



MEDIA FOR  
CITIZENS  
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CITIZENS  
FOR MEDIA

A HANDBOOK FOR MEDIA ACTIVISTS

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## WHY ARE MEDIA IMPORTANT?

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Media play the crucial role in determining which topics we consider, discuss and talk about. By selecting and presenting topics and speakers they influence our participation in public debates and co-shape our decisions about matters that affect our lives as members of the local community, country, international community and the world in general. Media demonstrate their power by choosing not to cover certain topics that might initiate a public debate threatening to harm the interests of media owners or advertisers.

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In addition to determining the topics that will be discussed and speakers who will discuss them, the media also explain events and actors, attribute meanings to them and define these meanings. In this way they co- create the image of social actors and contribute to the distribution of social roles and shaping of power relations.

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The media can encourage our understanding of the situation of other people, our empathy with the members of ethnic or religious groups, or groups organized by gender, sexual orientation, age, education, occupation and the like. On the other hand, a biased and stereotyped presentation of the members of specific groups may incite hatred or intolerance. In modern society, most media are owned by private persons and are profit-oriented. The media ownership concentration influences media content and the quality of journalistic work. In profit-oriented media, many types of content are just a cover for the promotion of advertisers' or sponsors' products or services. Investments in the media are frequently closely interrelated with other economic and political interest of various centers of power.

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Freedom to express ideas, opinion and viewpoints is a fundamental right of every individual and does not belong to media owners or individuals who produce media content.

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Citizens need to have the option of an open venue for communication in which access to communication channels, participation in public debates and the opportunity to influence media content is available to all regardless of their material circumstances or communication competence. This option can be ensured primarily by non-profit public media, for example, public service television or community media. These media, funded and supervised by the public, or citizens (who have their representatives in supervisory bodies), provide content serving the public interest and are not driven by market success. Instead of being accountable to private owners, advertisers or the government, they are accountable to the public, i.e. citizens.

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In the case of privately owned, profit-oriented media, the least citizens can expect from them is transparency of interests, respect for human dignity in covering various topics, non-incitement to intolerance and publication of corrections. These and similar requirements must be regulated by law, so it is important that citizens participate in public debates on media legislation and request from our elected representatives within the legislative and executive branches of power to give ear to our demands.

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In addition to working towards the development of non-profit public media and transparency and accountability of the private media, we should also learn and have the opportunity to critically assess the content produced by both the public and the private media. We should actively respond to media practices and policy, have the option of learning how to produce media content and launch community media or independent citizen media.

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## WHAT IS PROBLEMATIC IN THE MEDIA FIELD?

»If a handful of companies controls access to the media, and that handful of companies gets to decide which political positions it will allow to be promoted on its channels, then in an obvious and important way, concentration matters. You might like the positions the handful of companies selects. But you should not like a world in which a mere few get to decide which issues the rest of us get to know about.«

Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture*

Citizens' communication rights are threatened by media concentration and insufficiency of the private and public media. At the same time, minorities in particular face the problem of access to the media and inadequate media presentation of their minority groups. There are no effective regulation or self-regulation mechanisms on the national or the European level that can ensure accountable media operation and media plurality, that is to say, the diversity of content and dispersed media ownership.

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## MEDIA OWNERSHIP

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One task of the Media For Citizens project is the monitoring of media ownership and its impact on media autonomy in Slovenia. During the first half of 2006 we concentrated on the issue of government's stakes in media companies as a result of a specific form of privatization carried out in the early 1990s.

Our conclusion is that in Slovenia the government has a specific influence on the media and that the privatization of the Slovenian media led to a greater political influence on the media rather than smaller. For more than a decade now the state has been carefully safeguarding its stakes in media companies sustaining in this way the political influence of successive governments. This apparently 'silent' and 'unproblematic' owner that was never too fussy about the profitability of its investment has been continually protecting the political/opinion 'added value' of media property. However, media ownership is not just any kind of ownership. In media companies where stakeholders are state funds and state-controlled companies among others, the political aspect of media ownership affects the relationships between the supervisory boards, management boards, editors in chief and employees of these companies.

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The records in the shareholder registers do not reveal a true picture of the media ownership structure in Slovenia. Much more revealing than the list of formal owners are the links between management or supervisory board members of formal media owners, on the one hand, and companies that are not stakeholders but have ways to push their particular interests. The ownership structure of the main national newspaper *Delo* and its impact on journalists' and newspaper's autonomy is one such example.

