian-language outlets. Other notable VLOPs include those associated with the Latvian Television (PSM) News Service, the public media digital portal *lsm.lv* (in both Latvian and Russian), as well as major private media such as *Delfi*, *jauns.lv* (and *jaunsTV*), *TV24* account, and *Latgales Reģionālā televīzija* (operating in Latvian and Russian as *LRT* and *LRT+*).

Table 1. Media outlets and owners sample characteristics

Outlet	Market sector(s)	Editorial staff	Owner	Revenue (2023;2024)	VLOP(s)	Owner country
Delfi.lv	Web-only (international)	133	AS "Delfi"	5 598 523 EUR	Delfi	LV, EE
Diena	Newspaper/web	16	SIA "Izdevniecības Dienas bizness"	1 037 323 EUR		LV, EE
Grani.lv	Web-only (regional, Russian language)	9	SIA "Mediastriems"	151 987 EUR		LV
Gorod.lv	Web-only (regional, Russian language)	21	SIA Gorod.lv	49 944 EUR		LV
lr	Magazines, web	15	AS Cits Medijs	1 394 837 EUR		LV
Jauns.lv	Magazines, newspapers, web (tabloid)	93	SIA "Izdevniecība Rīgas Viļņi"	5 536 688 EUR	Jauns.tv	LV
Kurzemes radio	Radio (regional)	13	AS Kurzemes Radio	82 836 EUR		LV
Kurzemes Vārds	Newspaper, TV, web (regional)	32	SIA Kurzemes Vārds	801 708 EUR		LV

Latgales Reģionālā televīzija	TV (regional, in Latvian and Russian)	6	AS Kurzemes Radio	382 836 EUR	LRT; LRT+	LV
Latvijas Avīze	Newspaper, web	100	AS Latvijas Mediji	3 957 650 EUR		LV
Latvijas Radio	Radio (PSM)	293	Sabiedrisko elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu padome [Public Electronic Mass Media Council]	13 463 141 EUR		LV
Latvijas Televīzija; LSM.lv	TV; web (PSM)	513	Sabiedrisko elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu padome [Public Electronic Mass Media Council]	28 835 582 EUR	Latvijas Televīzijas Ziņu dienests; LSM portāls; LSM.lv rus.lsm.lv Latvija i mir Novosti Analitika (VLOP; Rus)	LV
Latvijskije Vesti	Newspaper (Russian language)	11	SIA "Zīme"	85 470 EUR		LV
Lz.lv	Web-only	1	SIA Global Entertainment	2149 EUR	Latvijas ziņas	LV

Mixnews (Russian)	Web, radio	11	SIA Krokus F	890 276 EUR	Radio Baltkom Mixnews	LV
MK Latvija	Newspaper, web	12	SIA "Baltic Technical Service"	58 883 EUR		LV
Nra.lv	Web-only	5	Mediju Nams	895 593 EUR		LV
Re:TV	TV, web	40	Re Media	608 535 EUR		LV
Rīgas Apmēģa Avīze	Newspaper, web	4	SIA Rīgas Apmēģa Avīze	300 037 EUR		LV
Segodnya	Newspaper	6				LV
360TV	TV, web (partly state owned)	51	Helio Media	12 799 240 EUR		LV; SE
TV24	TV, web	20	AS TV Latvija	790 850 EUR	TV24	LV
TV3	TV, web	217	All Media Latvia	30 255 172 EUR		LV, LT, US
Tvnet.lv	Web-only	90	Tvnet Grupa	4 138 285,00		LV; EE

Table 2. Ownership chains of media outlets

No	Outlet	1st level owner	2nd level owner	3rd level owner	4th level owner
1.	Delfi.lv	AS Delfi 100%	Aktiaselts Ekspress Grupp 100%	HHL Rühm OÜ 27,1% Hans Luik 26,72%, Other shareholders, including Management Board members	Hans Luik 76% Epp Nael 12% Hans Luik 12%
2.	Diena	SIA "Izdevniecība Dienas bizness" 100%	Walburg OU 75,5% Gatis Madžīņš 24,49%		
3.	Grani.lv	SIA "Mediastrims" 100%	SIA "Ekis & Co- Positioning and Consulting" 51,02% Jeļena Pankeviča 48,97%		
4.	Gorod.lv	SIA "Gorod.lv"	6 natural persons own from 34% to 13,48% of shares		

