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#rolreport2025

LIBERTIES

RULE OF LAW REPORT

2025



Co-funded by
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SLOVENIA

FOREWORD

This country report is part of the Liberties Rule of Law Report 2025, which is the sixth annual report on the state of rule of law in the European Union (EU) published by the Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties). Liberties is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) promoting the civil liberties of everyone in the EU, and it is built on a network of national civil liberties NGOs from across the EU. Currently, we have member organisations in Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, as well as a contributing partner organisation in Greece.

Liberties, together with its members and partner organisations, carries out advocacy, campaigning and public education activities to explain what the rule of law is, what the EU and national governments are doing to protect or harm it, and gathers public support to press leaders at EU and national level to fully respect, promote and protect our basic rights and values.

The 2025 report was drafted by Liberties and its member and partner organisations, and it covers the situation during 2024. It is a ‘shadow report’ to the European Commission’s annual rule of law audit. As such, its purpose is to provide the European Commission with reliable information and analysis from the ground to feed its own rule of law reports, and to provide an independent analysis of the state of the rule of law in the EU in its own right.

Liberties’ report represents the most in-depth reporting exercise carried out to date by an NGO network to map developments in a wide range of areas connected to the rule of law in the EU. The 2025 report includes 21 country reports that follow a common structure, mirroring and expanding on the priority areas and indicators identified by the European Commission for its annual rule of law monitoring cycle. Over forty member and local partner organisations contributed to the compilation of these country reports.

[Download the full Liberties Rule of Law Report 2025 here.](#)

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SLOVENIA

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Peace Institute



The Peace Institute is an independent, non-profit research institution founded in 1991 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, by individuals who believed in peaceful conflict resolution, equality and respect for human rights standards.

The Peace Institute (PI) uses scientific research and activism aimed at creating and preserving a society capable of critical thought and based on the principles of equality, responsibility, solidarity, human rights and the rule of law.

The Institute develops interdisciplinary research, educational, advocacy and awareness-raising activities in four thematic fields: human rights and minorities, politics, media, and gender. Acting as a research and civil society organisation, it focuses mainly on Slovenia, but it is also participating in numerous cross-border collaborative actions and comparative research on EU level and in the region of Southeast Europe. The PI acts against discrimination, as an ally of vulnerable groups and in partnership with them. It has carried out projects in support and advancement of the rights of children, women, victims of crimes, defendants in criminal proceedings, Roma communities, “erased people”, refugees and migrants, stateless people, LGBTQIA+ communities, journalists and others.

KEY CONCERNS

Media Environment and Media Freedom

In 2024, progress was made regarding the regulatory framework for safeguarding media pluralism and freedom. Additionally, RTV Slovenia's licence fee increase was approved. However, remaining challenges include media concentration, the public broadcaster's financial crisis, inadequate protection of journalists, and sustainability risks for quality news media.

In 2024, progress was made in developing legislative safeguards for journalists' protection, including a ban on intrusive surveillance software on devices used by journalists (in the media bill) and protection against SLAPP lawsuits (in the anti-SLAPP bill outline). However, no other safeguards were provided. The government increased the RTV Slovenia licence fee. Slovenian Press Agency financing was overhauled in the new media bill. However, no legislative safeguards were adopted to secure long-term independent and de-politicised funding for public service media.

Checks and Balances

The year 2024 was marked by the National Assembly adopting an amendment to the election law granting both active and passive voting rights in elections to persons deprived of legal capacity. On the negative side, like in the past, the government often failed to respect the relevant national provisions governing the duration of public consultations in the process of adopting laws and regulations.

Civic Space



A major 2023 public call for funding the NGO sector was marred by controversy and was annulled in 2024. As a result, successful applicants have been left without awarded funds, so some of them sued the state. Although less frequently, compared to 2023, participants in the 2024 Ljubljana Pride Parade again faced violence. The largest opposition party, winner of the 2024 EP election, and its media ecosystem continued to portray CSOs as being without value for society or blamed them for societal problems.

Disregard of Human Rights Obligations and Other Systemic Issues Affecting the Rule of Law Environment

No major changes have been identified in the field of migration and asylum (procedures, accommodation, reception conditions, integration). Overcrowding of prisons remains a problem, and there is an extremely high percentage of foreigners imprisoned based on Art. 308 of the Criminal Code. Issues persist related to the erased and other long-term tolerated

foreigners residing in Slovenia for years or decades (regarding the acquisition of permanent residency permits), statelessness, and the Roma minority.

State of play (versus 2024)

- N/A* Justice system
- Anti-corruption framework
-  Media Environment and Media Freedom
-  Checks and balances
-  Civic Space
-  Human Rights

Legend

Regression

No progress

Progress



MEDIA ENVIRONMENT AND MEDIA FREEDOM

Key recommendations

- *Further strengthen the public media outlets RTV Slovenia and the Slovenian Press Agency: institutional autonomy should be provided, particularly through the de-politicisation of both public media financing models (in the case of RTV Slovenia, for example, the amount of the licence fee is not conditioned on the decision of the government or the parliament but is automatically attached to inflation or other economic indicators).*
- *Comprehensive reform of media legislation to protect public interest in the media sector should be adopted, particularly focusing on the protection of journalists, financial support to quality journalism, protection of media pluralism, transparency of media ownership and finances, strengthening independence and capacities of media regulatory authorities, etc.*
- *A substantial reform of the institutional framework for enforcing media regulation should be introduced either by establishing a separate regulatory authority or by increasing safeguards for the independence of the existing authority (Agency for Communication Networks and Services - AKOS) and by securing sufficient resources to the authority to play an active and efficient role.*

Media and telecommunications authorities and bodies

Independence, enforcement powers and adequacy of resources of media and telecommunication authorities and bodies

In 2024, new regulatory powers for Digital Services Coordinators were assigned to the Agency for Communication Networks and Services (AKOS). Accordingly, digital services have been added to a range of sectors already overseen by AKOS – telecommunications, radio frequency spectrum, radio, television and VOD, postal services and railway services.

AKOS serves as an independent regulatory authority functionally separate from the government. However, the appointment of the agency's director as the highest decision-making body remains under the direct control of the government. The current director has been appointed, in 2023, by the current government to a five-year term. Such powers given to the government remain one of the main threats to the independence of the authority in charge of media regulation enforcement. The agency's council is also appointed by the government as a body supervising the work of the agency. It considers the agency's annual plans and reports and can propose the dismissal of the director.

The agency lacks adequate resources to actively and efficiently enforce media regulation. AKOS's human resources in the department tasked with enforcement of media regulation, overseeing radio, television and VOD, remain highly disproportionate compared to the resources of similar media authorities in the EU. Despite additional job positions approved for the department to perform the tasks of promoting media and information literacy in 2024, the size of the department, with 12 employees, remains insufficient.

The concerns regarding inadequate independence, limited resources and the low profile of AKOS as a media authority, continuing for many years because of the agency's leadership, are now growing with the additional tasks of conducting media concentration assessments and enforcing anti-concentration measures assigned to AKOS in the new Mass Media Act drafted by the government on 31 December 2024 and submitted to the parliament for adoption,¹ expected in 2025. After experiencing a

weak and inefficient media anti-concentration regulatory framework in Slovenia for several decades, adding this demanding media regulatory area to AKOS's portfolio has generated sharp criticism from independent experts. They see this merger of powers (of digital services coordinator and media anti-concentration regulator) as a "concentration of regulatory powers never seen in Slovenia".² Moreover, the newly proposed media act provides that the costs of monitoring media concentration carried out by AKOS will be met by the state budget,³ but the financial statement with budgetary consequences attached to the bill does not spell out the size of the funding allocated for the new task, or the number of new staff allocated to the regulatory authority for this purpose. Considering that AKOS's sources of operating revenue for performing other regulatory tasks are independent of the state budget and earned directly by charging different fees to service providers, the state budget as a source of funding for AKOS's new regulatory tasks related to digital services and media

- 1 Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 1884-IX Media Act, 31 December 2024, https://www.dz-rs.si/wps/portal/Home/zakonodaja/izbran/!ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPyKssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8zivSy9Hb283Q0N3E3dLQwCQ7z9g7w8nAwsnMz1w9EUGAWZGgS6GDn5BhsYGwQHG-pHEaPFAAdwNCBOPx4FUfiNL8gNDQ11VFQEAAAXcoa4!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?uid=F866B25D56483727C1258C040045EDDF&db=pre_zak&mandat=IX&ctip=doc.
- 2 M. K., *Priporobe na predlog zakona o medijih: ministrstvo za kulturo naj pripravi bolj dodelano besedilo*, rtvlo.si, 15 October 2024, <https://www.rtvlo.si/kultura/drugo/priporobe-na-predlog-zakona-o-medijih-ministrstvo-za-kulturo-naj-pripravi-bolj-dodelano-besedilo/724413>.
- 3 Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 1884-IX Media Act, 31 December 2024, https://www.dz-rs.si/wps/portal/Home/zakonodaja/izbran/!ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPyKssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8zivSy9Hb283Q0N3E3dLQwCQ7z9g7w8nAwsnMz1w9EUGAWZGgS6GDn5BhsYGwQHG-pHEaPFAAdwNCBOPx4FUfiNL8gNDQ11VFQEAAAXcoa4!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?uid=F866B25D56483727C1258C040045EDDF&db=pre_zak&mandat=IX&ctip=doc.

concentration can be considered a further risk to independence and political interference. In the provisions of the draft Mass Media Act allocating media anti-concentration regulatory powers to AKOS, the government referred to the requirements of the European Media Freedom Act. The concerns mentioned above confirm challenges regarding the implementation of the EU media regulation in the context of national regulatory authorities lacking adequate independence and capacities.