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The interconnectedness of politics, media ownership and media content is also manifested through the pressure exerted by advertisers with the aim of expediting political goals. The state has significant ownership stakes in some largest advertisers such as telecommunication and insurance companies.

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The cross-matching of data provided by AJPES and data in the media register show that of the 75 radio broadcasters altogether, 16 do not have radio broadcasting registered as their main line of business.

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Pro Plus, the largest private television company has 'other business and technical consulting' registered as its main line of business. Accordingly, Pro Plus is not a member of the Publishing, Printing and Media Association of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, but of the Engineering Association of the same Chamber. POP TV is a company registered for business consulting. The main line of business of the second largest cable television producer ETV is 'wholesale trade in metal products, installation material and heating devices.'

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#### MEDIA SUBSIDY POLICY

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During the period 2002–2005 the Republic of Slovenia earmarked approximately 1 billion and 750 million tolar for media subsidies; in 2006 this sum amounted to 995 million tolar.

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The analysis of media subsidy policy showed that the broadcasters who received state subsidies during the period 2002–2005 had lower labor costs than was the Slovenian average in this sector.

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A group comprising six subsidized television broadcasters with only 49 regular employees received almost 99 percent of funds allocated to television broadcasters during the period 2002–2005. According to this policy, media companies that reported loss were allocated as much as 63 percent of the total sum earmarked for local television stations, meaning that their dependence on state aid was twice as great as that on their owners' capital.

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Given the total number of companies, the subsidy policy is characterized by the concentration of aid in the radio sector. Until now, radio stations have received subsidies regardless of whether the company reported loss or profit and regardless of the number of employees.

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## JOURNALISTS

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According to the Statistical Office data, in 2005 there were 1650 journalists employed by various media companies in Slovenia. According to the register of independent journalists maintained by the Ministry of Culture, in June 2006 there were 331 independent journalists. Around 400 active journalists had their employment status unresolved.

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Experts estimate that approximately one third of active journalists in Slovenia have no employment contract, legal or social security protection.

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A number of journalists are self-employed or they have pseudo-employment with some limited liability company. Such employment practice is also found in Pro Plus, the owner of the largest commercial television channels, POP TV and Kanal A.

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Data on radio broadcasting activities in 2004 show that the production of media content is possible even if a company has no regular employees. For example, a group of radio broadcasters connected through capital links with Leopold Oblak has 14 members. The national programming network *Infonet* comprises 12 daughter stations plus 10 others. The »Oblak group« which holds a 16 percent share of the private radio stations market has only 6 regular employees. Within the radio-television sector, in 2004 there were 11 television broadcasters and 18 radio broadcasters operating with not one regular employee.

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## PRIME TIME TV NEWS PROGRAMS

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One part of the Media for Citizens project was the monitoring of the prime time news program *Dnevnik* on public service television and the *24 ur* news program on the largest commercial television channel in Slovenia, POP TV. We made a comparative analysis of the topics, the extension of coverage and speakers in these programs. The findings are intriguing.

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The two news programs are very similar in structure, with variations in certain segments only. One significant difference is the proportion of airtime devoted to advertisements, which was higher on the commercial channel. The analysis by topic groups showed only slight differences between the two channels; the commercial channel gave more airtime to the groups *domestic policies/war/conflicts/crime/security* and *culture/entertainment/sports/leisure*.

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The main news program on commercial television devoted conspicuously more airtime to the coverage of crime, while the news program on public television placed greater stress on international conflicts. Both television channels mainly covered events related to the capital Ljubljana, with the absence of regional coverage and reports from smaller towns being most conspicuous in the group of topics related to economy.

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The least covered topics during the period analyzed were those related to minorities and weak social groups; some among these were not the subject of any report during the analyzed month. Similarly, NGOs and civil society were not frequently the subject of media's interest.

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The speakers appearing in the prime time news programs in Slovenia are predominantly politicians. Women accounted for less than one fifth of all speakers and usually appeared in relation to the topic group covering *public services/welfare state/humanitarian work* and the group *society/religion*, or they were part of the group of anonymous speakers.

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In covering international affairs, both news programs are conspicuously Euro-centric, so in March 2006 not one report dealt with South America or Australia.

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All negative trends mentioned above, i.e. the predominance of politics, the absence or at best modest representation of minorities and civil society, Ljubljana-centric perspective in covering domestic affairs and Eurocentric perspective in covering international affairs, and a considerably lower percentage of women speakers, are characteristic of both television channels.

