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MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Assessment of Independence of Audiovisual Media Regulators in Visegrád Countries
according to INDIREG Methodology with Respect to Social, Political and Economic Actors in
Particular States

verfasst von / submitted by
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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science (MSc)

Wien, 2019 / Vienna 2019

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 066 550

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Communication Science

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Katharine Sarikakis

Mitbetreut von / Co-Supervisor:

1 Introduction

European Union consists of various countries with diverse historical, political, economic as well as cultural backgrounds. It is not so long time ago that some present EU member states were ruled according to the principles of totalitarian regime. This research focuses especially in so-called Visegrád group states. Visegrád four (refer: hereinafter referred to as V4) acts as cultural, political as well as geographical alliance among four Central European countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovak Republic. The group was established in 1991. The main purpose of its creation was to improve and support cultural, economic and military partnership (Visegrád Group, 2011).

V4 states share mutual historical, cultural, political and partially also linguistic background. Until 1989, all Visegrád countries acted as satellites of the former Soviet Union with totalitarian political system, well-known as communism with single one ruling party. The actions of public movements which were gradually emerging during 1989, such as the Velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia, and political transformations in Hungary and Poland, led to the breakdown of communistic regime and the establishment of democracy in the form of republics in whole Visegrád group (Beissigner, 2009). However the process of democracy establishment was not smooth. Specifically, when we focus on the media regulation developments, post-soviet countries went from one extreme (media censorship) to another (media liberalization). The euphoria from the communism downfall resulted in overall deregulation and liberalization of the media. Several years after democracy establishment V4 states abandoned the idea of media landscape liberalization. The countries started to apply media regulatory frameworks according to western democracies. However these actions were executed at short notice and probably resulted into centralistic media regulators establishment (Votmer, 1999).

Fifteen years later all V4 countries met requirements and became part of the European Union. Since their EU entrance, the states have committed themselves to follow EU legislation and to govern in line with EU integration values. Therefore Visegrád states are obliged to follow EU media regulation framework. This includes media pluralism protection and maintenance of diversity and high transparency of media ownership structures (Committee of experts on Media Pluralism and Transparency of Media Ownership, 2016).

The case of V4 interests us thanks to the combination of its totalitarian regime past, later (turbulent) transformation to democracy and current status of EU member state with alleged long-term mission to approach the position of Western European democracies. From recent past as well as current situation we may observe that especially political representatives of all V4 countries directly express thoughts of Euroscepticism (Nič, 2016). Moreover, Visegrád group tended to utilize a power of its partnership towards EU deliberately in negotiation of exemptions in several matters, such as public media and media regulators control by local governments, receiving refugees' quotas rejection and refusing particular national authorities' competence transfer to Brussels (EU Observer, Visegrad Cracks and Divisions, 2018).

Since 2016 we may have noticed the signs of "polonization" and "hungarization" of the media in Poland and Hungary. This phenomenon means that foreign-owned media would be obliged by national law to transfer their international shares to Owners with Polish origin and to Polish owner. In case of Hungary there was systematic effort of Fidesz ruling party to control media around the country since 2010. Many of foreign-owned media their investors sold their shares to Hungarian oligarchs with close ties to government during economic crisis period. Literally, Polish and Hungarian owners have to be (in the future)

major shareholders of the media ownership structure in these countries. Moreover, new media legislation in Poland and Hungary allows governments to influence the public media content through assigning as well as dismissing members of media regulators and public media top management (Bouillette et al., 2016; Klimkiewicz, 2016; Kroes, 2011; Urbán, 2016).

Situation in Slovakia and Czech Republic points out signs of decreasing media freedom especially in political dependence of public media and media market diversity (Media Pluralism Monitor - Country Reports 2017, 2018). A year ago, Slovak investigative journalist who discovered connections of the political elites acting in government to Italian mafia clan has been murdered. Private equity groups connected to the biggest money laundering cases are major owners of the most prominent commercial media groups in Slovakia (Kluknavská, 2017). Another questionable moment in Slovak media landscape is relationships of Slovak most influential political party on Slovak public media top management appointment process. On the other side, high profile politicians from Czech Republic publicly insult journalists and some of them own influential commercial media houses, such as Czech prime minister is the owner of the most prominent daily newspapers (Independent, 2018). We may see indications of political elites' connection to media ownership and their influence on commercial media content.

I may also mention reports of non-governmental research institutes – Freedom house and Media pluralism monitor (annual research project of The Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom). Slovakia and Czech Republic are assessed as free with respect to press freedom. However, Poland and Hungary were evaluated as the partly free (Freedom house, 2018). Closer look at the Media pluralism monitors results of V4 indicate that there is probably doubtful political independence of the media in V4 with especially high risk in

Hungary and Poland (Bognar, Batorfi & Dragomir, 2018; Klimkiewicz, 2018; Sampor, 2018; Štětka, Hájek, 2018).

Media regulatory bodies play significant role in democracy preserving as well as cultivation. The media co-create social reality and therefore its freedom ought to be guaranteed and protected by the state and law through the independent and competent media regulatory system. European Union tries to take into account opinions of several (all actors concerned) stakeholders. In other words EU includes civil society into the process of media regulations. Thus EU tries to approach to the ideal of media governance (Costache, 2014). Referring to the turbulent development within media regulatory frameworks in V4 as well as to application of power centralization elements in media regulators establishment and Euroscepticism ideas there are indications that media regulatory frameworks in V4 were not completely in line with EU and Western European democracies standards. Therefore in this research the overview of V4 media regulatory framework will be elaborated. Additionally formal and informal independence of V4 media regulators will be assessed on EU as well as national level. Particular national media regulatory systems are discussed from media governance point of view and according to Actor network theory developed by Callon, Latour and Law (Latour, 1996) the network of relations within media regulator and its environment are suggested.

