

# Country fact sheet Lithuania



## Context

In Lithuania, the debate about the viability and significance of regional, local and community media is dynamic and has been gradually evolving in the past few years. Likewise, the concept of ‘news deserts’ has found its place in mediated discussions.



The main media law ‘The Provision of Information to the Public’ contains the definition of ‘regional media’, whereas there are no institutionalised definitions for ‘community media’ and ‘local media’.

The risks in the decline of news affecting the local media landscape are more strongly linked to political and business alignments, a diminishing professional independence and infrastructural conditions (media viability and news distribution models), rather than being directly attributed to purely regional-economic matters or to those relating to accessibility to digital-technological information.



### The geographic leanings of young journalists

A significant problem for the local media landscape is the age of journalists. Younger journalists are not keen on living in rural areas or localities further away from urban centres.

Against this background, cooperation on initiatives and projects initiated by teams of journalists based in urban centres is a good possibility for the professional advancement of regional journalists.

### Conventional local media are slowly withdrawing from the market



There are only **six** local television stations in Lithuania, which broadcast news usually only once a day



Local radio stations also operate in **less than a third** of municipalities



This trend can be seen in recent years in the newspaper and audio-visual media sectors. Media concentration in local markets is high, as individual markets usually have only a few media outlets.



## Limited forms of state support

Direct subsidies to local media are administered by the Press, Radio, and Television Support Foundation (the Media Support Fund since 2024).

Although funding from the state budget for this fund in 2022 increased by 0.5 million euro compared to 2021, state support is insufficient to make local media more economically sustainable.



**20%**  
of local media  
journalists are  
freelancers

The **salaries of journalists working in the local media are, on average, lower than the average salary in Lithuania.** Thus, the money allocated to social guarantees is also lower than the national average.

While local media freelancers earn similar incomes to contract journalists, freelancers receive lower social guarantees.



## Detected concerns regarding editorial independence



Survey data of Lithuanian journalists show that **more than two-thirds of local media journalists** recognise the **influence of advertising decisions on their journalistic activities**

Lithuanian politicians, civil servants, and spouses have **ownership rights to over 100 media outlets.** Such media ownership is more common in **municipalities** where a large part of the local media is financially dependent on politicians. As a result, **it is quite difficult for some local media organisations to apply journalistic professional standards related to editorial autonomy and impartiality as well as to cover** all important topics and adequately inform their audience about local political and social problems.

The **economic weakness of local private media often creates conditions for corrupting editorial offices** through municipal advertising services. This way, some political opinions are highlighted, while others are belittled or silenced.

