



SLOVENIA

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Introduction

The analysis of media ownership and its impact on editorial independence represents a key area for understanding the functioning of the media landscape in Slovenia. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the ownership structures of major Slovenian media outlets, assess the level of transparency, and identify key risks associated with potential owner influence on editorial decisions.

The research focused on media outlets with the highest reach and influence, drawing on data from publicly available sources, official registry documents (e.g. AJPES, official media register), media reports, and research analyses. The analysis is based on a combination of “hard information”, such as official ownership shares and registered business entities, and “soft information”, which includes company representatives’ statements, journalistic reports, and publicly available information on political and business connections. This approach aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between formal ownership and the actual influence over media operations.

In the first part of the research, we considered a total of 35 media units representing the most influential Slovenian media outlets according to reach and readership data (e.g. the MOSS ranking system) and their presence across different platforms. The sample included major media organizations and their individual channels – television, radio, print, online, and accounts on social media or audiovisual platforms (e.g. Facebook, X – formerly Twitter, YouTube), including POP TV, Kanal A, 24ur.com, TV SLO 1, MMC, Radio Prvi, Val 202, STA, Planet TV, Delo, Delo.si, Siol.net, Novice Svet24, Svet24.si, Zurnal24.si, and N1info.si. This approach provided insight into the multilayered operations of media groups, as the modern media environment transcends the boundaries of a single platform: the influence and reach of a publisher often extend across multiple channels.

In the second part of the study, we focused on a smaller, in-depth sample of 10 media outlets, making sure only one outlet per publisher in the same media sector was selected. The narrowed sample included TV channels POP TV, TV SLO1 and Planet TV, newspaper Delo, radio station Val 202, web portals Siol.net, Svet24.si, Zurnal24.si, N1info.si, and Facebook profile Žurnal 24. The selection reflects the diversity of the Slovenian media landscape – from the public service broadcaster to major commercial television networks, traditional print, online media, and newer digital players.

In evaluating ownership structures, in addition to direct shares and formal owners, special attention was paid to the transparency of disclosures, potential conflicts of interest, and the impact of informal ownership or business ties. The analysis also included data on advertising networks, affiliated companies, and other activities of the owners that could influence editorial independence. The aim was to identify the main patterns of ownership concentration and potential risks that may affect media pluralism in Slovenia.

Media and Owners

The Slovenian media landscape is characterized by a pronounced concentration of ownership in the hands of a few major groups, alongside a web of business and political interests that extend beyond individual media organizations. In recent years, the ownership structures of most major media outlets have remained relatively stable; however, the influence of certain business networks remains strong, particularly in the commercial sector. Moreover, the Slovenian media market faces

a persistent challenge of limited transparency, especially when it comes to ultimate control and influence.

In Slovenia, media ownership is distributed between domestic and foreign actors, with some owners holding multiple media outlets within their portfolio, which can influence editorial policies and market competition.

Key Players and Ownership Groups

One of the strongest commercial media players in Slovenia is Pro Plus d.o.o., which operates television channels POP TV and Kanal A, as well as the online portal 24ur.com. The company is part of the international group Central European Media Enterprises (CME), which has been owned by the investment fund PPF Group, based in Czech Republic, since 2020. PPF Group has significant business interests in telecommunications, financial services, and the entertainment industry, placing Pro Plus within a broader framework of regional business influence. While the ownership structure is formally transparent, key journalistic and press freedom organizations warned at the time of the takeover that the connections between PPF and its other business activities could represent a potential source of influence on editorial independence (Article 19 Europe et al., 2020).

The public media service Radiotelevizija Slovenija (RTV SLO) operates as an independent public institution governed by a specific law (the Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act – ZRTVS-1). RTV SLO encompasses television, radio, and online channels, including (among others) TV SLO 1, Radio Prvi, Val 202, MMC RTV SLO, as well as active social media profiles. It is primarily funded through a mandatory monthly contribution paid by households and certain legal entities and, to a lesser extent, advertising. While the independence of RTV SLO is enshrined in law, instances of political influence on its management and editorial orientation have raised concerns, prompting legislative amendments designed to “enable the depoliticization of the broadcaster and limit the ability of any government to use its parliamentary majority to interfere in RTV Slovenija’s management” (Article 19 Europe et al., 2023).

Another significant player in the commercial television market is Planet TV, which, following several ownership changes, has been owned by the Hungarian company TV2 Media Group since 2020. In various media reports, TV2 Media has been described as associated with business groups close to the Hungarian government of Viktor Orbán, and the ownership configuration has been regarded as a potential source of cross-border political influence, consistent with comparable ownership trends in other Central European countries (Kučić, 2021).

