

# Freedom and Media

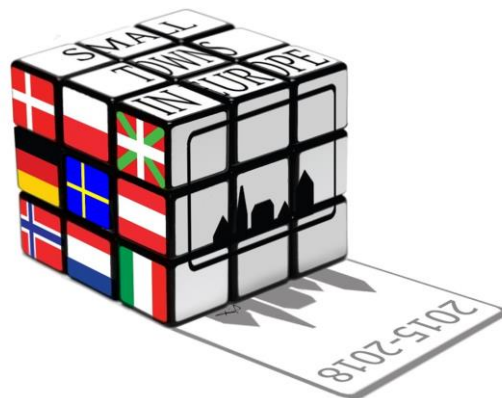
Different countries different situations



Erasmus+

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Small Towns In Europe: identity, challenges and opportunities.



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# Basque Country

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## THE MEDIA

In my country all the media is free, but there are some limits like it can't go against the honor and image rights.

In general, like public, we find out with the means, and this way we know what happens in the world. It is the fundamental work of the newspapers (be already in printed matter or in Internet), and also of the informative programs that have all the TV-radio channels (news, reportages, informative special, etc...).

Sometimes, also we form. Well be with specializing magazines, or, already in television, seeing for example documentaries of nature and science, programs of kitchen, do-it-yourself, gardening, etc... or even, more formally, following languages courses.

But especially, we amuse ourselves with everything attractive that the means offer us. Games and multimedia pages in Internet, musical in radio, and everything interesting that offers us the television: series, movies, animations, sports transmissions, contests, etc...

We need then free because if they aren't free they can't instill in the public the ideals of the proprietor.

In Spain all the media are free and there is no restriction to write about anything you want. For example, "El Intermedio" is a television program that remarks the news of the day by laughing at what happened but at the same time giving the real perspective of the news. I think this is such a good thing in our society to have the liberty to express what ever you think, without restrictions, so everyone can find or understand the real meaning of the new they just watched on TV. To save the free press in the future I think that the best way to do it is having a transparent government that don't care about anything someone writes. Media should be free in all countries around the world so everyone can get what the real new is, for example, what a political group really do.

# Germany

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## Often used word „Lügenpresse“

Lügenpresse' - roughly translated to mean 'lying press' and often shouted during Pegida rallies - was 'honoured' as the worst coinage of the year 2014. The word has been used this year to describe left-leaning media, who users allege promote their own world views rather than the truth. It has become a favourite chant among supporters of the anti-Islam Pegida movement.

But the idea is old, the 'lying press' was first used in the WW1 to denounce foreign press and later one of Goebbels (minister of Nazi regime) favourites words. He used it to adjudge his critics (mostly communist or socialist newspapers).

Since then, the concept belongs to the standard vocabulary of the extreme right in Germany. That, they use this word, which underline, that they are no Nazi, says a lot about this people.

It is a movement from the gut-instinct, one that a very good feeling for dying ideology of language, one that continues to set the border between "we" and "they" and the simple message ringing up: **Who is not in my opinion, is lying.**

But especially since the refugees crisis and the attack in Köln at new years even are more citizens agreeing with Pegidas [accusations](#) about the lying press. There aren't a lot of trustworthy source for exact figure, but it is fact that the number of people [have grave doubts about the](#) press grows. They think the press wants to force us the opinion of the government instead of giving us true information.

# Sweden

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## **1. How is the situation in your country? How is free press/media saved by government law?**

In Sweden we have a founding constitution law (Grundlagen Yttrandefrihet) that involves freedom of speech. This law is one of four that are almost unchangeable, only with a special set of votes can change them. This law prevents the government from stopping people from saying what they want, when they want it.

The freedom of writing (Pressfrihetsförordningen) is another founding constitution law. This law prevents the government from censoring our media and press. It also allows media to look into official government work, and later print it in the press.