Insufficient resources for the enforcement of media regulations and a lack of activity have been recurrent issues with the Inspectorate for Culture and Media for many years. The draft Mass Media Act only provides for one additional staff with the inspectorate for overseeing the implementation of the requirements laid down in the new law.

There is a functional self-regulatory framework for journalists in Slovenia, with the Journalists' Court of Honour playing a major role. It is a self-regulatory body on a national level operating within the Slovenian Association of Journalists. It is composed of representatives of journalists and the public. A reputed body, it continues a long tradition of setting ethical

standards and handling complaints. The body was co-founded by the Slovenian Association of Journalists and the Slovenian Union of Journalists, and its members are appointed by the founding organisations' representative bodies. It regularly handles complaints based on the Code of Ethics and publicly announces adopted decisions. In 2024, it published decisions relating to 28 complaints (as compared to 24 complaints in 2023 and 16 complaints in 2022). It is funded by both founding organisations.

Resulting from participation in the network of independent Press and Media Councils in Europe,⁴ there have been new initiatives by the Journalists' Court of Honour's founders relating to the possibilities for transforming the Journalists' Court of Honour to a media council that would further involve media publishers in the founding and operations of the self-regulatory body.

The draft Mass Media Act provides, for the first time, that financial support from the state budget is available for the promotion of media self-regulation in the provisions governing public interest in the field of media.⁵ The Slovenian Association of Journalists, however, expressed concerns that the provision in

4 Press Councils.eu, 'Journalists' associations in Greece, Malta and Slovenia to receive consultancy on setting up a press or media council', <https://www.presscouncils.eu/journalists-associations-in-greece-malta-and-slovenia-to-receive-consultancy-on-setting-up-a-press-or-media-council/>.

5 Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 1884-IX Media Act, 31 December 2024, https://www.dz-rs.si/wps/portal/Home/zakonodaja/izbran!/ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8zivSy9Hb283Q0N3E3dLQwCQ7z9g7w8nAwsnMz1w9EUGAWZGgS6GDn5BhsYGwQHG-pHEaPFAAdwNCBOPx4FUfiNL8gNDQ11VFQEAAAXcoa4!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?uid=F866B25D56483727C1258C040045EDDF&db=pre_zak&mandat=IX&tip=doc.

question would only allow for financial support to media outlets, excluding the association effectively implementing media and journalists' self-regulation.⁶

The Ombudsman of the public broadcaster RTV Slovenia handles complaints based on professional standards and other self-regulatory documents of RTV Slovenia. It is an active and responsive self-regulatory body, handling thousands of complaints every year, most of them related to TV Slovenia programmes and its news programmes. The Ombudsman is appointed by the governing body of RTV Slovenia for five years, and its independence is guaranteed by internal acts. In 2023, as per the last available annual report, the RTV Ombudsman handled 3,473 submissions, including complaints, questions and opinions. In 2022, the number was higher – 4,757 – due to specific circumstances of the parliamentary, presidential and local elections, all taking place in a single year. In 2021, there were 2,317 submissions handled by the Ombudsman. Annual statistics covering the year 2024 are not available at the time of writing. According to the

Ombudsman's monthly reports, there were around 200 average monthly submissions.⁷

Pluralism and concentration

As highlighted in the past, the situation in Slovenia is characterised by a significant level of media concentration. The dominance of the media group Media24,⁸ owned by the Odlazek family,⁹ is particularly significant in the print and radio market. According to recent research based on the 2022 data, Media24 consist of a network of 20 interconnected companies that are horizontally, cross-sectorally, and vertically concentrated. These 20 companies operate a total of 121 print or broadcast media outlets (34 print editions – dailies, weeklies and lifestyle magazines), 73 radio stations, 12 online portals, and two television stations).¹⁰ Based on data from several research projects,¹¹ the media outlets taken over by this beneficiary owner routinely experience downsizing both in terms of finance and staffing. Even though the current Mass Media Act stipulates that the publisher of a daily newspaper cannot simultaneously be the publisher or co-founder of a radio or television programme,¹² such practices

6 The information provided by Špela Stare, Secretary General of the Slovenian Association of Journalists, 6 January 2025.

7 RTV Slovenia, About the Ombudsman Institute <https://www.rtv slo.si/varuh/o-varuhinji>.

8 Media24 group, <https://media24.si>.

9 Lenart J. Kučič, *Mediji Martina Odlazka (1. del): nepregledna mreža radiev, tiskovin, televizije*, Pod črto, 19 November 2020, <https://podcrto.si/mediji-martina-odlazka-1-del-nepregledna-mreza-radiev-tiskovin-televizije/>.

10 Ribač et al., 2025 (forthcoming).

11 Popback Project, <https://www.popback.org>; Affective Media, <https://www.mirovni-institut.si/en/affective-media/>; MeDeMAP, at <https://www.medemap.eu>.

12 National Assembly of Slovenia, Mass media act (Zakon o medijih), 25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications.

have persisted. This is largely due to the ease of circumventing media law, stemming from inadequate regulation and oversight. Despite a small media market, a large number of media outlets and a high level of concentration, new news media outlets continue to emerge. In late 2024, the new online news media outlet Info360 was launched, for example.¹³

Dozens of media outlets, owned by or affiliated with the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), the largest opposition party, operate at both national and local levels, including the seemingly unconnected network of regional online media.¹⁴ These outlets predominantly function as propaganda tools rather than genuine media entities. In most cases, identical content is disseminated through these media outlets and platforms.

Recently, there has been a change in the media group Pro Plus,¹⁵ which dominates the television, video-on-demand, and online media markets. The long-term news programme director (in charge of producing news programmes at both POP TV and Kanal A channels) was replaced. The media group explained the

decision to be a result of a “strategic reorganisation”.¹⁶ There are concerns that this change can negatively impact the editorial standards and policy of the most watched TV news programme in the country.¹⁷

Rules governing and safeguarding the pluralistic media market, and their application (including regulating mergers, acquisitions and other ownership changes)

The implementation of provisions restricting media concentration has been deficient for many years, as the existing media law fails to effectively prevent media concentration and does not ensure adequate disclosure of media ownership. However, the new draft Mass Media Act introduces new safeguards regarding media concentration, and there are high expectations for the new media law to effectively address and restrict media concentration.

The proposed regulation, which aligns with the principles of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA),¹⁸ includes a specific media concentration assessment procedure. According to the draft Mass Media Act, the following

13 Info360, <https://www.info360.si>.

14 Lenart J. Kučič, *Infografika: internetni mediji SDS*, 10 December 2019, <https://podcrto.si/infografika-internetni-mediji-sds/>.

15 Pro Plus, <https://pro-plus.si/eng.html>.

16 Patricija Maličev, *Tjaša Slokar Kos, sedma sila v času strateške reorganizacije*, delo.si, 27 December 2024, <https://www.delo.si/sobotna-priloga/tjasa-slokar-kos-sedma-sila-v-casu-strateske-reorganizacije>.

17 Stanka Prodnik, *Zakaj so jo zamenjali?*, mladina.si, 27 December 2024, <https://www.mladina.si/237490/tv-komentar-zakaj-so-jo-zamenjali/>.

18 European Parliament and the Council, Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R1083>.

criteria shall be considered in the assessment procedure: the fulfilment of public interest in the field of media, the expected impact of media concentration on media pluralism considering the principle of freedom of expression, the formation of public opinion, and the diversity of programme content and media offerings in the market. Additionally, the online environment and the interests of the parties to the procedure, their connections, or activities in other media companies or related companies whose main activity is not media-related shall be considered. Finally, the expected impact of media concentration on editorial autonomy and the possibilities for expressing different opinions or beliefs and incorporating diverse programme content is evaluated.¹⁹

The state financial support aimed at protecting media and pluralism has continued in 2024. The Ministry of Culture distributes the funds on an annual basis, providing co-financing of programme content production and dissemination important for the pursuit of public interest in the field of media, per Article 4 of the Mass Media Act.²⁰

In 2024, €2.9 million were allocated to the media, with 2025 funds expected to increase to €4.1 million.²¹ Additional increase in financial aid to the media is expected in the coming years.²²

In the draft Mass Media Act,²³ two additional state aid schemes are set out, one supporting the digital transition of print media, and the

19 Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 1884-IX Media Act, 31 December 2024, https://www.dz-rs.si/wps/portal/Home/zakonodaja/izbran!/ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8zivSy9Hb283Q0N3E3dLQwCQ7z9g7w8nAwsnMz1w9EUGAWZGgS6GDn5BhsYGwQHG-pHEaPFAAdwNCBOPx4FUfiNL8gNDQ11VFOEAAAXcoa4!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?uid=F866B25D56483727C1258C040045EDDF&db=pre_zak&mandat=IX&tip=doc.

20 National Assembly of Slovenia, Mass media act (Zakon o medijih), 25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications.

21 For more information see the government website with the information on 2025 Public call at <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/javne-objave/redni-letni-javni-projektne-razpis-za-sofinanciranje-programskih-vsebin-medijev-v-letu-2025/>.

22 Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 1884-IX Media Act, 31 December 2024, https://www.dz-rs.si/wps/portal/Home/zakonodaja/izbran!/ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8zivSy9Hb283Q0N3E3dLQwCQ7z9g7w8nAwsnMz1w9EUGAWZGgS6GDn5BhsYGwQHG-pHEaPFAAdwNCBOPx4FUfiNL8gNDQ11VFOEAAAXcoa4!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?uid=F866B25D56483727C1258C040045EDDF&db=pre_zak&mandat=IX&tip=doc.