5.	360TV	SIA "Helio Media" 100%	SIA TET100%	SIA "Publisko aktīvu valdītājs Possessor", 51% Finnish company Telia, <i>Tilts Communications</i> 49%.	
6.	lr	AS "Cits medijs" 100%	7 Natural persons natural persons own from 3% to 11,7% of shares		
7.	Jauns.lv	SIA "Izdevniecība Rīgas Viļņi" 100%	SIA "Izdevniecība Pulss Plus" 100%	Aija Šmidre 100%	
8.	Kurzemes radio	AS "Kurzemes radio" 100%	AS "Latvijas Mediji" 93,1% Ventpils attīstības aģentūra, 5,07% 5 natural persons own from 0,009% to 1,2% of shares		

9.	Kurzemes Vārds	SIA "Kurzemes Vārds" 100%	15 natural persons own from 6% to 12% of shares		
10.	Latgales Reģionālā televīzija	SIA "Latgales Reģionālā televīzija" 100%	SIA "Ekis & Co- Positioning and Consulting" 100%	Rūdolfs Ēķis 50% Klāvs Kalniņš 50%	
11.	Latvijas Avīze	AS Latvijas Mediji 100%	Olafs Berķis 100%	SIA N & J, 100%	Olafs Berķis 60% Jānis Berķis 20% Nauris Berķis 20%
12.	Latvijas Radio, Latvijas Televīzija; LSM.lv	Latvijas Sabiedriskais medijs (LSM; Latvian Public Media) 100%	Latvijas Sabiedrisko elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu padome	State 100%	
13.	Latviskije Vesti	SIA "Izdevniecība "Zīme"" 100%	Jeļena Ustinova 100%		
14.	Lz.lv	SIA "Global Entertainment"	Andžejs Pjateckis 51%		

		100%	Adilbeks Žanabajevs 47,5%		
15.	Mixnews (Russian)	SIA "Krokus F" 100%	Andrejs Feldmanis 100%		
16.	MK Latvija	SIA "Baltic Technical Service" 100%	Vasilijs Zeļeņins 100%		
17.	Nra.lv	SIA "Mediju Nams" 100%	Asko R 100%	Anastasia Udalova 100%	
18.	Re:TV	SIA "Re Media" 100%	Jurģis Ābele 100%		
19.	Rīgas Apriņķa Avīze	SIA "Rīgas Apriņķa Avīze" 100%	AS "KNK Mediji" 73,20% Siguldas novada pašvaldība 9,3%	Dace Gusarova 100%	

			Mārupes novada dome 6,1%		
20.	Segodnya	SIA "Masu mediju grupa" 100%	Ludmila Janakova 100%		
21.	TV24	AS TV Latvija	SIA "Ekis & Co- Positioning Consulting" 100%	Rūdolfs Ēķis 50% Klāvs Kalniņš 50%	
22.	TV3	SIA "All Media Latvia" 100%	UAB All Media Group, 100%	Providence Equity Partners LLC 100%, US	Jonathan Nelson 100%
23.	Tvnet.lv	SIA "Tvnet Grupa" 100%	Postimees Grupp, Estonia; 100%	MM Grupp, 100%, Estonia	Margus Linnamäe 100%

Main risks to transparency

There are no formal legal obstacles to ensuring transparency regarding media owners and beneficial owners in Latvia. This is stipulated by the basic regulation, which, within the framework of the Commercial Law (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 04.05.2000.), requires all companies to provide information about their owners and real beneficiaries. This norm is also included in media regulatory acts. Information about current media owners in Latvia is publicly accessible and free of charge. For instance, data on owners and beneficial owners can be obtained through the Register of Enterprises of the Republic of Latvia. By registering with an electronic signature or internet bank, additional details, including annual financial reports of media organizations, are available in the Lursoft IT database. However, there is no specific transparency regulation addressed for media businesses and no freely accessible or user-friendly database of media owners has been established.