## **2. Situation of the local press?**

The printed papers are disappearing more and more in Sweden, as we rather read our news on the Internet with instant access to the latest news than subscribing to one daily report. This results in loss of advertising and advertisers for paper news companies, which means that the paper loses a lot of money. That in turn will result in even more papers closing down, and then we have downward spiral for the local press, as well as some of the national.

We also have a problem with the owners of our papers, as it's not unusual that one company owns several newspapers in the same city. Papers in which has different political agendas. This affects the content of the news, and we might not get as much variations that a democracy needs.

## **3. What do we have to do to save the free press in the future?**

It's important not to let government take control of media, or letting them censor it. We need various places to find information and

reliable sources. We need laws to protect our rights to say and write what we want. Free press is the very base of a democratic country and democracy in the world.

We also need Public Service, PS, to get an objective view on news. PS aren't influenced by any parties, companies or anything that might change the content of the news, and is constantly watched by the people.

The Swedish population has an issue with being critical when it comes to sources. This results in disinformation, and incorrect news. It's very important that we stop this in democratic countries, because misinformed press could lead to people basing their votes on information that isn't correct.

Julia Grünfeld, Elise Holgersson, Cassandra Becker

# Austria

Press in Austria

Karl Reininger

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Freedom of press, local press and free media in the future

Freedom of press is of the utmost importance to sustain democracy. The population has to have access to sources of genuine information due to the fact that everyone has to form their own unbiased opinion in order to be able to vote. One of the key steps to achieve such a stream of information is to secure that the media is allowed to report freely about ongoing events and political decisions.

The current state of freedom of press in Austria was introduced by the council of the allied forces after World War II and the collapse of the national socialist regime. It is legally fixed in the 13<sup>th</sup> article of the constitution which says that media must not be censored.

Austria currently ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the worldwide ranking of freedom of press. Austrian free media is not endangered by brute force or direct political intervention, but by economic pressure and financial contributions of companies and political parties which hope for beneficial reports. Especially tabloids are closely tied to politics due to the fact that parties favour them when it comes to advertisement. Even though a media transparency exists, the government under Austria's chancellor Werner Faymann passes on information to some newspapers earlier than to others. This policy is justified with the high circulation of the "Kronen Zeitung", Austria's most read and widespread newspaper, and the journal "Heute", whose core readership is in Vienna.

The media concentration of Austria is the highest in all of Europe. The "Kronen Zeitung" is read daily by an average of 32% of the adult population, which results in a small variety of journals (17 in total). There are also a couple of newspapers which are only published in one federal state which leads to them having only a small market share in the whole of Austria. Most of the weekly and monthly published newspapers with a wide circulation are owned by the "NEWS Verlagsgruppe", which means that there is another concentration in the print media sector.

In general it can be seen that a large percentage of Austrian reporting is quite similar due to the fact that many articles are adapted from the Austrian press agency owing to the fact that there have been extensive economies in the newspaper sector based on the recession in the readership of print media.

## Freedom of press in the future

In order to secure the freedom of press in the future several steps must be undertaken. The most important change that must be made is that media and politics must not influence each other. Because of the widespread monopolisation in the media sector, some media corporations have achieved a high economic and journalistic influence. Due to this fact some politicians feel compelled to adjust their political behaviour to the points of view of these companies.

If political parties and press are dependent on each other, there can be no free reporting.

In general, the economic pressure on press publishing firms should be eased by making them independent from the advertisements of companies and political parties in order to guarantee unbiased reporting. This can be achieved by the state funding media companies, which would result in them being able to function autonomously without being forced to attract advertisers by reporting in their favour.

## **Austria**

Press in Austria

Markus Gattermeyer

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In Austria free press exists since late 1918. Any censorship was repealed in our country and it was put down as a privilege for every citizen. Before 1918 every text or publication verified if it agrees upon the ideas of the imperial cabinet.

Nevertheless this ruling was neglected 15 years later, in 1933, and censorship was introduced once again. Hence, Adolf Hitler was able to unite Austria with German empire without much resistance. There was no more freedom of opinion and least of all free press.

Not until the war has ended the old constitution came into force.

