

MEDIA CAPTURE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: FROM CAPTURED STATES TO CAPTURED MEDIA

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Having in mind the threat of media capture and the importance of media freedom for democratic development, **elements of media capture** should be more carefully **assessed within the EU accession process** of Western Balkan countries.

02

Media capture should be analysed as a distinct phenomenon from media freedom in general to examine the mechanisms that enable political control over media in Western Balkan countries and **propose adequate remedies**.

03

Governments should adopt and implement specific legislation to ensure **transparency of media ownership and funding**, preventing concentration and concealment of media ownership.

04

Public funding of media outlets should be transparent, based on objective criteria and dedicated to serving the public interest. This also requires adequate **safeguards against arbitrary funding** from both the budget and state-owned companies and public enterprises.

05

Public broadcasters should be isolated from political influence, both through improving the mechanisms of appointment of management and ensuring funding independently from the state budget or independently from the executive of the country.

06

Legal frameworks should be improved to ensure the **independence of media regulatory bodies from political influence** and the increase in their capacities that would enable them to fulfil their important roles in contemporary democratic societies.

07

Disinformation should be tackled by both the governments in the region and the EU and other democratic actors having in mind **the severity of the problem** and its geopolitical component, both in terms of external actors involved and the effects of disinformation on other countries and regions.



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