23 Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 1884-IX Media Act, 31 December 2024, https://www.dz-rs.si/wps/portal/Home/zakonodaja/izbran!/ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8zivSy9Hb283Q0N3E3dLQwCQ7z9g7w8nAwsnMz1w9EUGAWZGgS6GDn5BhsYGwQHG-pHEaPFAAdwNCBOPx4FUfiNL8gNDQ11VFOEAAAXcoa4!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?uid=F866B25D56483727C1258C040045EDDF&db=pre_zak&mandat=IX&tip=doc.

other providing assistance to digital media.²⁴ The draft law lays down the eligibility criteria for all types of state financial support to the media, including respecting the transparency requirements regarding the ownership data, data on state advertising, and the disclosure of conflicts of interest. Furthermore, the schemes exclude the media that are public entities or are under the predominant influence of public entities. The media directly or indirectly owned or founded by political parties are also excluded from funding. Additionally, media outlets whose responsible editors or their substitutes have been convicted in the last two years of the criminal offence of public incitement to hatred, violence, and intolerance under Article 297 of the Penal Code are also excluded.²⁵ The measure follows the policy of demonetising hate speech in the media.

Transparency and media ownership

The newly proposed Mass Media Act adheres to the principles of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) in the part aimed at greater transparency of state advertising. According to Article 21 of the draft law, state institutions shall be required to regularly report on all media expenditures, including advertising, campaigns, and other media leases.²⁶ As

stipulated in this Article, public entities and those under their predominant influence are required to submit annual data to the Ministry of Culture by the end of February. The data shall capture the amount of funds or other contributions allocated to media activities in the preceding year, including those for advertising, sponsorship, product placement in media, payments for commissioned content, and donations to publishers. Furthermore, they must report the final recipients (publishers) of these funds or contributions. The ministry is responsible for publicly disclosing this data on its official website. Media outlets are also mandated to report these data in the new Media Register, as detailed in the subsequent section.

The current Mass Media Act includes provisions requiring media outlets to report ownership stakes exceeding 5% in the Media Register,²⁷ which is administered by the Ministry of Culture. Media companies are also required to annually publish data and updates on ownership changes in the Official Gazette. It has been quite common practice for the Media Register to be inaccurate and not to provide updated information on ownership shares in different media companies.

Under the newly proposed Mass Media Act, these issues will be addressed by establishing

24 Republic of Slovenia, 'The Media Act was approved by the government today.', 31 December 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-12-31-zakon-o-medijih-danes-potrjen-na-vladi/>.

25 National Assembly of Slovenia, Penal code (Kazenski zakonik), 20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications.

26 Republic of Slovenia, 'The Media Act was approved by the government today.', 31 December 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-12-31-zakon-o-medijih-danes-potrjen-na-vladi/>.

27 National Assembly of Slovenia, Mass media act (Zakon o medijih), 25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications.

a new Media Register, as stipulated in Article 20.²⁸ The media will be obliged to submit to the new Media Register the following data: the amount of funds received by the publisher from public entities or entities under their predominant influence, including the total annual amount of funds received from state advertising and the total annual advertising revenue received from public entities of third countries or entities under their predominant influence. Additionally, the data on direct or indirect owners of the publisher, as well as the name of the beneficial owner(s) of the publisher must be submitted by the media to the Media Register.

The proposed legislation thus integrates critical data on state advertising and actual ownership shares for the first time, expecting to enhance media transparency to a large degree.

Public service media

The de-politicised governing model of RTV Slovenia, introduced in 2022 by the current government,²⁹ has enabled the composition of RTV Slovenia's governing body that function independently from the government

influence or influence of other political actors. A 17-member governing council composed of representatives of civil society and RTV Slovenia employees appoints the top management and oversees the public broadcaster's programming and finances. The new governing body has replaced two separate governing councils, which had a combined 40 members, mostly appointed by the parliament and the government. Under the reformed system, the management structure includes a four-member management board, headed by a president.

In May 2024, the president of the management board Zvezdan Martić resigned,³⁰ after disagreements with and resignations of several members of the management board, and after failing to secure the support of the RTV Slovenia governing body for his work plan and the candidates he nominated for the board. The management crisis has been largely influenced by the financial difficulties of the public service broadcaster which further results in cutbacks in production and programming. The new president of the management board, Natalija Gorščak was appointed, in September 2024, with the large support of the RTV Slovenia

28 Republic of Slovenia, 'The Media Act was approved by the government today.', 31 December 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-12-31-zakon-o-medijih-danes-potrjen-na-vladi/>.

29 This governing model has been established by amendments to the Act on RTV Slovenia, and were implemented after the Constitutional Court had lifted, in May 2023, the temporary suspension of the amendments. The amendments to the Act on RTV Slovenija were adopted by the current government coalition in 2022 and were endorsed by majority of voters at a related referendum. Aiming at de-politicising the public service broadcaster's governing and management, the amendments mandated various independent institutions and organisations to appoint the governing body of RTV Slovenia.

30 Barbara Eržen, *Zvezdan Martić odstopil: Med večino svetnikov nimam več zaupanja*, delo.si, 28 and 29 May 2024, <https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/svetniki-kriticni-do-kurirskega-ravnanja-predsednika-uprave-rtv-slovenija>.

governing body.³¹ The new president of the managing board has been employed at RTV Slovenia since 1996, in recent years holding leading editorial and management positions on TV Slovenia but unlawfully dismissed from the position of TV Slovenia director by the RTV Slovenia director general during the previous government term. The management of RTV Slovenia in the given financial situation, however, is no more than crisis management. For example, the 2025 annual programming and production plan drafted by the RTV Slovenia management in December 2024 has not yet reached the governing body for approval due to difficulties in reconciling the programming and production plan with the financial plan, as required by the regulation.³² The RTV Slovenia is thus subject to temporary funding in proportion to last year's expenditures until the financial deficit is addressed and the annual programming and production plan is approved by the governing body.

In 2024, steps were made towards the preparation of systemic solutions that would protect the Slovenian Press Agency (STA) in the long term from risks to the independence and financial sustainability of the public service media. The proposal for the new law on STA was in public debate until July 2024, after which the draft law was further discussed by the

coordination of various government departments. Although the government representatives claim that the main purpose of the draft law is to strengthen the independence of the governing and management of the STA and to ensure adequate public financing, it remains to be seen which systemic solutions apply to the status, governing and financing of the STA will be included in the bill, as well as when the government will adopt them and send to the parliamentary procedure.

31 T. K. B., T. L. Š., B. R., *Nova predsednica Uprave RTV Slovenija je Natalija Gorščak*, rtvlo.si, 4 September 2024, <https://www.rtvlo.si/slovenija/nova-predsednica-uprave-rtv-slovenija-je-natalija-gorscak/719963>.

32 T. K. B., *Financiranje RTV-ja bo zaradi nesprejetja programsko-poslovnega načrta začasno*, rtvlo.si, 30 December 2024, <https://www.rtvlo.si/slovenija/financiranje-rtv-ja-bo-zaradi-nesprejetja-programsko-poslovnega-nacrta-zacasno/731965>; Barbara Eržen, *RTV Slovenija v novo leto z začasnim financiranjem*, delo.si, 28 December 2024, <https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/rtv-slovenija-v-novo-leto-z-zacasnim-financiranjem>.

Editorial standards (including diversity and non-discrimination)

The TV Slovenia news programme editor-in-chief's decision not to green-light an interview with the leading organiser of the 'March for Life' in Slovenia, a campaign opposing abortion, and its airing in the weekly TV show 'Interview' on 20 October 2024, prompted numerous complaints to the RTV Slovenia Ombudsman and an initiative by the opposition MPs for a special session of the parliamentary committee for culture.³³ The editor-in-chief, Polona Fijavž, briefly explained the decision in correspondence with a complaining viewer by saying that the show is devoted to engaging, in 50-minute interviews, those individuals who have made extraordinary achievements in their fields of work, while other news programmes such as late evening news shows allow shorter conversations. The editor-in-chief added that the interviewee in question did not meet the criteria for a 50-minute interview, adding also that the topic polarises the public and the interview format was not adequate for discussion on such polarising topics. The journalist who

proposed the interview further explained that the editor-in-chief referred to the fact that the right to abortion is protected in the Constitution when rejecting his proposal. The Ombudsman, Marica Uršič Zupan, recommended to the RTV Slovenia news programme editorial board to conduct a thorough discussion about the show guests, providing that journalistic autonomy and editorial responsibility are protected, as well as programming and professional standards of RTV Slovenia and constitutionally protected rights. The Ombudsman also called on the news programme editorial board to ensure that decisions and arguments are adequately communicated with the public.³⁴

The implementation of the editorial standards of RTV Slovenia requiring non-discriminatory presentation of the views of the government and the opposition, specified in the RTV Slovenia code of conduct 'Professional Standards',³⁵ was compromised by the decision of the biggest opposition party SDS leader, former Prime Minister Janez Janša, not to take part in the regular interview with the opposition leaders following the interview with the current Prime

33 For more information on this session see the National Assembly website at https://www.dz-rs.si/wps/portal/Home/seje/evidenca!/ut/p/z1/jY_BC0JAFEW_xYVb30sxrN1IYI1FqIk2m-9CYRkEdGS2hr09oVZT4dvdyzoUHDFJgTfYorDaXssmqMZ_Z8kJPqG-t0DP9hwMTv4xpFsXnZ0NyRdghjYGG9M9RGhhFJnA5vj45wjO8ycANj1PgY1K5u9XSZNbjgCm-I0rroy7Guui79turaOOwzAYQkpRceMqax1_KYXsekg_SWjrOE6fe54QTXsB7VS2Pw!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?mandat=IX&type=magdt&uid=B856F997CE3B0CA6C1258BE2004DCBD4.

34 RTV Slovenia Ombudsman, Monthly report on the reaction by the public: October 2024 (Mesečno poročilo o odzivih občinstva: Oktober 2024), https://img.rtv slo.si/_files/2024/11/13/46_540182050481635340_mesecno-porocilo-oktober-2024.pdf.