Today there are different compartments of press of which all are able to express their opinion and criticize whatever they want. This possibility is put down in the statute of our country.

However, most media is closely tied to a political party or a company which support them to enhance the prestige or to gain votes.

## Future press

To provide the freedom of press in our future we have to prohibit any attempt of rushing democracy. Free press is of utmost importance to sustain the democratic ideas. In addition we have to be proud of our rights and cherish our infinite possibilities of expressing our opinion. Furthermore, we have to make

sure that education is available for every citizen of our country. An educated society connotes less endangerment of democracy.

Unfortunately the internet entails also peril for free press. Topics like data preservation could provoke reversal of thinking and could contribute to a failure of democratic ideas.



## Media I use within one week

The most important item for my media consumption is my mobile phone.

When I get up in the morning I first check WhatsApp and during breakfast I listen to the radio.

During my way to school I read the newspapers in form of an app as this is more practical as printed newspapers.

In school lessons we often use the internet to look something up, to watch a film, etc.

During my way home I often check my mail and diverse messages, sometimes I watch clips on YouTube.

At home I read through the newspapers and advertisements we received by post.

Doing my homework I often use the internet for some help, for example by using an online dictionary.

If I get somewhere by car, I nearly always listen to the radio.

In the evening I communicate with my friends via WhatsApp, or play a game on my cell phone or, watch clips on YouTube, or I watch TV.

At the weekend I sometimes use the internet to check out events, but most of the time I watch TV at the weekend.

Even though I'm not registered on facebook or instagram, I spent quite a lot of time with (social) media.

## Austria: Freedom of the press

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In Austria freedom of the press is a basic law since 1<sup>st</sup> October 1945 (actually censorship was forbidden in 1918, but during WW II the situation was different). Free press is closely connected with the freedom of opinion, as journalists basically publish their own opinion. But there is also a restriction: the privacy of a person has to be protected; it is not allowed to write something, which is not proofed if it may harm the honour or reputation of a person. Free press is a privilege for us; just one out of seven people lives somewhere, where freedom of the press is guaranteed.

The Austrian government ensures a free press especially with financial support. Media pluralism is a big factor concerning this topic, and has to be ensured with different kinds of support. There has to be a counterweight to the public-service media, otherwise it is quite one-sided. A discount on postal delivery is a common way of supporting newspapers indirectly. It helps to reduce the costs, especially for smaller newspapers.

Even if the number of local newspapers decreases, there are at least two or three in my home town. They are principally free as well, but in my opinion they cannot write about everything and in any way they want, as they have to ensure a sufficient number of readers. However, it is really good that there are several papers and that we have the possibility to read different articles about the same happening.

In order to keep the situation like this, we have to ensure that small newspapers can survive as well as bigger ones. Furthermore is very important, to give prospective journalists a good education. Formation of opinion just can happen, if you read different reports about the same topic, and not only the ones supporting your own opinion. Therefore, children and young adults have to be taught that it makes sense to inform oneself in different newspapers, which may state and interpret several topics variedly. This assures a big variety of newspapers and different opinions stated in the press. As freedom of the press is anchored in the Austrian constitution, it should not be a problem to maintain it in general.

A free press is probably one of the most important things for a modern society. It is the basis for the development of one's personality, as well as guarantor for the maintenance and further development of the liberal system of the state and society. In this respect it can't be replaced by another medium. Due to free press people receive a differentiated view on the government and other organisations, and about what is going on in general. It offers food for thought and asks people to use their brain.

As media is everywhere around us, there is of course a huge offer. There are hundreds of radio stations, websites, TV channels, apps, etc., which is basically a good thing. But as each of this items has its one attitude, the news coverage is quite one-sided. This fact may harm the diversity of opinion, because the offer could be too big.

However, in my opinion a free press and free media is of utmost importance for our modern society and I couldn't imagine a life without it. There are many things to do in order to support freedom of the press and consequently the diversity of opinion.

