

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

# Greece

[Greece](#) | [Freedom of the Press 2012](#) | 

The constitution includes provisions for freedom of speech and the press, and citizens have access to a broad array of privately owned print and broadcast outlets. However, there are some limits on speech that incites fear, violence, and public disharmony, as well as on publications that are obscene, offend religious beliefs, or advocate violent overthrow of the political system. A 2007 media law mandates that the main transmission language of radio stations be Greek. The law also requires that radio stations keep a certain amount of money in reserve and hire a minimum number of full-time staff, which places a disproportionate burden on smaller, minority-owned stations. In September 2010, journalist Takis Michas was sued for libel by a Greek businessman over Michas's use of the term "paramilitary" to describe voluntary Greek units that were present at the 1995 Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a subject often not discussed in Greece. The case was later dropped.

Greece's growing trend of violence against journalists continued in 2011. During protests against the country's austerity plan, a number of journalists complained of physical violence by the police and by protesters, who saw them as part of the political mainstream. In June, a television and newspaper reporter, Tassos Teloglou, was attacked by protesters while he was covering an anti-austerity demonstration in Athens. In August, photographer Manolis Kypraios lost his hearing due to the blast from a stun grenade thrown at him by a police officer; Kypraios had identified himself and displayed his press card. Further violence against journalists occurred during protests in October, when several reporters and photographers were attacked by police. In 2010, men dressed in security uniforms had murdered Sokratis Giolias as he stepped out of his apartment in Athens. Giolias was a radio journalist and contributing blogger to *Troktiko*, a website known for reporting on social issues and political scandals. The murder occurred just before *Troktiko* was to publish an investigation regarding corruption in the country. It was the first assassination of a journalist in the country in 20 years.

Both public and private media in Greece are largely free from government restrictions, but state-owned stations tend to report with a progovernment bias. There are several independent newspapers and magazines, including some that portray the government unfavorably. However, many media owners have a close relationship with the government, and this is often reflected in a lack of critical commentary on key issues, including the debate surrounding financial crisis. Broadcasting is largely unregulated, and many broadcast stations are not licensed.

The financial crisis, and the resulting decline in circulation and advertising, has hit Greece's media sector hard, and jeopardized its ability to cover the crisis and the corresponding political turmoil. Many media outlets have either shut down, cut back staff and salaries, or failed to pay wages, and hundreds of journalists have lost their jobs. In November, staff of the popular Alter TV began to occupy the station's headquarters after months of unpaid salaries, forcing it off the air. In late December, the left-leaning newspaper *Eleftherotypia*—which had been established in 1975 and was Greece's

## 2012 SCORES

### PRESS STATUS

Free

### PRESS FREEDOM SCORE

30

### LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

9

### POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

15

### ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

6

second-most-popular paper—filed for bankruptcy protection. Employees at *Eleftherotypia*, which was considered a leading independent voice in the country, had not been paid since August, and went on strike in December.

Approximately 53 percent of the population accessed the internet on a regular basis in 2011, and access is generally not restricted. With the cutbacks at traditional outlets, many journalists and citizens are using new media to disseminate independent or alternative viewpoints.

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