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The total number of viewers of the two prime time news programs in March 2006 was lower than the number of viewers of the main news program on *TV Slovenija* in the early 1990s (i.e. *Dnevnik*, the only news program at the time).

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#### MEDIA PRESENTATION OF MINORITIES

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The media presentation of minorities, particularly the Roma, Muslims and gays and lesbians, was analyzed using the sample that covered the period of one month, February 2006. Our statistical and discourse analysis of media texts dealing with these minority groups aimed to determine who the speakers were, what they said and how they spoke, whose views and interpretations were reproduced, which implicit assumptions stood behind these texts and which discrimination practices were legitimized.

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In the group of 249 media texts dealing with the said minority groups, the majority of texts, 78 percent, dealt with Muslims. The reason were the events surrounding the publication of the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. The authors of texts dealing with minorities were mainly male journalists, and men also prevailed in the group of speakers who commented on these topics. Among the group of 390 speakers altogether, 89 percent were men, most of them politicians.

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The analysis of 194 texts on Muslims taken from selected Slovenian media showed that the coverage of the cartoon episode and related protests could be described as a form of moral panic among the media. The authors resorted to stereotyping techniques which created the impression that violence was a general characteristic of all Muslims.

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One method of achieving the generalization effect was presenting western speakers with their names and functions as contrasted with the »voice of the Muslim world« presented as one single opinion and frequently equated with the most loud or radical voice.

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The speaker group included 290 men and only 26 women. In many cases the context was omitted, which created the impression that all Muslims were uncivilized radicals. During the period analyzed, the topics related to Muslims and Islam were most frequently discussed by European and us politicians, and the ratio of Muslim to western representatives speaking about these issues was 2 to 8. The representatives of the Catholic Church accounted for 13 percent of speakers.

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Close to 20 percent of media texts about the Roma appeared in the crime section or reports on criminal offenses. During the period analyzed, the Roma issues were most frequently covered within the framework of crime or a debate about the umbrella law on the Roma. Roma issues were discussed by 45 male speakers and 15 women speakers, most of whom were not members of the Roma community.

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The majority of texts portrayed the Roma as passive objects who cause problems. The most frequent syntagm used in connection with the Roma was 'Roma-related problems,' with the attention focused on the two factors: education and employment. The Roma were described as uneducated and lazy, and in general everything that is negative, different and uncivilized was projected onto them. A text speaking about a Roma translator described him as a freak and an exception among uncultured Roma.

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The number of media texts about gays and lesbians, 14 of them altogether, confirmed that the media treat this topic as marginal. Homosexuality is still occasionally presented as an excess or a curiosity that sells the media. Recently, the gay and lesbian issues have been most frequently discussed in the context of the political debate on the registration of homosexual partnerships.

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Homosexuality is no longer medicalized in media texts, although discourses that reproduce stereotypes or present homosexuality as a secret still find their way into the media. Homosexuality has been normalized, but in the sense that homosexuals are acceptable only if they observe the norms of the majority and do not challenge the privileges of the majority, heterosexual society.

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In contrast to the texts dealing with Muslims and the Roma, speakers appearing in the texts about gays and lesbians were mainly lesbians and gays themselves, primarily GLBT activists.

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#### WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

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Women appear in the media less frequently than men and in different roles than men. The topics and segments of public life that are recognized as socially important are most frequently presented by men. On the other hand, in advertisements, women are frequently attributed the role of a decorative detail with sexual connotations.

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#### MEDIA PRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE

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Media coverage of violence and crime is sensationalistic and the extent of coverage is grossly disproportionate to the actual number or extent of violent acts. Excessive coverage of violence combined with indignant journalists' remarks about the inefficiency and bias of courts in treating violent crimes creates the impression that penal policy is too lenient and that rules related to the prevention of crime should be stricter. The public, therefore, feels threatened and has the impression that the system has failed, so it becomes more susceptible to vigilant initiatives and other initiatives for self-help.

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#### PORNOGRAPHY IN THE MEDIA

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Pornography in the media enforces specific images on children and adolescents on the basis of which they then shape their gender, sexual and general social identity. Even though in Slovenia legal means for the regulation of pornography in the media are in place, they are not effective in practice. With the advances in new technologies, the ineffectiveness of the legal protection of children and adolescents against potentially harmful media content has been increasing. Internet portals are one such example where pornography is part of the same register as games for children and young people accessible through mobile phones.