35 For more information see Article 4.2 of the RTV Slovenia Professional Standards at <https://www.rtv slo.si/rtv/kdo-smo/zakoni-predpisi-in-dokumenti/pravilnik-o-poklicnih-standardih/475078>.

Minister, on 16 December 2024, claiming that RTV Slovenia is “a subsidiary of the radical Left and Golob’s government, and thus lost all credibility”,³⁶ so he took part in an interview with a local TV instead.³⁷

The de-politicised governing model of RTV Slovenia was not followed by the introduction of a sustainable, de-politicised RTV Slovenia funding model, as the amount of the monthly licence fee paid remains dependent on the government’s decision. Such a solution continues to represent a possible lever for political pressure.

Although it did not take any action regarding the introduction of systemic solutions for the financial sustainability and independence of RTV Slovenia in 2024, the government took several measures to improve the financial situation of RTV Slovenia in the short term. The previous governments had not approved any increase in the licence fee (paid by households to RTV Slovenia on a monthly basis) for twelve

years, refusing to take into account the significant increase in the labour costs and material costs of RTV Slovenia programming and services, the current government made a decision, in August 2024, to increase the licence fee from €12.75 to €14.02 per month, starting from January 2025.³⁸ This is the highest possible annual increase, as the law stipulates that the government can change the amount of the licence fee by a maximum of 10% if there are valid economic reasons for doing so.³⁹

This increase in the licence fee will increase RTV Slovenia’s income by approximately €10 million per year. In 2024, the government earmarked an additional €10 million for the production of programmes targeting national minorities.⁴⁰ At the time of writing, there are no guarantees that additional support for minority programmes will again be granted in 2025, so a bigger RTV budget might not necessarily materialise in 2025 despite the increased licence fee. Additionally, the wage

36 C. Š., *SDS ni potrdila sodelovanja na RTV, namesto tega Janša gostuje drugje*, nova24tv.si, 16 December 2024, <https://nova24tv.si/sds-ni-potrdila-sodelovanja-na-rtv-namesto-tega-jansa-gostuje-drugje/>.

37 M. M., *Janša ignoriral Rosvito Pesek in Igorja E. Berganta, raje je na VTV solil pamet Velenjčanom*, reporter.si, 17 December 2024, <https://reporter.si/clanek/slovenija/janez-jansa-vtv-intervju-ksenija-rozman-1389197>.

38 Republic of Slovenia, "117th regular session of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia", 28 August 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-08-28-117-redna-seja-vlade-republike-slovenije/>; T. L. Š., *Vlada podprla zvišanje RTV-prispevka za 1,27 evra. S prvim januarjem bo ta znašal 14,02 evra.*, rtvslo.si, 28 August 2024, <https://www.rtv-slovenija/vlada-podprla-zvisanje-rtv-prispevka-za-1-27-evra-s-prvim-januarjem-bo-ta-znasal-14-02-evra/719282>.

39 National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, Act on Radio and Television Slovenia (ZRTVS-1), 15 July 2005, <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4461>.

40 B. R., *Vlada za RTV Slovenija zagotovila 10 milijonov evrov*, rtvslo.si, 24 April 2024, <https://www.rtv-slovenija/vlada-za-rtv-slovenija-zagotovila-10-milijonov-evrov/706208>; for more information see also the government website at <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-08-28-117-redna-seja-vlade-republike-slovenije/>.

system reform in the public sector introduced by the government in agreement with trade unions⁴¹ will increase the 2025 labour costs of RTV Slovenia and put the financial sustainability of RTV Slovenia further at risk. Such a financial situation has a detrimental effect on programming, employment policy and management, affecting also audience share, public trust and support. The government's promise of a new law introducing more substantial reform of RTV Slovenia, including reform of the funding model, remains unfulfilled.

In 2024, the government continued the policy of stable financing of the Slovenian Press Agency (STA), introduced already in 2022 when the current government started its term. Then, the government abolished the controversial regulation on the performance of public service by the STA, based on which the previous government carried out the financial depletion of the press agency. The annual agreements on STA funding for the years 2023 and 2024 have provided a slight increase in the contractual amount of funding, and at the same time, the Government Communications Office settled the financial obligations towards

STA that remained open from the previous period.⁴² However, there is a need for systemic solutions that would provide the independence and financial sustainability of STA in the long term. The adoption of the new law with such provisions has been expected, but the procedure of drafting the law, conducting the public consultations⁴³ and finalising the proposal for the government endorsement was not completed in 2024.

Online media

Online media (i.e. “electronic publications”, as per the current Mass Media Act) in Slovenia have been subject to the requirement of registering in the media register administered by the Ministry of Culture ever since the current Mass Media Act was adopted in 2001.⁴⁴ The registration has been a condition for starting dissemination of programming content by any media outlet in Slovenia. The requirement has not been misused for exerting pressure or restrictions by the government so far. Online media are also subject to content regulation and to ‘the right to reply’ provisions. The current Mass Media Act also requires online

41 M. Z., T. L. Š., T. K. B., *Kolektivne pogodbe za uveljavitev plačne reforme v javnem sektorju podpisalo 32 od 45 sindikatov*, rtv slo.si, 15 November 2024, <https://www.rtv slo.si/slovenija/kolektivne-pogodbe-za-uveljavitev-placne-reforme-v-javnem-sektorju-podpisalo-32-od-45-sindikatov/727499>.

42 Data provided by the government to the People's Voice, a coalition of civil society organisations, for the purpose of annual monitoring of the pre-election promises made by the parties involved in the government coalition, October 2024.

43 Republic of Slovenia, 'The proposal for a new Act on the Slovenian News Agency is in public discussion from today', 20 June 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-06-20-predlog-novega-zakona-o-slovenski-tiskovni-agenciji-od-danes-v-javni-obravnavi/>.

44 National Assembly of Slovenia, Mass media act (Zakon o medijih), 25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications.

media to adopt rules and make them available to the public in case they publish sections with comments by readers/visitors. “A comment that does not comply with the published rules must be withdrawn as soon as possible after the complaint or not later than one working day after the application”, specifies Article 9, para 3 of the Mass Media Act as amended in 2016.⁴⁵

The Act on the Implementation of the Regulation (EU) on the Single Market for Digital Services (ZIUETDS) came into force in April 2024.⁴⁶ The Agency for Communication Networks and Services of the Republic of Slovenia (AKOS) has been assigned the role of Digital Services Coordinator. In the same year, a newly established department at the agency started performing the tasks laid down in the regulation in question.

Reacting to the draft Mass Media Act, produced by the government in late December 2024, activists with links to the Slovenian Democratic Party, the largest opposition party, launched a campaign against draft provisions relating to the content regulation and

transparency rules (e.g. disclosure of conflicts of interest, the prohibition of inciting violence and hatred, the protection of children, and rules regarding advertising, sponsorship, and product placement) for their application including to influencers on online social platforms. A prominent member of the opposition party’s youth division launched a petition arguing that the proposed law infringes on freedom of speech on social media and that influencers failing to register with the Media Register shall be liable for minor offences,⁴⁷ mobilising thousands of supporters in the process. The Minister of Culture called the petition a textbook example of disinformation, explaining that the draft law does not regard influencers as media outlets and imposes no registration obligations whatsoever on them. According to the minister, only some limited provisions governing content regulation and transparency shall also apply to influencers.⁴⁸

Public trust in media

In Slovenia, the public opinion research on trust in institutions and professions, conducted

45 National Assembly of Slovenia, Mass media act (Zakon o medijih), 25 April 2001, and subsequent modifications.

46 National assembly of Slovenia, Act on the Implementation of the Regulation (EU) on the Single Market for Digital Services (Zakon o izvajanju Uredbe (EU) o enotnem trgu digitalnih storitev), 26 March 2024, and subsequent modifications.

47 For more information see the relevant petition-dedicated website at https://www.peticija.online/proti_vmeavanju_politike_v_medije_in_socialna_omreja.

48 Denis Malačič, Tadej Grešovnik, *Vplivneži zaradi novega zakona na nogah, ministrica: Gre za politično peticijo*, 24ur.si, 6 January 2025, <https://www.24ur.com/novice/slovenija/vplivnezi-zaradi-novega-zakona-na-nogah-ministrica-gre-za-politico-peticijo.html>; T. L. Š., *11.000 podpisov pod peticijo za umik predloga zakona o medijih. Vrečko: Skrajni primer lažnih novic*, rtvslo.si, 6 January 2025, <https://www.rtvsl.si/slovenija/11-000-podpisov-pod-peticijo-za-umik-predloga-zakona-o-medijih-vrecko-skrajni-primer-laznih-novic/732515>.

by Valicon in October 2024, once again revealed positive trends regarding trust in the public service broadcaster RTV Slovenia. The last opinion poll shows that trust in the public service broadcaster increased by three points compared to the October 2023 poll and by six points compared to the March 2024 poll. Despite this improvement, the media sector remains among the least trusted institutions overall.⁴⁹

According to ‘Standard Barometer 102 – Autumn 2024’ research,⁵⁰ a majority of 55% of respondents in Slovenia, seven percentage points up from last year’s poll, believe that Slovenian media provide trustworthy information, while 44% expressed distrust. Additionally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published the results of the Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions, in which Slovenia participated for the first time in 2024. According to the survey data, trust in the media is second to last, with only 26% of respondents expressing trust in media. The data show that overall trust in institutions in Slovenia is slightly below the average when countries which participated in the survey are considered.⁵¹

Safety and protection of journalists and other media actors

In 2024, the online platform ‘Report Attack’, coordinated by the Slovenian Association of Journalists and providing a reporting avenue in the event of attacks on journalists, recorded 10 such attacks, including physical attacks, threats of physical attacks, insults, including attacks on personal or professional integrity, and pressures through superiors. The victims included journalists with the national public broadcaster RTV Slovenia, local media, non-profit investigative media, as well as student media. The number of reported attacks was lower in comparison with the recent past, as 15 attacks were reported in 2023, 20 in 2022, while 33 attacks were reported in 2021.⁵²

In 2024, protests organised by opposition parties were the sites of physical attacks against journalists. In December, the car of an RTV Slovenia crew was attacked by supporters of the opposition leader Janez Janša, president of the Social Democratic Party, in front of the Celje court where Janša is standing trial. The supporters gathered to protest what they and the party president called an “injustice system”.⁵³ RTV Slovenia said in a public statement that

49 For more information see Valicon website with poll results at <https://www.valicon.net/sl/2024/11/valicon-ogledalo-slovenije-jesen-2024/>.

