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Freedom Of The Press - Portugal (2011)

Status: Free
Legal Environment: 5
Political Environment: 6
Economic Environment: 6
Total Score: 17

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution, and laws against insulting the government or the armed forces are rarely enforced. Some journalists argued that the 2007 revision of the federal Journalist Statute decreased the protection of confidential sources. This statute gives employers and clients the right to reuse journalists' work in any way 30 days following its first publication, gives journalists the right to remove the author's name from poorly edited publications, and gives journalists the right to reject modifications to their work. In 2010, the weekly *Sol* was fined €1.5 million (\$1.9 million) for defying a court injunction and publishing a story that included details of a wiretap of a government official. The story implicated Rui Pedro Soares, the Portuguese government's former representative on the board of the national telecommunications company Portugal Telecom, as well as Prime Minister José Sócrates and some of his associates in an attempt by Portugal Telecom to buy a controlling stake in TVI, a privately owned television station that is critical of the government. The transcripts of the wiretap allegedly show that Soares went to Madrid to negotiate the purchase, which fell through. Portugal passed an access to information law in 2003, which is in effect in addition to the 1993 Law of Access to Administrative Documents.

Cases of intimidation of journalists occur rarely, but in a minor case of harassment, Ricardo Rodrigues, the vice president of the Socialist Party, grabbed the microphones of two journalists who were interviewing him in the parliamentary library in May 2010. Rodrigues claimed psychological stress under questioning.

Portugal has six main national newspapers, four dailies and two weeklies. There are around 300 local and regional private radio stations; Radio Renascença, which is run by the Catholic Church, commands a wide listening audience. Commercial television has been making gains in recent years, providing serious competition for underfunded public broadcasting channels. As in many countries, the Portuguese media has felt the impact of the financial crisis, with advertising losses, downsizing of print circulation, and declining readership. The internet is unrestricted and about 51 percent of the population accessed it in 2010.