Citizens can demand from the state, and especially from their elected representatives in legislative bodies that pass media legislation, to establish a system that will protect primarily our communicational rights rather than just the interests of media companies or political power centers which exploit the media for political influence. The legislative bodies can be influenced more effectively if citizens are organized and if they operate through formal or informal associations, NGOs and networks, although individual initiatives and efforts can also be productive, especially if they gain wider attention and support.

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Citizens can influence the media industry by demanding from it to exercise self-regulation and self-restraint, and to act responsibly and in a credible manner. An important factor in this is the awareness of citizens, media owners, managers, and journalists that the financial and symbolic power of media companies is sustained through our choices: no media can be powerful or successful without dedicated readers, viewers or listeners. In this case, too, citizens' associations can make our influence on the media industry more effective.

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Personal circumstances (ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age etc.) or interests have always been the factors that brought together people and gave rise to media communities. Slovenia's experience in this field is modest; this kind of organizing is more characteristic of Eastern Europe or underdeveloped countries, for example, some African countries. One very useful and popular channel among these media communities is the radio, because it requires relatively small financial resources and undemanding skills to enable quick, interesting and interactive production of media content for target groups. The systematic development of community radio stations is, however, not possible unless it is encouraged by the government through favorable legal solutions, stimulating policy of low power broadcasting and allocation of public funds (subsidies) to support their operation and production.

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At the same time, new technologies enable citizens to establish their own media publications and disseminate content to a wide audience. Web media such as web diaries or blogs can have the characteristics of citizen journalism (participatory journalism) where the author who is not a journalist by profession and does not work for a media company has the opportunity to attract the interest of a wide public and provoke a public debate on important issues in society.

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Some media companies have been increasingly introducing interaction with citizens in the production of media content. This should be used to good advantage to increase the number of proposals and the volume of content that stimulate a quality and open public debate on important social issues. However, one should be aware that when speaking about the quality participation of citizens in the production of media content we do not have in mind payable voting by phone on specific issues or reality shows.

During the process of proposing or drafting media legislation, which in Slovenia is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, citizens can communicate their proposals and remarks to lawmakers. As part of its commitment to ensure an open public administration, the government has undertaken to respond to citizens' and NGOs' proposals and remarks.

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Therefore, when sending remarks and proposals to the Ministry of Culture citizens should require from it a response specifying whether the remark/proposal will be taken into account, or the Ministry should provide arguments if the proposal is rejected. In addition, it is important to demand from the Ministry of Culture to present its points of departure and proposals to the interested public during an early stage of the law making process, and to organize a public presentation of a bill at which opinions and proposals of various interest groups can be exchanged and confronted.

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When the media legislation is discussed in the National Assembly citizens should require from it, through letters addressed to the president of the National Assembly, or to parliamentary groups and individual parliamentarians, to publicly present the opinions on the bill put forward during the discussion in the National Assembly.

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Legislation is passed by the National Assembly in accordance with the normal or accelerated procedure. Citizens should be well acquainted with the legislative procedure, keep themselves informed about the planned discussions by parliamentary committees (most frequently media legislation is discussed by the parliamentary committee for culture) and propose in time alternative solutions to those provisions that they deem important for the community, our interests or society as a whole.

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The sessions of the parliamentary committees dealing with specific bills before they are proceeded to the National Assembly for discussion are usually open to the public. Citizens can take part in these sessions, propose alternative solutions or attend as observers. They can ask for a permission to address the committee, present alternative proposals and provide arguments in support of it. The proposals put forward by citizens, their associations or NGOs may gain support of some or the majority of parliamentarians or parliamentary groups, particularly so if they are based on solid arguments and supported with comparative data presenting good practices from other countries.

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Once media legislation is in place, it is necessary to monitor its implementation. The governmental bodies and departments authorized to supervise the practical implementation of the legislation should be alerted to media's failures to implement legal provisions. In Slovenia, the bodies to which such alerts and initiatives for changes should be addressed are the Ministry of Culture, the Post and Electronic Communications Agency (the department responsible for the broadcasting sector) and the media inspector.

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Every failure of a media outlet to supply the required data to the media register, every violation of the legally stipulated limit on advertisements/commercials, or a failure to protect children and adolescents from potentially harmful media content, or a violation of the right of correction or the right of reply, should be reported to the media inspector and the Ministry of Culture (media sector). In the case of broadcasting media, i.e. radio and television, the complaint should also be addressed to the Post and Electronic Communications Agency (broadcasting department) and the Broadcasting Council.