50 European Union, Standard Eurobarometer 102 - Autumn 2024, 2024, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3215>

51 Evropska komisija, Standardni Eurobarometer 102: Oktober 2024 - Nacionalno poročilo: Slovenija, 2024.

52 Journalists' Association of Slovenia, Report an Attack, <https://novinar.com/prijavi-napad/>.

53 The Slovenia Times, *Janša supporters rally against “injustice system”*, The Slovenia times, 12 December 2024, <https://sloveniatimes.com/41906/jansa-supporters-rally-against-injustice-system>.

the attack was an unacceptable behaviour that jeopardises the safety of the public broadcaster's staff. The public broadcaster also called on the authorities to protect journalists: "The physical assault on media workers is an unacceptable and grave attack on media freedom and democratic values. Such acts have no place in our society and the competent authorities must act swiftly and decisively."⁵⁴ The police dealt with the alleged offender at the site and issued a statement afterwards.⁵⁵

Another physical attack took place in December 2024 when a photographer of the weekly magazine *Mladina*, Gašper Lešnik, was attacked by the supporters of the Pensioners' Voice party at one of their protests against the current government. It is a non-parliamentary party established in early 2024 after organising, in 2023, a series of protests, firstly acting as an informal group and then as a formal association. It is led by a former MP of the Slovenian Democratic Party, Pavle Rupar. The participants of the protests under his leadership had already attacked journalists in May 2023. A participant in the December 2024 protest grabbed the photographer's camera strap,

urging him to delete the pictures and refusing to let him go until the police intervened. "I was lucky that the police intervened quickly,"⁵⁶ said the photographer. The Slovenian Association of Journalists condemned both attacks, and their photographers' section wrote: "Photojournalists play a key role in society by documenting events such as protests and thus contributing to public information. Any attack on photojournalists, cameramen or journalists is unacceptable and in complete contradiction with the fundamental principles of freedom of expression and journalistic work."⁵⁷

Apart from the prohibition of installing intrusive surveillance software on any device used by journalists, a provision transposed from the European Media Freedom Act, the proposed draft Mass Media Act introduces no specific measures supporting or promoting the safety of journalists.

The Slovenian Association of Journalists has continued to carry out various initiatives to increase the safety of journalists. They maintain the online platform 'Report Attack' and provide, in cooperation with a law firm, free first legal advice in case of attacks. The 2024 attempts by the association

54 T. L. Š., B. R., *RTV obsoja napad na svoje zaposlene*. "Gre za povsem nesprejemljivo ravnanje.", rtv slo.si, 27 November 2024, <https://www.rtv slo.si/slovenija/rtv-obsoja-napad-na-svoje-zaposlene-gre-za-povsem-nesprejemljivo-ravnanje/728771>.

55 T. L. Š., B. R., *RTV obsoja napad na svoje zaposlene*. "Gre za povsem nesprejemljivo ravnanje.", rtv slo.si, 27 November 2024, <https://www.rtv slo.si/slovenija/rtv-obsoja-napad-na-svoje-zaposlene-gre-za-povsem-nesprejemljivo-ravnanje/728771>.

56 Luka Volk, *Napad na fotoreporterja Mladine*, mladina.si, 27 December 2024, <https://www.mladina.si/237544/napad-na-fotoreporterja-mladine/>.

57 Luka Volk, *Napad na fotoreporterja Mladine*, mladina.si, 27 December 2024, <https://www.mladina.si/237544/napad-na-fotoreporterja-mladine/>.

to obtain the support of the Ministry of Culture for follow-up activities on the safety of journalists such as legal support, training and protocols, and cooperation with safety experts, in recent years financed by the Network of European Foundations, have not been successful. An initiative to establish a working group on the safety of journalists, with the participation of the Ministry of Culture, has been recently considered.⁵⁸

In 2024, journalists with the investigative portal Necenzurirano were targeted by another lawsuit filed by Rok Snežič, a tax expert close to former Prime Minister Janez Janša. He has been using SLAPPs against the Necenzurirano newsroom for four years. In November 2024, in an article published after the 52nd amongst these lawsuits was initiated, the editorial board wrote: “The theatre of the absurd goes on. Rok Snežič continues to file a series of lawsuits, not seeking justice, but wanting to financially drain our media. All the lawsuits he has filed are more or less the same. They are three or four pages long, usually revolving around one sentence from our articles, even though Snežič loses every case. But he does it because he can. He makes a mockery of

everyone, both the courts and the state, for which he is officially a social case.”⁵⁹

In October 2024, the government made steps towards transposing the Anti-SLAPP Directive when it approved the preliminary framework for drafting legislation on preventing SLAPP lawsuits, prepared by the Ministry of Justice.⁶⁰ According to the government statement, the preliminary framework envisages that the legislation will be broader in scope than the directive and will apply not only to cross-border cases but also to national cases. Also, it shall be examined whether the rules against SLAPPs can be laid down in such a manner as to apply to criminal proceedings involving offences related to honour and reputation, and not only to civil proceedings, as required by the directive. General safeguards in court proceedings are expected to include bail, the earliest possible hearing, and support and assistance in the proceedings. In cases of abusive litigation, the bill should provide additional safeguards for the beneficiaries such as the possibility of rejecting such claims as quickly as possible following an appropriate prior substantive assessment, and reimbursement of all legal costs.⁶¹

58 Information on activities of the Slovenian Association of Journalists regarding the safety of journalists were provided by Špela Stare, Secretary General of the association, 6 January 2024.

59 Uredništvo, *Še 52. tožba Roka Snežiča: od nas zahteva 10 tisoč evrov zaradi duševnih bolečin*, necenzurirano.si, 20 November 2024, <https://necenzurirano.si/clanek/novice/rok-snezic-slapp-andreja-katic-tozbe-1383623>.

60 Republic of Slovenia, 'Government confirms starting points for legislation to prevent SLAPP lawsuits', 10 October 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-10-10-vlada-potrnila-izhodisca-zakonodaje-o-preprecevanju-slapp-tozb/>. See also A.K., STA, *Vlada nad neutemeljene tožbe za osebe, ki se javno udeležujejo*, 24ur.com, 10 October 2024, <https://www.24ur.com/novice/slovenija/vlada-nad-neutemeljene-tozbe-za-osebe-ki-se-javno-udejstvujejo.html>.

61 Republic of Slovenia, 'Government confirms starting points for legislation to prevent SLAPP lawsuits', 10 October 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-10-10-vlada-potrnila-izhodisca-zakonodaje-o-preprecevanju-slapp-tozb/>.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

Key recommendations

- *The government ministries should respect national provisions related to public consultations in the process of adopting laws and regulations.*

Process for preparing and enacting laws

The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted in 2009 a Resolution on Legislative Regulation.⁶² The resolution was aimed at improving standards for drafting laws and regulations. Among other things, the resolution in question provides for minimum standards as regards public consultations, with a minimum period of 30 to 60 days budgeted for consultation with the public. The Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia were later also amended to include the provision related to the minimum period for public consultations.⁶³

The Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS) established a violation meter, a mechanism to monitor the frequency of violations of provisions related to public consultations. This mechanism captures regulations for which the

resolution stipulates a minimum time for public consultations. It also captures other acts for which such consultations are provided in the government rules of procedure. After taking office from 1 June 2022 until 23 December 2024, data gathered through this monitoring mechanism revealed that the current government did not respect provisions concerning public consultations in 63% of the cases. The former government, in office from 13 March 2020 until 1 June 2022, did not respect the relevant provisions in 70% of the cases.⁶⁴

Electoral Framework

Until 2024, persons who reached the age of 18 did not have the right to vote and to stand for election if the court decided when they were placed under guardianship that they were not capable of understanding the meaning, purpose and effects of elections. On 30 January 2024, the National Assembly passed amendments to the National Assembly Election Act

62 National Assembly of Slovenia, Resolution on legislative regulation (Resolucija o normativni dejavnosti), 19 November 2009.

63 Government of the Republic of Slovenia, Rules of procedure of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (Poslovnik Vlade Republike Slovenije).

64 For more information see the CNVOS website on <https://www.cnvos.si/stevec-krsitev/>.

which did away with this practice. The adopted amendments grant both active and passive voting rights in parliamentary elections to persons deprived of legal capacity (i.e. persons under guardianship). Provisions governing assistance in voting at polling stations have also been modified to capture more persons with disabilities. The amendment sets out that a voter with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment may bring a person of their choice to the polling station to help them. The assistant must respect the free will of the voter and provide for the secrecy of the vote. The electoral committee decides on the voter's right to an assistant. Already initiated procedures concerning the right to vote in proceedings on the placement of an adult under guardianship that have not yet been legally completed by the date of entry into force of the amendments shall be halted. Legally binding court decisions by which persons of legal age were deprived of legal capacity or over whom the parental rights of parents or other persons were extended beyond their majority, or placing them under guardianship, shall be annulled in the part relating to the deprivation of the right to vote

or to stand as a candidate in an election. The voting register shall be adjusted accordingly. Following the principle of equality, relevant provisions of other election laws have been modified, including, for instance, the Election of Members of the European Parliament from the Republic of Slovenia Act.