## POLAND

### OUR OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE LOCAL MEDIA IN ELBLĄG

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The local media are responsible for local matters about the city of Elbląg, the region and the whole province. Officially, there is no pressure exerted on them, even though, sometimes local decision-makers or business people try to make their claims and hold grudges against the media or particular journalists. However, it doesn't affect publishing the news. World affairs and politics appears in the media with the same frequency as it affects the citizens. It means that the local media deal with home or foreign politics when people are talking about it, e.g. when they are going to work or in conversations with friends.

Today the media seem to be serving the viewers or listeners, which means they publish things that the recipient wants to hear, read or see. The national media are currently heavily divided as far as political views are concerned. We have a strong representation of right-wing media, for example Weekly "ABC" and "in Network" or Radio Maryja - which favour only one political option. Now, as the radical right-wing party is in power, it seems that the politicians are taking over the public media such as Polish Television or Polish Radio. It bears a serious fear that they are not going to be objective and will serve the ruling team. It is connected with, for example, the time when particular politicians are on camera.

Another observation is that nowadays all the media have tabloidising, which means they go in the direction of gossip newspapers - the scandals are what counts -because they are marketable. Fortunately, it doesn't concern all the media. There are also opinion-forming weeklies, TV and radio channels, some of them thematic e.g. TVP History or TVP Culture, which try to be objective and not so politics-oriented.

Our conclusion is that the media will be changing along with their recipients. Information in the modern society is just commodity – it must sell and it will sell as long as there will be a buyer. We believe that a way to keep the media free and independent is to keep the proper proportions and the time on camera so that each issue has is treated equally in that matter and the society is not fed with gossip or low-quality programmes.

by Natalia, Marlena, Monika and Maja

## Denmark

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### **1. How is the situation in your country? How is a free press/ media saved by government/ law? Situation of the local press?**

The Danish constitution secure the free press in Denmark. This is written in § 77: " Any person shall be at liberty to publish his ideas in print, in writing, and in speech, subject to his being held responsible in a court of law. Censorship and other preventive measures shall never again be introduced."

In general, the free press situation in Denmark is good. A report from 2009 by Reporters without Borders has investigated the degree of the free press in 175 different countries and the result was that Denmark tops the list together with Sweden, Finland, Norway and Ireland.

In Denmark, we mainly receive our news from the national radio and television and their websites. The Danish population receives 30 % of the news by the local Medias according to Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2014. Hillerød has two large, local newspapers: Hillerødposten and Frederiksborg Amts avis. Hillerødposten is a free newspaper that is financed by commercials and Frederiksborg Amts avis is owned by a bigger news agency. This is a tendency you see throughout Denmark – smaller news agencies are either financed by commercials or owned by a larger agency. This results in the smaller newspapers losing their full independency, which decreases their possibilities.

Today we have gotten access to social Medias, which has led to greater possibilities to get the news and the internet has become a democratic resource. In Denmark, the use of the cellphone to receive news feeds has increased from 43 percent in 2013 to 52 percent in 2014. The numbers for using tablets has increased from 25 to 34 percent. However, around 54 percent of the Danish population uses the computer as the most important way to get their news.

Hillerødposten and Frederiksborg Amt avis are for example to find on Facebook, where they post their news. This is very popular among the population and especially the younger generation. However, the news on Facebook can easily be shallow because people are mostly interested in understanding the point of the news. Moreover, people

tend to read the news in a superficial way and the interest in reading the news is lacking.

These are some of the difficulties, which the news' spreading face. Furthermore, this decreases the news' influence on people.

Today people are always looking for entertainment, which effect people's attitude towards the news, as described before.

## **2. What do we have to do, to save the free press in future?**

To help the press in future we have to change people's attitude towards the news. People must learn to show interest in the world around them.

In school, the students could take "News" lessons. These could be integrated in the social science classes. Thereby the news would be a natural part of their everyday.

Furthermore, the news should target at different age groups. In Denmark, we for example have a child's program on the television called *Ultra Nytt* that tells the news on the children's own terms.