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Transparency of Media Ownership in Europe

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Accurate and up-to-date
data on media
ownership is an
essential component of
media pluralism

International Standards

1994 Council of Europe Committee of Ministers *Recommendation on Measures to Promote Media Transparency*

[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/doc/cm/rec\(1994\)013
&expmem_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/doc/cm/rec(1994)013&expmem_EN.asp)

2007 Council of Europe Declaration on protecting the role of the media in democracy in the context of media concentration

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1089615>

2008 European Parliament Resolution on concentration and pluralism in the media in the European Union

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6
-TA-2008-0459&language=EN](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0459&language=EN)

Recent and forthcoming initiatives

- January 2013, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe resolution: *The state of media freedom in Europe*
<http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewPDF.asp?FileID=19474&Language=EN>)
- September 2013, Open Society Media Program and Access Info Europe seminar on transparency of media ownership in Brussels, with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Parliament.
- February 2013, report by EC High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism, *A free and pluralistic media to sustain European democracy*
<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/HLG%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- February 2013, members of the European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee voted to adopt a non-legislative resolution calling for the EU to introduce annual monitoring across the Union of media freedom and media concentration. [...for which, ownership transparency is a precondition].
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20130218IPR05922/html/Media-freedom-MEPs-call-for-annual-EU-monitoring-of-member-states%E2%80%99-media-laws>

*Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia,
Germany, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg,
Macedonia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Romania,
Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, UK*

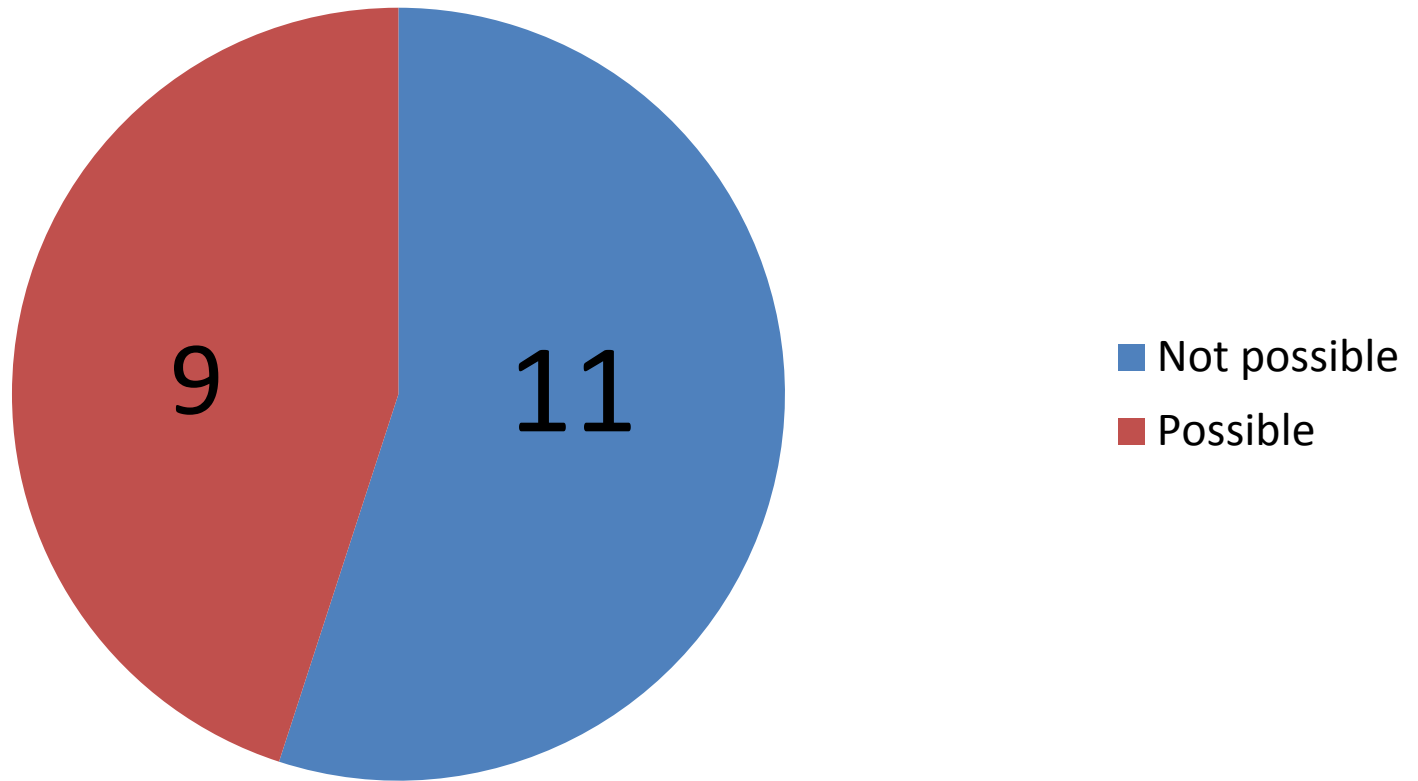
Transparency
Media Ownership
survey



SCOPE OF RESEARCH

- ***Media regulation:*** Media-specific regulations requiring disclosure of ownership information to a public body, such as a media authority.
- ***Direct Disclosure:*** Media-specific regulations requiring media to disclose ownership information directly to the public.
- ***Company Law:*** The general legal requirements that may directly or indirectly require companies' shareholdings to be disclosed and the information reported to company registers.

Disclosure of media ownership



Public access to ownership information



Beneficial ownership from any source?

Broadcast media only

	Via Regulator	Company Register	Direct to public
Austria	✓		✓
Croatia	✓		✓
Georgia			✓
Italy		✓	
Macedonia	✓	✓	
Norway	✓	✓	
Romania		✓	
Switzerland	✓		
UK	✓		

RECOMMENDATION #1

Require and enable national media authorities to collect and make public sufficient information to identify the beneficial and ultimate owners of the media

1.1 Reporting Ownership

1.2 Public access

1.3 Sanctions

1.4 Information to be disclosed to the media authority

1.4 INFORMATION TO BE DISCLOSED TO MEDIA AUTHORITY

- Name, address and contact details of media outlet
- Name and contact details of the owner
- Beneficial ownership
- Those with an indirect control or significant interest of a media outlet
- Size of shareholding over specified threshold
- Interests of owner in other media and non-media organisations
- Subsequent changes in ownership (resulting from a merger or acquisition by other entities, etc.)

RECOMMENDATION #2

- **National Company Registers should collect information on the beneficial and ultimate owners of all companies and make public the contents of the Register.**

2.1 Enhanced data collection

2.2 Public Access to Company Registers:

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STEERING COMMITTEE OF CDMSI

- Organise panel discussion on transparency of media ownership at the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and Information Society meeting in Belgrade later this year.
- Send a representative to the OSMP / AIE seminar on transparency of media ownership in Brussels in September 2013.
- Take steps to encourage the Council of Europe to reconsider its standard setting role on this issue, either by updating the 1994 Recommendation or through initiating a new document.

Thank You!

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