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Furthermore, citizens have the right to require access to information falling within the domain of work of the media-related and other governmental bodies. This means that the Ministry of Culture, the Post and Electronic Communications Agency (broadcasting department) and the media inspectorate are obliged to enable us to access data under their authority related to the implementation of media legislation.

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One such example of influencing the legislative procedure was the proposal of the Peace Institute team at the time of discussing the new *RTV Slovenia Act*. The proposal related to the introduction of a radio and television program for the Roma community, or to be more precise, the article stipulating the programs and content *RTV Slovenia* is obliged to produce. An alternative proposal was simultaneously submitted by the Roma Association of Slovenia. The proposers of the law and the majority of deputies in the National Assembly decided to support the alternative proposal in its modified (curtailed) form. The current legislation hence stipulates that *RTV Slovenia* is obliged to produce radio and television broadcasts (not an entire program) for the Roma community in Slovenia.

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An example of a complaint addressed to the media inspectorate would be one filed by a group of citizens regarding the implementation of provisions stipulating the protection of children and juniors from potentially harmful content. This complaint was filed a few years ago, while the previous media law was still in effect, and the result was that the media inspector prohibited cable operators from providing pornographic movies.

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In Slovenia as well as other EU countries the coming years will be dedicated to intensive preparations for the transition to digital broadcasting. Citizens should influence national policy in this field and prevent the situation in which access to media content, and especially quality content, could become a privilege of well-off citizens, because of the high costs of subscription fees and new technical devices that enable the reception of the digital signal. Citizens should therefore monitor this process, establish links and join forces and efforts to ensure that the transition to digital broadcasting will bring benefits to all the members of our society. For this purpose, it is necessary to monitor and influence the digitalization of public service radio and television programs.

Citizens have the right to request from the media to obey the law and to implement additional mechanisms of self-regulation and self-restraint to secure our trust (and through it ensure that we will read, listen to and view the media in question). The mechanisms of self-regulation and self-restraint are developed through introducing ethical codes and rules of conduct and presenting these to the citizens who are then able to complain if the media violate ethical rules they have pledged to observe. In order to ensure that various codes of conduct are not just a dead letter, the media must establish and present to the public a mechanism for processing complaints, remarks and proposals by the audience. There are several possible options to achieve this. The media may appoint a member of the editorial board or an independent individual to supervise the implementation of the code and accept complaints. Certain media companies, in western Europe in particular, have internal ombudsmen who protect the rights of readers, listeners and viewers.

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An increasing number of media outlets, the print media in particular, have recently been providing the journalist's e-mail address giving opportunity to the citizens to respond to the text and send their comments or proposals to the author. In on-line publications, this is made possible through the 'comments' option and through forum discussions about the topics initiated by a specific text.

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Citizens should actively exploit the mechanisms developed by the media in an effort to build credibility and gain the trust of their audiences or to enable interaction between media content producers and readers, listeners or viewers.

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Citizens have the right to request from the public service broadcaster in particular (*RTV Slovenia*) a careful and systematic programming and operation in the interest of the public, since it is citizens who support its operation by paying the license fee. The programs broadcast by public service radio and television stations contribute to our informedness, education and entertainment, so they should aim for the highest quality possible.

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Public radio and television company in Slovenia is managed by the bodies which include the representatives of civil society. Therefore, citizens should more frequently contact the members of the programming and even the supervisory board of *RTV Slovenia*, send their proposals and request from them to ensure that *RTV Slovenia* fulfills its tasks. The management board and supervisory bodies which include the representatives of civil society should actively and regularly present to the wider public information on programming and the operation of public radio and television, and on the spending of funds obtained through license fees in particular.

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For the influence of citizens to be more effective and to ensure better responsiveness of the programming directors and supervisory bodies, *RTV Slovenia* should establish additional mechanisms, for example, introduce a complaint body or an ombudsman who will protect the rights of viewers and listeners. Such a body should be independent and efficient. The ways of ensuring this and the very manner of operation of public service radio and television should be presented to the public by *RTV Slovenia* itself through special publications. Citizens should regularly make use of such instruments to influence public service radio and television.

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In some European countries citizens have organized themselves in associations which argue that in disseminating media content the broadcasters use the public good (frequencies), so broadcasting must be subjected to stricter rules even in the case of private media outlets. Therefore, they persist in their requirements that radio and television stations and public service broadcasters in particular, but also the government which determines the legal basis for their operation, should strictly observe the interests of citizens. One such organization is the Voice of Listeners and Viewers in Great Britain which served as a model for other similar organizations and contributed to the networking of similar citizens' associations across Europe.

