



Statement of the Media Board on developments concerning the Slovak Council for Media Services

Across the European Union, the independence, stability, and effective functioning of national media regulators constitute an essential pillar of democratic resilience. Independent regulatory authorities foster a pluralistic and diverse media environment, safeguard freedom of expression, thus upholding fundamental rights enshrined in EU law and contributing to the rule of law. This role is not merely aspirational; as a matter of fact, it is codified in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) and reaffirmed under the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) and by the Digital Services Act (DSA), which recognise that independence and protection of regulators from undue interference are indispensable for maintaining public trust and ensuring that oversight remains impartial.

In the light of this context, and of the collective commitment to safeguarding media regulatory independence across the Union, the Media Board addresses the current situation in Slovakia.

Background and concern

The Media Board has received information regarding the recent dismissal of the Chief Executive of the Slovak Council for Media Services. While we are not in a position to prejudge national circumstances, several aspects flagged to us, including the sudden introduction of a dismissal proposal, the narrow vote that followed, and indications of potential structural changes affecting internal safeguards, pose systemic risks and raise concerns as to their compatibility with AVMSD and DSA requirements. In this context, it should be recalled that the Chief Executive was entrusted with the external representation of the Slovak Council for Media Services and, in that capacity, served as a member of the Media Board and the European Board for Digital Services. The independence of the Media Board, including that of its members and representatives, is expressly safeguarded under Article 9 of the EMFA. In a similar fashion, Article 50 of the DSA lays down the applicable safeguards regarding the Digital Services Coordinators' independence.

The Media Board stands ready to take any steps under EU law and to cooperate with the European Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, to ensure that national regulators can carry out their tasks free from undue interference.

Relevant EU framework - Article 30(5) AVMSD, Article 9 EMFA and Article 50 DSA

The AVMSD requires Member States to ensure transparent, non-discriminatory, and clearly pre-established procedures for appointing and dismissing the heads of national media regulators. Article 30(5) of the AVMSD specifically mandates that dismissal decisions must be duly justified, subject to prior notification, and made public. These safeguards - reinforced by the EMFA - are intended to guarantee that national media regulatory authorities can operate independently and effectively across the Union. At the same time, Article 9 EMFA requires Member States to refrain from any action that could undermine the independence of the Board. Additionally, Article 50 DSA requires that the Digital Services Coordinators shall act with complete independence and remain free from any external influence.

Position of the Media Board

The Media Board expresses doubts on the compatibility with EU law of the dismissal of the Chief Executive of the Slovak Council for Media Services. In light of the information brought to our attention, and without making definitive assessments, the Media Board invites the European Commission to look into the situation in Slovakia.

Given the Union-wide importance of safeguarding regulatory independence, the Media Board encourages the Commission, in light of the Commission's responsibility as guardian of the treaties, to give particular consideration to the proper and effective application of the relevant provisions of the abovementioned laws on the independence of national regulatory authorities.