Within Slovenia’s print and online media landscape, Delo d.o.o. is a major publisher responsible for (among others) newspapers Delo, Slovenske novice, Nedelo, Nedeljske novice, and online portals Delo.si and Slovenskenovice.si. In 2025, the company underwent a structural reorganisation: its publishing activities were transferred to a newly established subsidiary, Delo mediji d.o.o., while the parent company was renamed Delo, medijska hiša d.o.o. (Tomažič, 2025). The company continues to be owned by FMR Financiranje through upravljanje naložb d.o.o., which is connected to the Kolektor conglomerate, one of Slovenia’s major industrial holdings. This means Delo is connected to a business network primarily involved in energy, industry, and infrastructure. According to media analyses, its ties to industrial ownership structures have been viewed as potentially compromising its impartiality in reporting on specific topics (Zwitter, 2018).

Another major online portal, Siol.net, operates within Telekom Slovenije, a majority state-owned company. Siol is among the most widely read Slovenian online news portals and holds notable informational reach. Civil society organizations have cautioned that direct and indirect state ownership in commercial media can pose risks of government influence (Civil Liberties Union for Europe, 2024).

Among the most influential actors in Slovenia's media landscape is the Media24 Group, which, according to media reports combines print, radio, and television activities through an opaque network of interconnected companies that is allegedly controlled by businessman Martin Odlazek (Kučić, 2020).

The Styria Media Group, an Austrian media company with a long-standing tradition in the region, has a significant presence in Slovenia through the Zurnal24.si portal and other digital content.

N1 Slovenia is among newer actors, published by Adria News S.à r.l. It operates within the United Media group, whose majority owner is the investment fund BC Partners. United Media is one of the largest media conglomerates in Southeast Europe, encompassing television, online, and cable platforms.

Key Patterns of Ownership

The analysis of ownership connections reveals three key trends in the Slovenian media landscape:

- Consolidation of ownership – many nationally significant media outlets are part of larger groups that also have business interests in other sectors.
- Interweaving of domestic and foreign capital – a significant portion of commercial media is foreign-owned, creating a mix of local and regional influences.
- Lack of transparency of ultimate owners – while registries provide formal data, tracing the ultimate beneficiaries is often extremely difficult, especially when ownership is layered through several corporate entities or countries.

Types of Missing Information and Transparency Risks

The most common data gaps relate to:

- the lack of consistent public records on beneficial owners,
- incomplete disclosure of advertising and business connections between media companies and other commercial entities,
- absence of publicly available financial statements for individual media channels, and
- ambiguity regarding the influence of politically connected owners on editorial decisions.

The combination of these factors reduces the transparency of the media sector and limits public oversight of media pluralism.

Distribution

The distribution of media content is a key element that determines how information reaches the public, while also affecting the pluralism and transparency of the media landscape. In Slovenia, a combination of linear and non-linear platforms operates, significantly influencing content accessibility, media reach, and, consequently, the potential influence of owners and editorial decisions.

Linear Distribution

Linear media include television and radio programs, where content is broadcasted according to a predetermined schedule. The main television channels are POP TV, Kanal A, Planet TV, and the public service channel TV SLO 1, which provide wide coverage through traditional cable and broadcast networks. Linear radio programs, such as the public Radio Prvi and Val 202, and a range of private programs, complement the informational space, offering daily coverage of news, talk shows, and entertainment content.

The advantage of linear channels lies in their stability and audience recognition, which allows for reliable measurement of reach and advertising potential, however, linear distribution also entails limited flexibility for the user.

Non-linear Distribution

Non-linear media include online portals, social media, and video platforms, where users access content according to their own choice and schedule. In Slovenia, the most important platforms distributing content outside linear broadcasting are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) (Mediana, 2025), which act as intermediaries for content produced by both commercial and public media.

The inclusion of non-linear platforms in the distribution process allows media outlets to achieve broader reach and direct engagement with young and digitally oriented audiences. For example, POP TV and N1 actively use YouTube to broadcast news and programs, while Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) serve as channels for updates, news sharing, and user interaction. This increases the visibility of media content, while simultaneously placing it within distribution networks owned by foreign tech giants.

The main risks associated with non-linear content distribution stem from the limited transparency of algorithmic systems that determine which content is shown to users. On platforms such as Facebook or YouTube, decisions about the visibility and reach of content are largely automated, governed by algorithms optimized for engagement and commercial outcomes. Although media outlets produce the content, its effective distribution and accessibility depend partly on these mechanisms. As a result, even outlets with high editorial standards cannot always ensure that their content reaches the intended audience.

Integration of Linear and Non-linear Channels

Most Slovenian media often use a combination of linear and non-linear channels to achieve maximum impact, greater flexibility and especially reach.