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In Slovenia there exist professional and economic associations within the media field which adopted ethical rules and commitments and established relevant bodies to handle citizens' complaints. They all work towards establishing the credibility of journalism and media activities. Such organizations are the Ethical Commission of the Slovene Association of Journalists, and the Ethical Commission that operates under the auspices of the Chamber of Advertising Industry.

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Citizens may file complaints about journalistic texts referring to the journalistic code. If the Ethical Commission establishes that a journalist or media outlet violated the journalistic code, it may require from the media in question and other media to publish its adjudication, meaning that the conduct is exposed to public condemnation. The Ethical Commission of the Chamber of Advertising Industry processes complaints about the content or dissemination of advertisements in the mass media or through other means (e.g. jumbo posters). The penalty may be a withdrawal of the advertisement.

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Advertorials (this is a paid promotional content presented to the readers, listeners or viewers as a journalistic text) are prohibited by law and by codes of advertising. Citizens should be wary of this type of content and should be able to identify it and file complaints with the relevant governmental bodies and ethical commissions. The media can be fined for the violation of this rule.

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The attempts at establishing a national body in Slovenia modeled after similar bodies in other European countries (e.g. press council, press complaint commission) have been unsuccessful so far. Such a national body would cover the entire country and all the media, and would include the representatives of journalists, publishers and citizens. This initiative has been put forward on several occasions by the Media Watch team of the Peace Institute. However, the years-long conflict between the journalists' and publishers' associations prevented the realization of this initiative.

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Citizens should more actively take advantage of their right of correction and the right of reply, both of which are Constitutional rights defined in more detail by the media legislation. This right is not taken for granted in many countries where citizens still strive to bring the government to legislate it. So we should be more aware of this important achievement and take advantage of it instead of allowing it be used, and sometimes abused, by the centers of power exclusively.

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Citizens enter into contractual relations with cable operators and pay their services, so instead of passively accepting their choices and range of programs we should express our interests and influence their choice. Once again, associations of citizens could be more effective than individual initiatives, because a demand supported by many stands a better chance of bringing more gains.

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Unresolved legal and social situation of journalists has adverse effects on their professional work and credibility. Owing to social uncertainty (harmful contracts, low payments, delays of payments etc.) journalists work under the pressure of management boards, owners and advertisers, and are occasionally forced to violate the rules of profession. One notorious example is paid texts, i.e. advertorials. Therefore, a quick resolution of journalists' situation is in our interest, so we should support them when they are presenting their case or even resorting to a strike.

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We should be aware that we exert influence through the very choice of the media we buy. The media whose market survival depends on sales and advertising revenues have a vested interest in increasing the number of readers/viewers/listeners. This factor affects not only their sales revenues but also advertisers' interest in them and the price of advertising space/time. If the conduct of some media is unacceptable, we should cease to read/view/listen to that media. We can also invite others to boycott the media in question, announce the boycott publicly and through this launch a wider campaign to oppose a disputable media practice.

Citizens can organize themselves in various associations and strive towards influencing the areas of public interest by establishing and creating their own media. These could be the print media of limited extent or a radio or television station with a limited reach. In the context of empowering citizens to participate in the public debate on important social issues, particularly important are initiatives for the launching of non-profit media created by social groups and communities with limited social power.

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Therefore, the members of these social groups or communities should work towards establishing and producing their own media and should require from the state to support their media when allocating state subsidies or granting licenses for low-power broadcasting.

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The members of weak social groups and communities should gain at least some skills needed to operate such media outlets. They can turn to professional journalists' organizations or schools for journalists which could provide needed assistance. In some European countries experienced journalists working for public service broadcasters offer assistance to minority communities preparing them to launch their own media. This kind of assistance to minority communities is provided free of charge and is regarded by these public service broadcasters as part of their mission and service in the interest of citizens.

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New technologies, the Internet and various carriers of picture and sound (now more affordable) enable the creation and dissemination of media content. According to the Slovenian Mass Media Law, a media activity is any regular production and dissemination of editorial content. Before a media outlet begins to disseminate such content, it must be entered into the media register maintained by the Ministry of Culture. The entry of the media outlet into the register is a pre-condition for applying for the state subsidy.

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In developed countries and in Slovenia it has been increasingly obvious that the web media, including web diaries (blogs) can have a substantial reach and influence public debate about important social issues, so even the mainstream media occasionally refer to these sources.

