

SELDI HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA FREEDOM ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

On this year's World Press Freedom Day, SELDI stands in solidarity with journalists and media professionals worldwide in recognizing the vital role of media freedom in promoting transparency and accountability.

As a leading regional network in the fight against corruption, SELDI recognizes that free and independent media play a critical role in uncovering malign or illicit activity, promoting accountability, and fostering democratic governance. Media freedom is a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, and SELDI's network remains committed to supporting journalists and media professionals as they carry out their vital work.

SELDI recognizes that journalists and media professionals face **increasing threats** to their safety and independence, including harassment, physical attacks, and political pressure. At the same time, we are deeply concerned by the growing threat of media capture by both local and foreign authoritarian actors, which can undermine

the independence and impartiality of the media and limit the public's access to accurate, timely, and unbiased information.

In response to these challenges, SELDI and its partners have **analyzed the networks and tactics behind media capture** and provided policy **recommendations** to protect media freedom and independence, including the introduction of stronger legal protections for journalists and greater transparency in media ownership.

As we mark World Press Freedom Day, SELDI remains committed to promoting media freedom and independence across Southeast Europe and beyond.

We would like to use this occasion to call on policymakers, civil society organizations, and media professionals to join us in this critical effort and work together to protect the fundamental role of independent media in our democracies.