

Portugal: Media System

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Situated in southwestern Europe, Portugal covers an area of 92,152 sq km and has a population of 10,7 million (2009 estimate). The two biggest cities are Lisbon, the capital, and Oporto. The official language is Portuguese. The literacy rate is 93 percent, and 85 percent of the population are Roman Catholic. In 2009, the country's GDP per capita was USD 20.655. Portugal is a parliamentary democracy. The Portuguese Constitution determines the complete separation of the four main organs: the president, the government, the parliament, and the courts.

Portugal has been an independent country since the twelfth century. The monarchy was overthrown in 1910, but the period of the First Republic ended in 1926 with a military coup d'état. From 1933 the nation was ruled by a repressive right-wing regime with close ties to the Catholic church, the Estado Novo. Democracy came with the 1974 leftist revolution, which also led to independence being granted to Portugal's colonies in Africa. Between 1985 and 1995, the ruling center-right Partido Social Democrático promoted the privatization of key sectors of the economy, including banking and telecommunications, a tendency that continued under subsequent Socialist Party governments. The country joined the European Union in 1986 and experienced a significant economic growth in the 1990s. However, the economy has struggled and unemployment has grown since 2001.

Following the 1974 revolution, the 1976 constitution – and its revised versions – granted *press freedom* and prohibited any forms of censorship (☒ Freedom of the Press, Concept of; Freedom of Communication). Media laws currently in place (e.g. Press Law no. 2/1999, Television Law no. 27/2007, Radio Law no. 4/2001) enshrine a pluralist view of the media (☒ Plurality) and establish a number of rights and guarantees for journalists and citizens. The Entidade Reguladora para a Comunicação Social (Mass Communication Regulatory Body) oversees the enforcement of such rules and regulations.

There are six daily generalist *newspapers* with national circulation. Two of these are “quality” papers: *Público*, owned by the Sonae business group, and *Diário de Notícias*, the property of the Controlinveste multimedia group. This group also owns the mid-market *Jornal de Notícias*, based in Oporto, and *24 Horas*, one of the two popular newspapers. The other is *Correio da Manhã*, property of the Cofina group. In 2009, the group Sojormedia launched a new daily titled *i*. Traditionally, readership of dailies is low. At the end of 2008, *Público* had a circulation of 42.527 copies, *Diário de Notícias* 33.626, and *Correio da Manhã* 122.090 (APCT 2010). With circulations of 117.507 and 92.850 respectively, *Expresso* and *Visão* are the most widely read *weekly newspaper* and *news magazine*. Both are the property of the Impresa multimedia group. Several free newspapers top the circulations of the paid dailies and weeklies: *Destak*, *Global Notícias*, *Metro* and *Sexta*. In 2008, the number of print regional and local papers in the country stood at 274, a marked decrease from the beginning of the decade (GMCS 2010). Typical circulations are only a few thousand.

The Portuguese *radio system* is organized into three main groups: Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP), Renascença, and Media Capital. The radio arm of RTP, which is a public service broadcaster, had its origins in Emissora Nacional, funded in 1935 under the Estado Novo. Soon after, the Catholic church started Renascença. This group is the audience leader, with 40,5 percent of audience share in late 2009, due especially to RFM, its hugely popular easy-listening music channel. Funded by a license fee and

advertising, RTP operates three main channels – Antena 1, Antena 2, and Antena 3 – which broadcast news and popular music, classical music, and new music targeted at young people, respectively. The Media Capital group is the most commercial of the three with its Rádio Comercial, Cidade FM and a few others taking 23,8 percent of audience share (Marktest 2010). Local stations were legalized in the 1980s and totaled around 350 in 2009. In addition, TSF (part of Controlinveste), which features long news bulletins and documentaries, plays a key role in radio journalism in Portugal.

Four *television channels* are freely broadcast in Portugal. Two belong to the state-owned Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (funded in 1955): RTP1 and RTP2 (☒ Public Broadcasting Systems). SIC is the property of Impresa, and TVI is owned by Media Capital. SIC and TVI started operating in 1992 and 1993 respectively. RTP transmits dedicated channels to the island territories of Portugal: RTP Açores and RTP Madeira. RTP1 invests more in national production with cultural and/or historical relevance, and had an audience share of 24,5 percent in early 2010 while RTP2, with a higher proportion of knowledge-oriented programmes, had a share of 4,7 percent. With an audience share of 25,2 percent, SIC devoted its prime time to Brazilian and Portuguese telenovelas, but was overtaken by TVI with nationally produced soap operas (28,5 percent share). Cable television and other channels had a 17,1 percent share (Marktest 2010). RTP, SIC and TVI own a cable news channel each and several entertainment ones. ZON Lusomundo, of the (mainly state-owned) Portugal Telecom multimedia group, has a number of cinema channels (☒ Satellite Television; Cable Television).

The Internet has grown to 302,944 domains registered under .pt (DNS.pt 2010). In 2009, there were 1.841.347 clients with access through a landline and 3.445.755 clients of mobile internet providers (ANACOM 2010). All the main national media and most of the regional and local ones have online editions. There are several digital news periodicals, such as *Portugal Diário* and *Diário Digital*. Blogging is widespread and also used by some conventional media. The existence of numerous web TVs and the delivery of television programs to mobile phones are other examples of the convergence of various forms of communication.

While the Portuguese media system was marked by censorship and oppression during the Estado Novo period, it radically changed in the following 30 years, when privatization and deregulation turned the market into the decisive factor (☒ Censorship; Privatization of the Media). Although there is still some state intervention in the Portuguese media system, it has become increasingly liberal (☒ Media Policy). Low levels of readership and ongoing widespread losses in the newspaper sector present challenges to the survival of many titles while several attempts of government interference in the media have threatened the freedom of the press in recent years. Excessive concentration of property is the main risk for press diversity in the future (☒ Concentration in Media Systems). Digital and cable media offer the biggest prospects for growth.

SEE ALSO: ◦ Cable Television ◦ Censorship ◦ Concentration in Media Systems ◦ Freedom of Communication ◦ Freedom of the Press, Concept of ◦ Media Policy ◦ Plurality ◦ Privatization of the Media ◦ Public Broadcasting Systems ◦ Satellite Television

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