

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS



# Portugal

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

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution, and laws against insulting the government or the armed forces are rarely used against journalists. A 2007 revision of the Journalist Statute allows courts investigating criminal cases to order journalists to divulge their confidential sources. Lawmakers argued that the identity of sources would, in many instances, be too difficult to procure through other means, but journalists contested that the revision would effectively allow judges to make them carry out police work. The rule has not been used to date.

Portugal passed an access to information law in 2003, adding to the 1993 Law of Access to Administrative Documents. Much government information is freely accessible in practice, although laws prohibit news coverage or commentary on ongoing judicial investigations and trials.

Cases of physical harassment or intimidation of journalists are rare. In July 2011, a Lisbon court ruled in favor of the magazine *Sábado*, which had accused Ricardo Rodrigues, vice president of the Socialist Party, of violating freedom of the press. Rodrigues had grabbed the digital recorders of two journalists who were interviewing him in the parliamentary library in April 2010. The weekly *Espresso* revealed in August 2011 that senior members of the country's Strategic Defense Intelligence Service (SIED) had illegally obtained a journalist's telephone and text records. The journalist had written a story about alleged tension between SIED and the Security Intelligence Service (SIS), the country's domestic intelligence agency.

Portugal has six main national newspapers: four dailies and two weeklies. State-run and state-financed media outlets are considered to be editorially independent. There are around 300 local and regional private radio stations; Rádio Renascença, which is run by the Roman Catholic Church, commands a wide audience. Commercial television has been making gains in recent years, providing serious competition for the underfunded public broadcasting channels. As in many countries, the Portuguese media have felt the impact of the ongoing financial crisis, suffering from advertising losses and shrinking print circulation. The lack of job security for many younger journalists makes them more vulnerable to self-censorship and pressure regarding content.

The internet is unrestricted, and about 55 percent of the population accessed it in 2011. Many prominent journalists and politicians contribute to social media and blogs, but the blogosphere remains relatively undeveloped.

## 2012 SCORES

### PRESS STATUS

**Free**

### PRESS FREEDOM SCORE

**17**

### LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

**5**

### POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

**6**

### ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

**6**