Transparency Risks

The main risks in distribution stem from the concentration of control over distribution channels, particularly non-linear platforms controlled by large foreign companies. Opaque algorithms determine the visibility, reach, and ranking of media content, which can lead to systemic biases in news exposure and undermine informational pluralism.

Moreover, complex ownership structures in the media landscape allow the same owner to exert influence across multiple, interlinked media outlets, thereby obscuring the actual sources of control and reducing transparency. The increasing importance of non-linear platforms further amplifies these concerns, as online distribution channels often enable non-transparent forms of monetization and create additional risks that commercial interests may affect editorial decisions.

Legal Frameworks

Transparency of media ownership in Slovenia is governed by several legislative acts that establish obligations for ownership disclosure, oversight, and media operations. The legal framework plays a crucial role in ensuring pluralism, preventing ownership concentration, and protecting editorial independence, but there are also significant risks associated with the implementation of these provisions.

Key Legislative Acts

Mass Media Act (ZMed-1)

The Mass Media Act is the principal legal framework governing media ownership concentration and transparency in Slovenia. The law requires media providers to publicly disclose information about ownership structures, key management personnel, and contact persons. The purpose of these provisions is to enable public oversight of ownership interests that could influence editorial decisions. In practice, implementation of these provisions is often limited to formally registered data, making it difficult to identify ultimate control and influence. The law was updated recently to align with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA).

Act on Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS Act)

This act regulates the provision of audiovisual media services and video-sharing platforms, outlining the main responsibilities of providers and the role of the national regulator, the Agency for Communication Networks and Services of the Republic of Slovenia (AKOS), in cooperation with other European authorities in this field. It was aligned with the 2018 Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS) in 2021; however, the transparency provisions were transposed to the minimum required and apply only to audiovisual services.

Companies Act (ZGD-1)

The Companies Act establishes obligations for disclosing the ownership of legal entities, including registration with AJPES and disclosure of beneficial owners. However, the law does not always guarantee full transparency, as ownership can be organized through affiliated companies or individuals who are not formally registered as owners.

Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act (ZRTVS-1)

The Radiotelevizija Slovenija Act regulates the operation of the national public broadcaster RTV Slovenija, defining its public service remit, funding mechanisms, governance structure, and safeguards for editorial independence.

Act on the Slovenian Press Agency (ZSTAgen)

The Act on the Slovenian Press Agency (ZSTAgen) regulates the status and operation of the Slovenian Press Agency, which was originally established as a private news agency but later came into public ownership. The Act is currently undergoing revision, and the Slovene Association of Journalists has criticized the proposal for increasing bureaucratization and politicization of the agency. Among other changes, the proposal introduces a character limit for agency news items and requires that the price list for public-service activities be approved by the government rather than by the agency's supervisory board (Društvo novinarjev Slovenije, 2025).

Compliance with Normative Expectations

The normative expectations of European institutions and organizations promoting media pluralism foresee that media ownership structures should be clearly identifiable, allowing the public and regulators to assess risks of ownership concentration and influence on editorial policy. While Slovenia formally meets most of these requirements, the analysis shows that gaps exist in practice.

Complex ownership chains, the use of third parties, or formally concealed ownership reduce the effectiveness of legislation and make it difficult to obtain a transparent view of actual influence.

Conclusion

The analysis of ownership structures and distribution practices in the Slovenian media landscape reveals a combination of formal transparency and actual gaps that can affect editorial independence and media pluralism. The research indicated a concentration of nationally significant media outlets in the hands of a limited number of owners or ownership groups (often based outside Slovenia), creating potential overlaps between economic, political, and editorial interests.

Content distribution today involves a combination of linear and non-linear channels, with non-linear platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) significantly affecting the accessibility and visibility of content. While non-linear channels increase reach and interactivity, they simultaneously reduce transparency regarding how and why certain content reaches audiences.

The legal framework in Slovenia provides certain mechanisms for ownership disclosure, prevention of concentration, and protection of editorial independence. However, in practice, complex ownership structures, formally concealed ownership, and limited oversight of non-linear digital platforms reduce the effectiveness of these provisions. As a result, a full understanding of actual influences may not be obtained, thereby posing risks to media pluralism.

Summarizing the findings of this report, the following key risks can be highlighted:

- Consolidation of ownership in the hands of a limited number of actors, reducing editorial pluralism.
- Formally concealed ownership, which complicates the identification of actual influence.
- Opacity of non-linear digital platforms, which determine content visibility and monetization, potentially affecting editorial decisions indirectly.
- Interconnection of economic, political, and media interests, which can lead to conflicts of interest and reduced editorial autonomy.

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