Citizens of other EU Member States who have reached the age of 18 by the election day and have a permanent residence permit and registered permanent residence in the Republic of Slovenia or have a certificate of registered residence and a registered temporary residence in the Republic of Slovenia, are no longer obliged to produce evidence that their voting right has not been revoked in the EU Member States. Regardless of possible loss of voting rights in another EU Member State, they are free to fully exercise their right to vote and stand as candidates in EU elections in Slovenia, the same as Slovenian citizens.⁶⁵ The 2024 European Parliament elections were the first election held in Slovenia allowing for the participation of all adults.

65 National Assembly of Slovenia, National Assembly election act (*Zakon o volitvah v državni zbor*), 10 September 1992, and subsequent modifications; National Assembly of Slovenia, Election of Members of the European Parliament from the Republic of Slovenia act (*Zakon o volitvah poslancev iz Republike Slovenije v Evropski parlament*), 25 October 2002, and subsequent modifications.

CIVIC SPACE –

Key recommendations

- *The funding authorities should provide transparent procedures for awarding funds to the NGO sector and should honour the outcomes of procedures where no failures on the part of applicants have been established.*
- *The authorities, including law enforcement, should further provide for the unhindered right to public gatherings and safety at public gatherings. Attention should be given to public gatherings involving historically vulnerable groups of the population. Violent acts against such gatherings should be resolutely prosecuted.*

Freedom of association

In spring 2023, the Ministry of Public Administration launched a public call for funding NGO projects aimed at fostering public participation, enhancing advocacy skills, and promoting democratic governance, transparency, and active citizenship.⁶⁶ The process became controversial, leading to the minister's resignation in autumn.⁶⁷ A group of NGOs, including the national umbrella organisation, criticised the minister over alleged irregularities, such as adjustments to tender conditions after

evaluations, personal and familial ties to fund recipients, and the sudden replacement of the tender commission's head mid-process. These issues eroded trust in public calls for funding and tarnished the NGO sector's reputation.⁶⁸ In January 2024, citing ongoing internal and external oversight procedures, not expected to be completed shortly, the new minister annulled the call entirely,⁶⁹ leaving successful applicants without their promised funding. In February 2024, a coalition of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Slovenia filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of Public

66 Republic of Slovenia, 'Public call for proposals for strengthening active civil rights and empowering NGOs in this area - CANCELLED', 24 March 2023, <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/javne-objave/javni-razpis-za-sofinanciranje-projektov-za-krepitev-aktivnih-drzavljskih-pravic-in-opolnomočenje-nvo-na-tem-področju/>.

67 Ministry of Public Administration (2023), Ministrica Ajanović Hovnik se je v odstopni izjavi zahvalila tudi zaposlenim za korektno sodelovanje, public release, 6 October 2023.

68 CNVOS, 'Call for the resignation of Minister of Public Administration Sanja Ajanović Hovnik', 6 October 2023, <https://www.cnvos.si/novice/3416/poziv-k-odstopu-ministrice-za-javno-upravo-sanje-ajanovic-hovnik/>.

69 Ministry of Public Administration (2024), Obvestilo v zvezi z javnim razpisom za krepitev aktivnih državljskih pravic in opolnomočenje NVO, public release, 16 January 2024.

Administration, challenging the annulment of the public call. They contend that the ministry misapplied substantive law governing public calls and violated procedural rules. Specifically, the ministry cited the Public Finance Act and the Rules on Procedures for the Implementation of the Budget of the Republic of Slovenia as the basis for annulment. These provisions, however, do not stipulate the annulment of a call, particularly when recipients have already been selected. Additionally, the ministry failed to invite the selected organisations to conclude contracts concurrently with the issuance of selection decisions, as required by the aforementioned rules. The organisations also claim that the ministry acted arbitrarily, infringing upon their right to equal protection under Article 22 of the Constitution, which prohibits arbitrary conduct by public authorities. They highlight the lack of a proper legal basis for the annulment as evidence of this arbitrariness.

The NGOs are seeking a ruling from the Administrative Court to declare the ministry's annulment decision unlawful and to overturn it entirely. They believe such a judgment would rectify the violations of their rights and help prevent similar infractions in the future. This legal action follows unsuccessful appeals and discussions with the ministry, during which the NGOs emphasised that the annulment decision did not affect individual selection decisions already issued. Despite a meeting with

the Minister of Public Administration, who expressed regret over the situation, the ministry maintained its stance on the annulment, citing the protracted nature of review procedures as justification.⁷⁰ The Administrative Court dismissed the lawsuit but acknowledged that the legal position of the petitioners did not change and that decisions on the selection of projects were still valid. The NGOs once again requested the conclusion of the relevant contracts but were rejected by the ministry, so they are currently planning to file for administrative enforcement. There was also another group of NGOs that were successful in this public call which filed civil lawsuits requesting the conclusion of contracts or payment of compensation. This case is still pending.⁷¹

Freedom of peaceful assembly

Although less frequently compared to 2023, participants in the 2024 Ljubljana Pride Parade were again victims of incidents motivated by hate based on homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. A dedicated report analysed 22 such incidents (21 taking place during the day of the parade – from 10 AM on 15 June to 5 AM on 16 June – and one taking place on 17 June). According to the report, males represented an overall majority of alleged perpetrators. Almost half of the incidents took place between 2 and 6 PM, mostly outside the official sites. Reports indicate that during this

70 Pravna mreža za varstvo demokracije, 'Nevladne organizacije zoper državo vložile tožbo zaradi razveljavitve razpisa', 16 February 2024 <https://pravna-mreza.si/nevkladne-organizacije-zoper-dzavo-vlozile-tozbo/>.

71 Information provided by a representative of PIC – Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, 13 January 2025.

period, groups of mostly younger men threw eggs at people they suspected were participants in the parade, sprayed them with water pistols, spat on them, poured beer on them, pulled parade flags from their bags and backpacks, insulted them, incited intolerance, and threatened them with physical harm and death. Existing descriptions of incidents suggest that these were organised groups at work. At an official parade site, some participants were further targeted with pepper spray. While in 2023, the police did poorly to protect participants in the parade, the year 2024 saw more appropriate and effective cooperation between organisers and the police. However, according to the report, police officers present at the scene should be able to more effectively assess the circumstances of the incidents and apply aggravating penalties in cases involving intolerance due to, for example, sexual orientation.⁷²

Attacks and harassment

In 2024, the Slovenian Democratic Party, which is the largest opposition party and the second largest party in the current parliament, and the winning party in the last EP elections, as well as its leader continued to be involved in spreading negative stereotypes and in smearing civil society organisations. This seems to be a regular feature of the party's functioning in

recent years. Both by the party and its media ecosystem, civil society organisations and their activities are often portrayed as being without value for society or being blamed for societal problems. Via X (formerly Twitter), a platform which frequently serves such purposes, the party leader often led by example. For example, commenting on the European citizens' initiative for safe and accessible abortion, started by the 8th of March Institute, a Slovenian NGO, the party leader related that it was a Soros campaign for the disintegration of Europe carried out under a simple formula, namely as few births as possible and as many illegal migrants as possible. According to this politician, nothing changes culture, customs, lifestyle and identity more than Great Replacement.⁷³

In another comment regarding the decision on the simultaneous implementation of the EP election and several referenda in Slovenia, the party leader suggested that next time prohibition of budget funding of non-humanitarian NGOs should be on the agenda.⁷⁴ A local youth branch of the party, campaigning for a party candidate in the EP election, posted on X that non-governmental organisations were leftist paramilitaries and that this should be resisted.⁷⁵ In the party's media ecosystem civil society organisations are often depicted, in a formulaic manner, as privileged and parasitic.

72 Eva Gračanin, *Poročilo o incidentih s sovražnim nagibom na Paradi ponosa 2024*, Društvo Parada ponosa, 2024.

73 Janez Janša, X, 23 April 2024, <https://x.com/JJansaSDS/status/1782767764094001648>. The Southern Poverty Law Center, 'The Racist 'Great Replacement' Conspiracy Theory Explained', 17 May 2022, <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hate-watch/racist-great-replacement-conspiracy-theory-explained/>.

74 Janez Janša, X, 2 May 2024, <https://x.com/JJansaSDS/status/1785974970746622053>.

75 SDM Kranj, X, 13 May 2024, https://x.com/sdm_kranj/status/1789987571964977375.

For example, according to these outlets, public calls for funding CSO activities prove that CSO work is the most profitable activity in the country, and not that of the entrepreneur,

craftsman or worker who earns their daily bread and contributes to prosperity, but those of the parasite — the one who takes from them.⁷⁶

76 C.Š., *Nov – kar 12,6-milijonski – razpis za “nevladnike”*, nova24tv.si, 9 June 2024, <https://nova24tv.si/lnov-kar-12-milijonski-razpis-za-nevladnike/>; Marko Puš, *Parazitske nevladne organizacije*, Demokracija.si, 24 February 2024, <https://demokracija.si/komentar/parazitske-nevladne-organizacije/>; A.H., *Nov “plačni dan” za nevladnike*, nova24tv.si, 9 October 2024.

