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## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

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# Portugal

[Portugal](#)[Freedom of the Press 2013](#)

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 asserted 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.

The media are generally free from political interference. However, in late January 2012 *Este Tempo*, a morning current-affairs program on the public radio station Antena 1, was unexpectedly taken off the air. The show's editors claimed the decision was linked to a report broadcast earlier in January that had criticized the

portrayal of Portuguese-Angolan relations in a program on the public television channel RTP1.

Cases of physical harassment or intimidation of journalists are rare. In March 2012, while covering street protests against austerity measures in Lisbon, Agence France-Presse (AFP) photojournalist Patricia Melo was struck by a police officer. In June, a court in Lisbon fined member of parliament Ricardo Rodrigues €4,950 (\$6,400) for stealing the recording devices of two journalists during an interview in 2010.

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. The internet in Portugal is unrestricted, and about 64 percent of the population accessed it in 2012. Many prominent journalists and politicians contribute to social media and blogs.

As in many countries, the media in Portugal have felt the impact of the ongoing economic crisis, suffering from advertising losses and shrinking print circulation. There has also been a significant influx of Angolan money into the media sector, raising concerns over ownership and independence. The lack of job security for many younger journalists makes them more vulnerable to self-censorship and pressure regarding content. In October 2012, workers at Portugal's national news agency, Lusa, went on strike—causing a news blackout for four days—after the government announced a plan to cut its state funding by 30 percent. In its 2013 budget proposal, the government also released plans to privatize Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP), the country's public broadcaster, causing an outcry from media advocacy organizations. It also proposed drastically cutting RTP's budget and reducing services.

## 2013 SCORES

### PRESS STATUS

# Free

PRESS FREEDOM SCORE

**17**

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

**5**

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

**6**

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