



## Key findings

Given its geographical size and a media landscape that is already saturated, there is no distinction between local and national media in Malta: the ‘local’ is what makes up ‘national’ news and therefore, there are no ‘local’ editions of the national media.

All media are available over the entire territory and communities in suburban areas in Malta are well served by the national media .

**While there is no cause for alarm regarding news deserts in Malta, the report findings underline other concerns as the country presents:**

- ▶ A high level of political instrumentalisation of the media
- ▶ Significant lack of editorial independence
- ▶ A politicised public service broadcaster

### No transparency in distribution of government advertising to media

The government and its entities are a primary source of advertising income for all media outlets, which is a **risk to editorial independence**.

Moreover, the direct advertising booked by ministries or state entities is not transparent, and there are no checks and balances to monitor fair distribution of this type of ‘funding’ among outlets.

### Record of SLAPPs

In 2022, **the country had the highest number of SLAPPs per capita in Europe**, with 19.93 cases per 100,000 people.

These included several cases brought by ministries and state agencies against the online investigative portal, *The Shift News*. These cases were related to 40 Freedom of Information requests that had been denied.

## Harsh conditions to conduct journalism



Besides the SLAPPs cases, **harassment of journalists** and media entities in Malta also involves **direct threats to personal safety** and a large-scale disinformation campaign targeting six independent media outlets and a news blogger. This campaign includes creating spoof websites and sending fake emails to newsrooms, with the primary objective of spreading fake news.

Furthermore, the **Institute of Maltese Journalists** cannot, in practice, ensure professional standards and editorial independence. The Institute, which is an association and does not operate as a union, has yet to find ways of updating and enforcing its code of ethics.



## The case of minorities in Malta

Even though there are no legally recognised minorities in Malta, they do exist and **over the last ten years, the number of third country nationals** residing and working in the country **has increased exponentially**.

Malta seems to rely on the fact that all non-Maltese residents understand and speak English. When it comes to broadcast formats, practically every station broadcasts mainly in Maltese, whilst English tends to be more dominant in print and online media.



There is **no obligation for Public Service Media to represent minorities**. According to the Broadcasting Authority, when it comes to the portrayal of minorities in broadcasting, there is no policy in place, except for **general provisions** of balanced, fair and impartial representation.

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