



PRESS RELEASE

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The OHRID Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs, Skopje has the honour to announce the new Index report published by the international non-government organization "Freedom House". According to "Freedom House" report the funding and political influence on media remained problematic in Macedonia. Freedom House also notes that weak judiciary and high-level corruption persist in countries in transition, including Macedonia. Macedonia's rating for independent media remains at 4.25. The media situation is particularly criticized given the fact that the country has the same rating since 2004, with no signs of improvement.

Regarding the political influence on the media, the main problem has been identified as the ownership of the media; more specifically, the owners of the media are also leaders of the political parties. Problems within the media became apparently during the election process in June, where the media in Macedonia did not treat political parties equally. There is also registered violence towards the journalists, and as special problem for the journalist it is the non-transparency shown by the institutions. In regards to the corruption, it is stressed that the country has a high level of negative coefficient; but, nevertheless, it has slightly improved since 2007 and 2008 when it was scored 4.50 and 4.75. The report also finds that the judiciary continues to suffer from significant number of vacancies and unresolved cases.

The Republic of Macedonia has low scores in the area for national governance, 4.00. The most positive score Republic of Macedonia has is in the area of the development of the civil society and the influence of the non-governmental organizations, which is 3.25. It is also noted, that although the government respects and follows the rights for establishment of this kind of civil associations, it rarely invites such organizations to official events or considers their opinion. For 2009, in the area of the election process, the country has score of 3.50, which is lower than previous years. The explanation for this issue is the decreased census for the presidential elections, which is a reduction of 50 to 40 percents attendance which limits the need of the presidential candidates to win the support of the voters from different ethnic groups.

According to Freedom House in 2009 there might be possible turmoil in the ruling coalition, which will reflect pressure on the Albanian coalition partner for leaving the coalition. The interethnic relations in the country can be jeopardized from the influence of Kosovo. The government will be under pressure to make bigger economic reforms and to realize higher



economic growth, whereas the Euro – Atlantic integration and the processes related are expected to contribute for the stabilization of the country.

Freedom House, an independent nongovernmental organization that supports the expansion of freedom in the world, has been monitoring political rights and civil liberties worldwide since 1972.

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