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The operation of the community media usually does not require large financial resources. The operation and production most critically depends on creativity, a few skills, commitment, and efficient exploitation of available human and other resources. Educational institutions, NGOs dealing with the media sector and public media should offer training programs and encourage citizens to create and operate their own media.



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In encouraging citizens to participate in the media production, we should devote special attention to young and older citizens. NGOs and educational institutions should offer free computer courses to older citizens, while young people should be taught to critically assess the media content and use creative approaches to launch their own media, both within the educational system and outside it.

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The participation of the government in media production has become a necessity given the current concentration of media ownership and insufficiency of the public media. Many individuals across the world are increasingly aware of this fact. Therefore, a number of formal and informal associations and movements that operate locally but form global networks strive for citizens' participation in media activities and media activism, and it is frequently part of a wider effort towards greater social justice in the world.

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CITIZENS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

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media and journalism that serve the public interest and exert independent critical control over the operation of the government and private interests;

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media and journalism that are accountable not only to their owners but to their readers/listeners/viewers as well;

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media that are owned by a variety of owners whose economic interests and potential conflict of interest in publicly known;

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media that respect social rights of their employees;

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media that are accessible to various social groups and initiate a public debate about their needs and interests;

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public service media that are independent from political and economic interests – media that are 'owned' by citizens and work for citizens, and include citizens in their strategic decisions and production of content;

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media policy designed to serve the interests of citizens rather than the interests of power centers only, for example media owners;

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active public policies that open new spaces for public debate and contribute to the establishment of a non-profit media sector independent from the government.

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IMPORTANT ADDRESSES AND SOURCES

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MEDIA POLICY IN SLOVENIA  
(GOVERNMENTAL BODIES)

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MINISTRSTVO ZA KULTURO

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Sektor za medije  
Maistrova 10  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 369 59 00  
F: (01) 369 59 01  
E: gp.mk@gov.si  
<http://www.kultura.gov.si>

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DRŽAVNI ZBOR

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(odbori, poslanske skupine, poslanci)  
Šubičeva 4  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 478 94 00  
F: (01) 478 98 45  
E: info@dz-rs.si  
<http://www.dz-rs.si>

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REGISTER PREDPISOV REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE

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<http://zakonodaja.gov.si>

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INŠPEKTORAT ZA KULTURO IN MEDIJE

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Medijski inšpekto  
Metelkova 4  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 478 79 01  
F: (01) 478 79 81  
E: gp.mk@gov.si  
<http://www.kultura.gov.si>

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AGENCIJA ZA POŠTO IN ELEKTRONSKE KOMUNIKACIJE

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Oddelek za radiodifuzijo  
Stegne 7  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 583 63 00  
F: (01) 511 11 01  
E: info.box@gov.si  
<http://www.apek.si>

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SVET ZA RADIODIFUZIJO

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Stegne 7  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 583 63 85  
F: (01) 511 11 01  
E: [srdf.box@apek.si](mailto:srdf.box@apek.si)  
<http://www.gov.si/srd>

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INFORMACIJSKI POOBLAŠČENEC

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Vošnjakova 1  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 230 97 30  
F: (01) 230 97 78  
E: [info@ip-rs.si](mailto:info@ip-rs.si)  
<http://www.ip-rs.si>

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VARUH ČLOVEKOVIH PRAVIC

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Slovenska 56  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 475 00 50  
BT: 080 15 30  
F: (01) 475 00 40  
E: [info@varuh-rs.si](mailto:info@varuh-rs.si)  
<http://www.varuh-rs.si>

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MEDIA POLICY IN EUROPE  
(EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS):

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Directorate General Information Society and Media

BU 24 0/41  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Brussels  
Belgium  
T: +32 2 299 93 99  
F: +32 2 299 94 99  
E: [info-desk@ec.europa.eu](mailto:info-desk@ec.europa.eu)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information\\_society](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information_society)

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Correspondence With Citizens Unit

GOLO3A012

2929 Luxembourg

Luxembourg

F: +352 4300 27072

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament>

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Parliamentary Committee For Culture And Education  
(Slovenian representative: Ljudmila Novak, 2004-2008)

F: +352 4300 27072

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/cult\\_home\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/cult_home_en.htm)

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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Media Division

Directorate General Of Human Rights (DGI1)