DISREGARD OF HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS AND OTHER SYSTEMIC ISSUES AFFECTING THE RULE OF LAW ENVIRONMENT

Key recommendations

- *The state should establish accessible and fair legal pathways to status regularisation for the erased and other long-term irregularly staying migrants. The state should re-open and review special legislation on access to permanent residence so that all those who were erased can regularise their status, regardless of where they currently reside. Such a law should not impose any restrictive conditions and must have an open deadline for applications. The country should also adopt additional measures of fair redress for all erased people that include compensation and appropriate healthcare, social welfare and pension measures. The state should establish a special legal pathway for regularising the status of long-term irregularly staying migrants, respecting the right to private and family life enshrined in Article 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights. Such remedy should provide for an effective pathway to a permanent regularisation of their status, allowing free access to the labour market, health and social care, etc.*
- *The state should establish by law a dedicated statelessness determination procedure (SDP) and protection status in line with norms and good practice, to give full effect to the rights under the 1954 Convention for stateless persons in Slovenia. There should be equal access to SDPs regardless of residence or documentation status, language, gender, ability, age, or any other aspect of identity or circumstances. Also, Slovenia should assume its responsibility and immediately ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.*
- *The state should immediately address the problem of over crowdedness in Slovenian prisons, including by amending Article 308 of the Criminal Code so that sentences are reverted to the level before the 2020 amendment.*

Systemic human rights violations

In 2024, the police processed 44,375 irregular border crossings (97% involving border

crossings from Croatia). The number is 20% lower compared to 2023. Most often, citizens of Syria were processed, followed by citizens of Afghanistan, Morocco and Turkey. In 2024,

42,673 intentions to apply for international protection were recorded,⁷⁷ while 5,173 asylum applications were lodged, and only 175 people were granted international protection in 2024.⁷⁸ 258 persons were accepted by foreign security authorities to Slovenia, while 141 foreigners were handed over to foreign security authorities (most to Croatian) on the basis of international readmission agreements.⁷⁹ The persons returned to Croatia are at risk of violence and inhumane treatment, and further chain return to Bosnia and Herzegovina or Serbia.

In 2024, there was an increased number of very young unaccompanied children – between five and 10 years old – on the move recorded. Last year saw a lack of legal guardians that the state appoints *ex officio* to each unaccompanied minor. Per the relevant legislation, each legal guardian should not represent more than five children, however, in practice, it happens that one legal guardian is representing up to 15 children at the same time. In 2024, there was a lack of new candidates for this function,

and the training for new legal guardians was not even implemented. On a positive note, a special accommodation centre for unaccompanied children was established. Since April, all unaccompanied migrant children (those who have declared their intention to claim asylum, asylum seekers, persons with international protection, and so-called “irregular” migrants) are being placed in the same centre in Postojna.⁸⁰ This facility, however, is not without its significant issues. For example, there is a staff shortage and no separate departments for girls and other particularly vulnerable children have been set up.

Despite lower numbers compared to the previous year, significant difficulties in accommodating people on the move remain, as the existing accommodation facilities are ill-suited to accommodate larger groups of people. There were attempts to open new reception centres in Obrežje and in Središče ob Dravi (close to the Croatian border), but local communities have protested such developments.⁸¹

77 Republic of Slovenia Ministry of Interior, Statistical reports on illegal migration, <https://www.policija.si/o-slovenski-policiji/statistika/mejna-problematika/nedovoljene-migracije-na-obmocju-republike-slovenije>.

78 Republic of Slovenia, Immigration to Slovenia, <https://www.gov.si/podrocja/drzava-in-druzba/priseljevanje-v-slovenijo/>.

79 Republic of Slovenia Ministry of Interior, Statistical reports on illegal migration, <https://www.policija.si/o-slovenski-policiji/statistika/mejna-problematika/nedovoljene-migracije-na-obmocju-republike-slovenije>.

80 Sabrina Mulec, *V Centru za mladoletnike brez spremstva v Postojni vse nared za sprejem prvih stanovalcev*, rtv slo. si, 27 March 2024, <https://www.rtv slo. si/ slovenija/ v-centru-za-mladoletnike-brez-spremstva-v-postojni-vse-nared-za-sprejem-prvih-stanovalcev/703013>.

81 STA, N1, *Na vlado prinesli skoraj 7.000 podpisov proti azilnemu domu na Obrežju*, n1info.si, 11 April 2024, <https://n1info.si/novice/slovenija/na-vlado-prinesli-skoraj-7-000-podpisov-proti-azilnemu-domu-na-obrezju/>; STA, *Minister Poklukar v Središču ob Dravi: stališče glede azilnega doma niso zblížali*, n1info.si, 9 April 2024, <https://n1info.si/novice/slovenija/minister-poklukar-v-srediscu-ob-dravi-stalisc-glede-azilnega-doma-niso-zblizali/>.

The length of the asylum procedures is another issue of concern. According to Article 47 of the International Protection Act, the decision should be made at the latest within six months from the lodging of the application, or in two months in accelerated procedures. However, in practice, these deadlines are mostly not respected, and the duration of the procedure is seen as one of the biggest shortcomings of the Slovenian asylum system.⁸²

The situation in the field of migration and asylum additionally underlines the need for additional complementary legal pathways that will provide for a safe arrival and access to the international protection procedure. This would save people in need of protection from irregular dangerous and costly routes, often exploitation, violence and risks of trafficking in human beings.⁸³

Related to the state asylum and migration policies is the increasingly higher percentage of foreign nationals in Slovenian prisons, resulting in their considerable overcrowding.⁸⁴

Both are the consequence of the 2020 amendment to the Criminal Code, which significantly increased the penalty for the criminal offence of illegal crossing of the state border or territory — smuggling of undocumented migrants (Article 308).⁸⁵ Among experts and human rights activists there is a concern that the stricter penalties for smugglers (who are dominantly foreigners) imposed by Criminal Code amendments are too high or even draconian and in combination with the prison overcrowding, lack of prison staff and language barriers could lead to a situation when the rehabilitative component of imprisonment is not accomplished. Smugglers account for more than 50% of detainees and around 30% of convicts in Slovenian prisons.⁸⁶ In 2024, the police arrested 524 persons accused of smuggling.⁸⁷

More than half of the 25,671 erased did not receive any form of redress, neither the restitution of the status they were illegally deprived of nor the financial compensation for the damage suffered. The erasure from the register of permanent residents implemented by the

82 Urša Regvar, Lana Krznarič, *Asylum Information Database – Country report: Slovenia – 2023 Update*, ECRE, 2024.

83 Maja Ladić, Iza Thaler, Katarina Vučko, Urša Regvar, *Priporočila za uvedbo programov zasebnega sponzorstva v Sloveniji*, Peace Institute, 2023.

84 Republic of Slovenia, Occupancy of institutions for serving prison sentences and re-education homes, 15 January 2024, <https://www.gov.si/assets/organi-v-sestavi/URSIKS/Dokumenti/Zaporska-statistika/2024/Stevilo-zaprtih-oseb-in-zasedenost-zavodov-dne-15.-1.-2024.pdf>.

85 National Assembly of Slovenia, Criminal Code (Kazenski zakonik), 20 May 2008, and subsequent modifications.

86 Gregor Cerar, *Slovenski zapori so iz dneva v dan bolj prezasedeni, najbolj jih polnijo tihotapci ljudi*, rtvslo.si, 29 January 2024, <https://www.rtvsl.si/slovenija/slovenski-zapori-so-iz-dneva-v-dan-bolj-prezasedeni-najbolj-jih-polnijo-tihotapci-ljudi/696267>.

87 G. K., *Nezakonitih migracij je vse manj, na Zahodnem Balkanu je 80-odstotni upad*, rtvslo.si, 28 December 2024, <https://www.rtvsl.si/slovenija/nezakonitih-migracij-je-vse-manj-na-zahodnem-balkanu-80-odstotni-upad/731800>

administrative bodies of the Republic of Slovenia was an arbitrary act that did not have any basis in the law. With the loss of status, they also lost all economic and social rights tied to permanent resident status. In Slovenia, there are still some erased persons who live in Slovenia without regulated status since the erasure, i.e., over 32 years. The remedies available to them are ineffective. The special law intended for the regularisation of the permanent residence of the erased people expired in 2013 and ever since, there has been no remedy that would provide for a permanent residence status. The distress of the erased people without a status in the country is severe, many of them are elderly and sick people, who, without permanent residence, are ineligible for any form of social protection or benefits.

In 2023, the NGOs Peace Institute, Civil Initiative of Erased Activists and Amnesty International Slovenia, in cooperation with the Office of the President of the Republic of Slovenia, drafted a legal proposal that would provide for status regularisation to all who were erased, removing the obstacles that have prevented many erased persons from regularising

their status in the past. The President of the Republic sent the proposal to the Prime Minister, who in March 2024 responded only in the media.⁸⁸ In the statement, the Prime Minister expressed support for the proposal, but at the same time linked it to the decision of the Constitutional Court, which at the time was deciding on a constitutional appeal against an article of the 2010 Status Act. The Constitutional Court subsequently found no unconstitutionality in this case,⁸⁹ and the government did not respond further to the NGOs' proposal.

In December, the President of the Republic of Slovenia awarded the erased the recognition for work in the field of human rights, which gave some moral satisfaction to at least some of the erased people.⁹⁰ At the award ceremony, the President stated that the award was another attempt to encourage the government to finally address the problems of the erased. In the same month, the government approved amendments to the Social Welfare Act to allow the erased to be placed in crisis accommodation in elderly homes. The new law aims to address urgent cases, including those of the erased who lack residence documents.⁹¹

88 Peter Petrovčič, *Končno poprava krivic izbrisanim?*, mladina.si, 1 March 2024, <https://www.mladina.si/231091/koncno-poprava-krivic-izbrisanim/>.

89 Constitutional Court (Republic of Slovenia), For more information, Decision of 6 February 2024 No. U-I-465/22-13, Up-1038/19-33, <https://www.us-rs.si/odlocba-ustavnega-sodisca-st-u-i-465-22-up-1038-19-z-dne-6-2-2024/>.