Transparency is undermined by the lack of publicly available information about media owners' political affiliations, links with other organizations, and detailed income structures - particularly regarding revenues from state advertising or third-country sources. Possible links between the media and political actors can often be identified through casual content analysis. For instance, this became evident when numerous publications and commentators appeared across several media outlets and digital platforms, supported by public relations services and opinion leaders, to discuss the lifting of sanctions against Russian oligarch and associate of the Russian president Vladimir Putin, Piotr Aven, who had obtained Latvian citizenship through family ties (Lastovskis, September 19, 2025).

Another major risk stems from the outdated legal definition of media in Latvian regulation. In the digital environment, numerous websites and individual content creators imitate professional media, producing content that seeks to influence public opinion while operating outside the ethical and accountability frameworks that apply to registered media organizations.

Most media company websites disclose ownership information by naming the legal entity that owns the outlet. In many cases, they also provide information about the editor-in-chief, editorial team, and, occasionally, company management. Some editorial offices also publish their codes of ethics online.

Among the analyzed outlets, only TV3 publicly disclosed information about its beneficial owners in accordance with Article 6(1) of the *European Media Freedom Act* and Article 3(6a) of *Directive (EU) 2015/849*. (TV3, n.d.)

Type of information missing

In Latvia, there is a notable lack of transparency regarding editorial policies and mechanisms of market accountability (Kreutler et al., 2024). Information that would help the public understand editorial decision-making or ethical considerations is generally unavailable and, more broadly, not embedded in the country's media culture.

Information about links between media organizations and political or other institutional actors is also not accessible to the public. While investigative journalists occasionally explore such issues, there is little regular or systematic research at the academic level. For instance, two regional media outlets included in this study – grani.lv and gorod.lv, owned by local businesspersons and representing Daugavpils, Latvia’s second-largest city - have been identified by the *Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism* ([Jemberga & Litvinoviča, May 26, 2025](#)) as receiving substantial financial support from the city council and promoting content favorable to local political elites.

When analyzing financial information from media organizations, it is not possible to determine the specific proportion of advertising revenue originating from third-countries or public funding sources.

Few media companies or their parent organizations in a sample hold non-media-related business interests. For example, SIA N & J, owner of newspaper *Latvijas Avīze*, is engaged in holding company activities. SIA Izdevniecība *Pulss Pluss*, owner of *Izdevniecība Rīgas Viļņi* (publisher of *jauns.lv*), operates with similar activities. Meanwhile, SIA *Asko R* (owner of *nra.lv*) lists its activities as including “financial services not elsewhere classified, excluding insurance and pension funding,” and “retail trade in metal products, construction materials, paints, and glass.” The owner of 360TV, *SIA Helio Media*, is, in addition to operating in advertising and audiovisual production, also engaged in accounting, bookkeeping, auditing, and tax consultancy services. It must be noted that these data reflect only the officially registered information available in enterprise databases. No comprehensive analysis exists regarding the actual scope or influence of these business activities.

Regarding media staffing, not all outlets publicly disclose information about their editorial teams. Therefore, the EurOMo database relies on data from *Lursoft IT*. Consequently, staff figures often reflect the total number of company employees, not exclusively those engaged in editorial or journalistic work.

Distribution

Role of linear vs. non-linear distribution

Radio and television broadcasting in Latvia are provided by the Latvian State Radio and Television Centre, a fully state-owned company. It also ensures free-to-air television broadcasting, which as of July 1, 2025, includes six television channels. Free coverage extends to 99.72% of the country’s territory and reaches 99.77% of the population ([LVRTC, n.d.](#)), ensuring a high level of universal access to public media content and audiovisual information.

Press delivery is managed by the state joint-stock company *Latvijas Pasts* (Latvian Post). Publishers receive indirect state support through compensation for delivery costs. However, the level of this support has been gradually declining. According to the Ministry of Finance, €7.74 million was allocated for press delivery compensation in 2024, while €6.9 million is planned for 2025 - a decrease of approximately 10% ([FM, March 8, 2024](#)).

Latvian Post also organizes press subscriptions, complemented by subscription systems developed by publishers themselves, which increasingly include digital versions of publications. The 2025

Latvian Post subscription catalogue lists 14 newspapers in Latvian and 14 in Russian. Most of these are published weekly or monthly, with only one newspaper (*Latvijas Avīze* [Latvian Newspaper], included in the study sample) appearing four times a week, and two others (*Diena* and *Segodnya*, also in the sample) published three times a week. In addition, 137 magazines in Latvian and 27 in Russian are available by subscription. Among the 24 regional newspapers, the majority are published twice a week, with only *Kurzemes Vārds*, included in this sample, maintaining a four-times-weekly schedule.

