

SLOVENIA: ELECTIONS AND THE RULE OF LAW



Elections and
the #RuleofLaw

MAIN RULE OF LAW ISSUES

Media freedom: Media freedom is a major issue in Slovenia. While the situation is not yet critical, there are persisting concerns regarding the toxic work environment for journalists created by the government's hostile attitude towards media, negative rhetoric by officials, insults, threats and harassment of journalists, particularly targeting female journalists.

Many long-standing independent media outlets that are considered critical voices have lost public funding as the Ministry of Culture transferred funds to significantly smaller but government-supporting media. Similarly, the government also managed to replace almost the entire leadership structure of the public broadcasting service, Radio and Television of Slovenia. This led to the cancellation or alteration of a significant number of critical TV programmes on news and politics, regardless of their ratings. The Slovenian government has also restricted payments to the Slovenian Press Agency, bringing it to the brink of collapse.

Corruption: Corruption in Slovenia is systemic, but only around 1% of cases are investigated. It consists of politically motivated staffing in state-owned companies, conflicts of interest, bribes, and a lack of transparency throughout the country's political and economic spheres, particularly in public tenders. Even in cases in which the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption finds evidence of a breach of integrity by high officials (e.g., ministers or even the prime minister), these decisions are rejected by those investigated and no charges are filed or punitive actions taken against them. The government has also not enforced existing rules to uphold transparency and integrity in public procurement during the pandemic.

SLAPPs (Strategic lawsuits against public participation): Defamation is a criminal offence in Slovenia and is used by politicians and those in positions of power as an effective means of silencing criticism. Those critical of the government (journalists, NGOs, protesters, etc.) are not only faced with legal actions, but they are also at risk of being the targets of smear campaigns and online harassment, at times perpetrated by media outlets that support the ruling political party. Often, many complaints are filed by the same complainant against the same person. In the [case of the media outlet Necenzurirano](#), a tax expert and unofficial financial advisor to Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša filed 39 lawsuits against three of the outlet's journalists. NGOs working in the fields of environmental protection, culture, human rights, non-discrimination, and LGBTI rights, are also particularly targeted.

FURTHER READING

[European Commission Rule of Law Report 2021 on Slovenia Eurobarometer on corruption](#)

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