

Luxembourg

Population: 0.7m

Country media capture risk overall (value - %): 26.9

Media capture risk average across countries (mean - %): 38.3



Country Overview

Luxembourg presents low levels of media capture risk, particularly related to the political system and societal context. The media ecosystem presents higher levels of risk, albeit still low, except for the pluralism and transparency composite indicators.

Despite its relatively small population of around 680,000 inhabitants, the media landscape is composed of six newspapers, five weekly publications, three magazines, seven online media, as seven radio stations (of which *RTL* has three), and three TV channels. At the same time, the French-printed free newspaper *l'Essentiel* and the left-winged *Tageblatt*, owned by EditPress, reach more than one-third of Luxembourgish population. The few publicly controlled media channel are *Radio 100.7*, which combines generalistic and cultural programs, and *RTL*, that has public service missions.

The concentration of media in Luxembourg has historically been linked to gaps in the legal framework and the suspension of the Plurimedia survey, which had previously served as a key monitoring tool. However, the legal framework has now been strengthened: a public consultation on media reform led to the drafting of the Electronic Media Reform Bill. The disclosure of media ownership remains limited, as obligations apply only to stakeholders holding more than 25% of a media outlet's capital. At the same time, government funding and support programmes have been expanded, notably through the Law of 30 July 2021 on an aid scheme in favor of professional journalism. This press subsidy scheme is designed to encourage stable employment, promoting the hiring of journalists on permanent contracts, a feature that strengthens newsroom professionalism compared to other countries. Nonetheless, despite these measures, structural challenges remain, including declining print revenues and persistent ownership concentration, which continue to affect media pluralism and market dynamics.

With respect to the traditional media market, the digital landscape is even at a higher risk of concentration, with no obligations to declare agreements, no platform concentration monitoring and an early development of an effective AI regulation, substantially based on the transposition of EU acts. This gap reflects the rapid transformation of the media environment since the early 1990s, with the shift from traditional broadcasting to digital platforms, social media, and AI-driven content. The convergence between traditional and online media has created a complex ecosystem that existing legislation does not fully address. In particular, the lack of rules on platform transparency, concentration, and algorithmic accountability increases risks to media pluralism. These developments highlight the need to update regulatory frameworks and raise questions about the effectiveness of national regulation in a global digital environment.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Constitution and actuated, in force of the independent media control authority (ALIA), created to monitor media market activity. Journalists are generally not subject to political pressure. However, an investigation into tax fraud led journalist Raphaël Halet to be fined. In 2023, the European Court of Human Rights recognised Halet as a whistleblower and ruled that the Luxembourg authorities had violated his freedom of expression. On a professional level, Luxembourg features a law in protection of whistleblowers and is now opening a parliamentary procedure to comply with Digital Service Act, which highlights even more the low risks related to such dimension. Printed media interests are too guaranteed by the Press Council, created with the goal to match the requirements of professional journalists and media publishers in economic, contractual and editorial terms.

These features are clearly linked to the country's history. Born on the form of parliamentary Grand Duchy since 1815, the country is currently governed by the prime minister Luc Frieden, expression of a right-wing coalition composed by the *Christian Social People's party* (CSV) and the *liberal party*. The form of government of the constitutional Grand Duchy is very stable despite rare changes in the relative political majority, held for over 60 years by the CSV. In contrast with very positive levels of trust in institutions, political participation is decreasing; to take action against this phenomenon, the government exploits the trend of population growth by allowing the vote of foreign national both for local and national elections, the latter only if in possession of Luxembourgish citizenship.

Luxembourg's societal context is generally respectful but, given that foreigners account for nearly half of the population, according to STATEC, episodes of stigmatization and hate speech have occurred in recent years, reflecting tensions arising from significant demographic changes driven by migration. Women's rights are being fortified by the efforts of a dedicated Ministry for Gender Equality and Diversity. Depending on the reduced dimension of the country, local and national information is intertwined in the media given the small size of the country and the ease of access for journalists. Media education is being promoted through scholar programs next to digital sensibilization, with a wish to launch soon thematic university subjects, given the lack of media education at university level.

Even with concerns for economic blind spots and leaks in the media ownership concentration, Luxembourg results characterized by a strong political system in which polarization does not represent an issue, a reduced but solid media market and an advanced legal framework in favor of minor communities. However, despite this apparent diversity, the media market remains highly concentrated both horizontally and vertically: the majority of the national press is controlled by two groups, while the radio and television sectors are dominated by a single group, CLT-UFA.