90 G. K., *Pirc Musar priznanje za delo na področju človekovih pravic podelila izbrisanim*, rtvslo.si, 10 December 2024, <https://www.rtvsl.si/slovenija/pirc-musar-priznanje-za-delo-na-podrocju-clovekovih-pravic-podelila-izbrisanim/730138>.

91 Republic of Slovenia, '133rd regular session of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia', 18 December 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-12-18-133-redna-seja-vlade-republike-slovenije/>.

Another group without an effective pathway to status regularisation are the long-term irregularly staying migrants, who have resided in the country without status for longer periods. Currently, permission to stay under Article 73 of the Foreigners Act, is the only legal solution to status regularisation of persons, who have resided in the country for years, sometimes decades, and thus created in Slovenia their centre of life interests, social and cultural ties, and possibly (but not necessarily) family ties. Under the cited provision, the police may issue permission of stay to foreigners, whose removal from the country is currently not possible, for limited statutory reasons. Protection of private and family life is not reflected in these statutory grounds. For the majority of the long-term irregularly staying migrants, this solution was ineffective in practice.⁹²

The issue of statelessness has generally been ignored by Slovenian authorities and there is no reliable data about the number of stateless persons residing in the country. While Slovenia is a party to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, Slovenia did not accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Slovenia does not have a dedicated statelessness determination

procedure, there is no stateless protection status and no obligation in law to consider a claim of statelessness, nor clear instructions, guidance or training for officials conducting the assessment. Furthermore, in other administrative procedures, the burden of proof is on the applicant, the standard of proof is very high, and legal aid is only available for judicial review. Existing research also shows that people claiming to be stateless will face the presumption of having another citizenship or being able to apply for one in another country and the public officials will refer them to embassies of other countries rather than considering their statelessness as a relevant circumstance. Stateless persons face a heightened risk of arbitrary detention particularly where procedural safeguards to identify and determine statelessness and related barriers to removal are lacking.⁹³ There are also significant gaps in existing safeguards that should protect children from statelessness. The safeguard in nationality law to prevent statelessness among children born in Slovenia relies on the status of the parents rather than the child.⁹⁴ The parents of a stateless child born on the territory must also be stateless (or unknown) for the child to acquire Slovenian citizenship.

92 Human Rights Ombudsman (Slovenia), Annual Report of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia for 2018 (Letno poročilo Varuha človekovih pravic Republike Slovenije za leto 2018), 2019, https://www.theioi.org/downloads/c1kn/Slovenia_HR%20OM_NPM%20Report_2018_EN.pdf.

93 European Network on Statelessness, *Protecting Stateless Persons from Arbitrary Detention: An Agenda for Change*, 2017, https://www.statelessness.eu/sites/www.statelessness.eu/files/attachments/resources/ENS_LockeInLimbo_Detention_Agenda_online.pdf.

94 National Assembly of Slovenia, Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia act (Zakon o državljanstvu Republike Slovenije), 5 June 1991, and subsequent modifications.

Other systemic issues

The marginalisation of Roma communities is a recurrent issue in Slovenia. They often face exclusion, bias discrimination and are at risk of experiencing hate crime.⁹⁵ They mostly live in segregated settlements, often without basic infrastructure, the majority of them do not complete even primary school and are unemployed.⁹⁶ Around 20% of Roma settlements in Slovenia do not have access to clean drinking water. According to Amnesty International Slovenia, in cases when municipalities are not willing to ensure such access, the state must do so (especially having enshrined the right to water in the Slovenian Constitution).⁹⁷

The year 2024 was marked by a wave of calls for repressive measures against the Roma communities in the southeast municipalities

in Slovenia, which was sparked by an incident in June involving a Roma student in a primary school in the Brežice municipality.⁹⁸ Several local communities have organised protests against Roma, and mayors of several municipalities have also continuously emphasised the criminality and security issues. The Human Rights Ombudsman has publicly condemned their rhetoric.⁹⁹

In the summer of 2024, tensions escalated as locals suggested forming militias,¹⁰⁰ police increased their presence in Roma areas,¹⁰¹ and political parties (SDS, NSi, and SD) sought to use the events to gain political capital.¹⁰² For example, the NSi proposed stricter Criminal Code amendments targeting younger juvenile offenders, which was later rejected.¹⁰³ In August, Ribnica officials conditioned connecting Roma settlements to public water supplies

95 Iza Thaler, Katarina Vučko, Maja Ladić, *Hata crime in Slovenia: National report*, Peace Institute, 2023.

96 For more information see the Amnesty of Slovenia website at <https://www.amnesty.si/romi>.

97 STA, *NGOs wants govt to ensure water access for all Roma villages*, sta.si, 19 November 2024, <https://english.sta.si/3364828/ngos-wants-govt-to-ensure-water-access-for-all-roma-villages>

98 STA, *Calls for govt to tackle Roma issues continue*, sta.si, 4 July 2024, <https://english.sta.si/3318846/calls-for-govt-to-tackle-roma-issues-continue?q=roma>.

99 M. Z., Al. Ma., *Ribniški župan v odzivu na kritike varuha človekovih pravic povabil na "doživetje v romsko naselje"*, rtvslo.si, 27 august 2024, <https://www.rtvsl.si/slovenija/ribniski-zupan-v-odzivu-na-kritike-varuha-clovekovih-pravic-povabil-na-dozivetje-v-romsko-naselje/719183>.

100 STA, *Interior Ministry officials visit communities facing Roma-perpetrated crime*, sta.si, 17 July 2024, <https://english.sta.si/3323286/interior-ministry-officials-visit-communities-facing-roma-perpetrated-crime?q=roma>.

101 STA, *Police bolster presence in Roma-populated areas in Slovenia*, sta.si, 23 August 2024, <https://english.sta.si/3334906/police-bolster-presence-in-roma-populated-areas-in-slovenia?q=roma>.

102 Uroš Esih, *Poslanci so poleti odkrili romsko problematiko*, delo.si, 8 august 2024, <https://www.delo.si/novice/slovenija/poslanci-so-poleti-odkrili-romsko-problematiko>.

103 M. Z., *NSi predlaga zaostritev zakonodaje, po kateri bi bil zapor možen tudi za mlajše mladoletnike*, rtvslo.si, 20 August 2024, <https://www.rtvsl.si/slovenija/nsi-predlaga-zaostritev-zakonodaje-po-kateri-bi-bil-zapor-mozen-tudi-za-mlajse-mladoletnike/718507>.

with the Roma meeting obligations and joining integration efforts.

In September 2024, the working group for dealing with the Roma issues,¹⁰⁴ whose task is primarily to monitor the implementation of the National Program of Measures for the Roma for the period 2021-2030,¹⁰⁵ formed a sub-group¹⁰⁶ that focuses on the security issues.¹⁰⁷ This was the first of the three priorities of this working group, the other two being "attending primary school" by Roma children and alleged "inappropriate spending of social welfare allowances".

In October, a round table on the expansion of police powers was organised by the Ministry of the Interior. The Minister stated that there will be no general or radical changes to the relevant legislation but technical updates to the powers will be made, with details remaining unclear.¹⁰⁸

In December, the government endorsed amendments to the Financing of Municipalities Act to reduce development gaps and set out criteria to ensure dedicated spending of funding for Roma communities and a blueprint of measures that include the promotion of integration of Roma children and efforts to improve living conditions in Roma villages.¹⁰⁹ The government plans amendments to several laws, namely the Act on the Roma Community to improve living conditions, the Kindergartens Act to boost Roma children's inclusion before primary school, and the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act to remove extra child allowance for children under four not enrolled in kindergarten. The Act on Primary Schools would extend Slovenian language and culture lessons for Roma children outside class if needed for other students' safety. Mandatory Roma coordinators in municipalities and changes to enhance police effectiveness in maintaining public order are

104 Republic of Slovenia, 'Interdepartmental working group to address Roma issues in Škocjan', 19 September 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-09-19-medresorska-delovna-skupina-za-obravnavo-romske-problematike-v-skocjanu/>.

105 Republic of Slovenia, 'The government adopted the National Programme of Measures for the Roma for the period 2021-2030', 18 December 2021, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2021-12-28-vlada-je-sprejela-nacionalni-program-ukrepov-za-rome-za-obdobje-20212030/>.

106 STA, *Ustanovljena podskupina za romsko problematiko, obenem potekal protest*, n1info.si, 19 September 2024, <https://n1info.si/novice/slovenija/ustanovljena-podskupina-za-romsko-problematiko-obenem-potekal-protest/>.

107 STA, *Focus in dealing with Roma shifts to security*, sta.si, 21 August 2024, <https://english.sta.si/3334274/focus-in-dealing-with-roma-shifts-to-security>.

108 Republic of Slovenia, 'Roundtable: New Police Powers – Yes or No?', 4 October 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-10-04-okrogla-miza-nova-policijska-pooblastila-da-ali-ne/>.

109 Republic of Slovenia, '132nd regular session of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia', 12 December 2024, <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-12-12-132-redna-seja-vlade-republike-slovenije/>.

also being considered.¹¹⁰ In the same month, The Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development published a call under which €2 million is available for basic utility infrastructure in Roma settlements in the next two years.¹¹¹

110 STA, *Govt lays the groundwork for tackling Roma issues*, sta.si, 12 December 2024, <https://english.sta.si/3373322/govt-lays-the-groundwork-for-tackling-roma-issues>.

111 Republic of Slovenia, 'Public tender for co-financing basic municipal infrastructure projects in Roma settlements in 2025 and 2026', 2 December 2024, <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/javne-objave/javni-razpis-za-sofinanciranje-projektov-osnovne-komunalne-infrastrukture-v-romskih-naseljih-v-letih-2025-in-2/>.

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**Co-funded by
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Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the granting authority - the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.