67075 Strasbourg Cedex

France

T: +33 3 88 41 31 67

F: +33 3 88 41 27 05

E: [media@coe.int](mailto:media@coe.int)

E: [media@coe.int](mailto:media@coe.int) <[media@coe.int](mailto:media@coe.int)>

<http://www.coe.int/media>

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MEDIA INDUSTRY

(MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATIONS IN  
SLOVENIA)

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ZDRUŽENJE ZA TISK IN MEDIJE

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Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije

Dimičeva 13

1504 Ljubljana

T: (01) 589 82 77

F: (01) 589 82 00

E: [tisk-mediji@gzs.si](mailto:tisk-mediji@gzs.si)

[http://http://www.gzs.si/tisk\\_in\\_mediji](http://http://www.gzs.si/tisk_in_mediji)

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DRUŠTVO NOVINARJEV SLOVENIJE

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Wolfova 8  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 426 03 60  
F: (01) 426 03 63  
E: [generalni@novinar.com](mailto:generalni@novinar.com)  
<http://www.novinar.com>

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SINDIKAT NOVINARJEV SLOVENIJE

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Wolfova 8  
1000 Ljubljana  
T&F: (01) 426 03 66  
E: [sns@siol.net](mailto:sns@siol.net)  
<http://www.novinar.com/sindikato>

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NOVINARSKO RAZSODIŠČE

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Wolfova 8  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 426 03 60  
E: [pisarna@razsodisce.com](mailto:pisarna@razsodisce.com)  
<http://www.razsodisce.com>

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SLOVENSKA OGLAŠEVALSKA ZBORNICA

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Oglaševalsko razsodišče  
Parmova 53  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 439 60 50  
F: (01) 439 60 59  
E: [info@soz.si](mailto:info@soz.si)  
[http://www.soz.si/oglasovalsko\\_razsodisce](http://www.soz.si/oglasovalsko_razsodisce)

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RADIOTELEVIZIJA SLOVENIJA

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Programski svet  
Kolodvorska 2-4  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 475 21 11  
E: [programski.svet@rtvslo.si](mailto:programski.svet@rtvslo.si)  
<http://www.rtvlo.si>

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ZDRUŽENJE KABELSKIH OPERATERJEV SLOVENIJE

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Celovška cesta 150  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 505 89 70  
F: (01) 514 27 83  
E: info@zdruzenje-kos.si

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MEDIA ACTIVISM IN SLOVENIA  
(NGOS AND CITIZEN INITIATIVES)

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MIROVNI INŠTITUT

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Projekt Media Watch,  
Projekt Mediji za državljane  
Metelkova 6  
1000 Ljubljana  
T: (01) 234 77 20  
E: info@mirovni-institut.si  
<http://mediawatch.mirovni-institut.si>,  
<http://mediawatch.mirovni-institut.si/media4citizens>

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MEDIJSKI BLOG (MEDIJSKI WATCH DOG)

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E: [medijski@gmail.com](mailto:medijski@gmail.com)  
<http://www.medijski.blog.si>

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MEDIA FORUM

---

Center za javno komuniciranje  
E: [info@media-forum.si](mailto:info@media-forum.si)  
<http://www.media-forum.si>

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MEDIA ACTIVISM ABROAD:

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CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

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Vi & Garner Smith House, 2nd Floor  
23 Orford Road  
Walthamstow  
London E17 9NL  
Great Britain  
T: +44 20 8521 5932  
E: [freepress@cpbf.org.uk](mailto:freepress@cpbf.org.uk)  
<http://www.cpbf.org.uk>

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MIRA MEDIA, ONLINE / MORE COLOUR IN THE MEDIA

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Mariaplaats 3  
PO-Box 1234  
3500 BE Utrecht  
The Netherlands  
T: +31 30 230 22 40  
F: +31 30 230 29 75  
E: [info@miramedia.nl](mailto:info@miramedia.nl)  
<http://www.miramedia.nl>  
<http://www.multicultural.net>

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FREE PRESS

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100 Main Street  
P.O. Box 28  
Northampton, MA 01061  
US  
T: +1 413 585 1533  
F: +1 413 585 8904  
E: [info@freepress.net](mailto:info@freepress.net)  
<http://www.freepress.net>

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FAIR (FAIRNESS AND ACCURACY IN REPORTING)

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112 W. 27th Street  
New York, NY 10001  
US  
T: +1 212 633 6700  
F: +1 212 727 7668  
E: [fair@fair.org](mailto:fair@fair.org)  
<http://www.fair.org>

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