Press distribution is supported by various retail chains, although the decreasing frequency of publication and circulation of printed press indicates a gradual weakening of the traditional print distribution network.

Latvia has well-developed digital infrastructure and high internet speeds, enabling wide access to online media and audiovisual platforms. According to data from the independent network quality measurement provider SpeedChecker ([DB, August 25, 2025](#)), the average combined (3G, 4G, 5G) internet speeds in 2025 were as follows: Tele2 recorded the highest average download speed (104.18 Mb/s) and an upload speed of 15.16 Mb/s; Bite achieved an average of 91.63 Mb/s for downloads and 17.33 Mb/s for uploads; while LMT recorded 78.73 Mb/s and 11.57 Mb/s, respectively.

According to the media register maintained by the National Electronic Media Council ([NEPLP, n.d.](#)), Latvia has 34 commercial radio programs, 35 commercial television programs, 5 cross-border television programs, 29 on-demand audiovisual service providers, and 18 program distribution service providers.

Conclusions and Discussion

Although a large share of the Latvian population now receives daily information through social networking platforms, most content about current socio-political events continues to originate from professional media editorial offices. Therefore, the question of media ownership remains crucial for understanding the integrity and independence of public information.

In principle, interested members of the public who are familiar with media brands and the national media market can access information about Latvian media owners through the databases of the Register of Enterprises. However, doing so requires considerable effort, as no easily accessible or regularly updated media ownership register has yet been established. While ownership data are formally available and a few studies on media ownership have been conducted, these efforts lack regularity, depth, and a systematic methodological approach. Even after the entry into force of the European Media Freedom Act (European Union, April 17, 2024) and its requirement that media outlets disclose beneficial ownership information on their websites, Latvian media companies have been slow to comply with these obligations.

The existing Latvian media regulation framework supports general openness but does not include specific transparency standards for the media sector. Instead, transparency relies on broader

corporate disclosure obligations requiring entrepreneurs to provide information about founders and beneficial owners.

Latvian media are predominantly owned by national residents, with a few exceptions where influential outlets belong to international corporations. Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the media landscape in Latvia has undergone significant restructuring, eliminating ownership links to the Russian Federation and other non-EU states where freedom of expression and press standards do not meet the fundamental principles of democratic media. There are currently no Latvian media directly owned by politically exposed persons (PEPs) or political parties. Nevertheless, gaps remain concerning the involvement of media companies in non-media business activities and the possible implications of such connections for editorial independence.

Academic research on media ownership in Latvia indicates that the discussion on transparency should expand beyond formal ownership data (Rožukalne, Balčytienė, & Harro-Loit, 2024). It should also address the influence of disinformation, polarizing political communication, hate speech, war propaganda, and foreign interference in democratic processes on media independence and public trust. These developments suggest that transparency must also encompass qualitative aspects – such as the goals, values, and editorial policies of media owners. This is particularly significant in Latvia's hybrid media system, where a high level of commercialization and the coexistence of competing journalistic cultures raise concerns about the integrity of the media landscape. Some outlets appear to operate within an instrumental framework, suggesting that their founding objectives may diverge from the principles of independent, public-interest journalism. Such inconsistencies between ownership goals, editorial practices, and the standards of quality and accountability may weaken journalistic autonomy and, ultimately, the democratic function of the media.

Although Latvian law on Press and other Mass Media foresees an agreement between the media owner and the editorial board defining the terms of their cooperation, the content of such agreements is not made public. As a result, citizens remain uninformed about how the principle of editorial independence is applied in practice – particularly regarding the decision-making authority of editors-in-chief and the role of editorial staff in shaping content policy. Enhancing transparency at this deeper level would better reflect the complexity of today's communication environment and align with modern standards of media accountability.

Regular monitoring of the less visible links between media owners and political or economic actors is equally necessary. Such monitoring could reveal how populist communication strategies and disinformation networks may influence media organizations through financial dependencies or personal connections. Strengthening this dimension of oversight would enhance the accountability of the Latvian media market by making editorial decisions and ethical breaches more transparent to the public. However, such practices have yet to become an established part of Latvian media culture.



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