2 Theory

Present research is based on three theoretical pillars. These are the theories of historical development within media regulators in post-soviet countries (Molnar 1999; Voltmer, 1999; Mungiu – Pippidi, 2000, 2012); media governance theoretical framework (Puppis,

2010); Actor network theory (Latour, 1996). Particular theoretical grounds of my project are presented together with clarification of the key concepts in theory chapter.

2.1 The origin and purpose of regulatory bodies as independent regulatory agencies (IRAs)

According to Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003) the initial official efforts within audiovisual media regulations started in the nineteenth century (together with development of movie industry). The media regulation focus gradually moved from the definition and creation of policy as such to the setup of public media role and finally to establishing media regulatory body role in the process of media market liberalization and transfer of state media to private hands (Van Cuilenburg, McQuail, 2003). The opening of the media market resulted into the setup of independent media agencies with main mission to protect media from an influence of political elites (Lunt, Livingstone, 2012). In Western European democracies the first IRAs emerged in Great Britain, Italy, France and Germany (from fifties to eighties of twentieth century) (Lunt, Livingstone, 2012). The states of V4 started to regulate their media landscape later, after the political transformation. Nowadays V4 is supposed to govern its media not only on national but also on EU level according to common framework.

Media regulatory body as an IRA is an organization which performs as non-governmental authority whose main role is to propose, supervise and to keep the standards and rules in entrusted area of interest. In our case these rules are supposed to be applied into media law and regulation program in order to set up balance in economic environment. The second purpose of IRAs' existence is that these organs regulate the media activities for common good of all citizens. By their independent regulatory activities IRAs help maintain and

preserve democracy. With respect to media law and media regulations, regulatory bodies in sense of IRAs have the role of authority that ought to be (according to democratic principles) absolutely independent from the government, political parties as well as media owners and commercial or business entities (European Commission, Media Freedom and Pluralism, 2018, Gilardi, 2004).

2.1.1. Independence of IRA / media regulatory body

When assessing the media regulators' independence the concept of independence needs to be defined and clarified. From the communication science viewpoint (Czepek, Hellwig & Nowak, 2009) freedom (of press) and overall media system can be reached only by no state interference and influence on the performance of the media. Freedom and at the same time independence are one of the principles of democracy. Therefore the scholars agree that there should be autonomous authority which will act as guarantor of media freedom protection and optimal media landscape governance. In simple words this organ ought to be completely independent from the state, political elites, subjects of the regulations, advertising companies and any other actors (Gilardi, 2008; Maggetti, 2006; Thatcher, 2005). Independence of regulatory agency is ideal which attributes are captured in policies. There are several viewpoints how the academia looks at the independence of regulatory agencies. First of all formal/de jure and informal/de facto independence need to be distinguished from each other. Formal independence is the outcome of the laws and legal documents. The formal independence points out *“whether or not the government is credibly bound to accept and not undermine the independence of the regulator”* (Montoya, Trillas, 2007, p. 183). Formal independence is accompanied by informal or actual (de facto) independence. De-facto is related to *“discretion allowed by the institutional framework and the effects of the relationships – less formalized – with other actors than*

the decision-makers, namely the regulatees, that possibly will affect the behavior of IRAs”

(Gilardi, 2008, p.4). The main conditions of formal independence are that IRA's competencies are defined in law, it stays apart from ministries and other state agencies, IRA is not managed by elected officials, rather it has the separate management board (Thatcher, 2005). Key dimensions of regulators' independence according to Gilardi (2008, p. 56):

1. *“Status of the agency head (e.g. term of office and appointment and dismissal procedure)*
2. *Status of the members of management board,*
3. *Relationship with government and parliament,*
4. *Financial and organizational autonomy*
5. *Regulatory competencies”*

On the other hand the aspects of de facto independence cover primarily the actions of regulatees (subjects of regulations) and political decision makers aimed to influence regulations and outputs of regulator. IRA's de-facto independence may be assessed on level of relationship with political decision-makers and regulatees (Maggetti, 2006).

Additionally when the closer look at Thatcher's (2005) concept of regulator's independence is taken he emphasizes three key aspects playing important role in overall independence status (similar to Maggetti's as well as Gilardi's one). The body's competencies, roles and duties should be grounded and guaranteed in national legislation; the organizational structure and overall operation of the body should stay apart from the government organs and offices; members of regulatory boards should not lead the whole body (there should be appointed separate management and regulatory expert committees). In addition to above mentioned authors Gibbons (2013) focuses more on the expertness

and appropriate competence of media regulator board members. He also emphasizes the synergetic combination of knowledge, competencies and procedures clarification which ought to result into successful output.

2.2 Evolution of media regulations research

The topic of media regulatory bodies' research started to be significant point in discussions at the EU, as well as national and international level. There are several challenges to deal with in media regulation. One of the most difficult is connected to so-called non-linear media operating in digital environment. IRAs have to face the evolution in media digitalization and convergence as well as an interactive nature of non-linear media (Schultz et al., 2015). Development of media regulations research is presented by communication scholars Frank Esser and Thomas Hanitzsch (2012) in chronological manner. They underline three stages, in which we can divide the media regulatory research development.

The first phase was the start of the media regulatory research in late 1970's and early 1980's. The introductory research project that applied the principles of comparative analysis in examination of the difference in development of regulatory policies at the European level was conducted by Dyson & Humphreys (1988). As scientific reflection of cable and satellite technologies emerging in 1980s, scholars processed data from Western Europe, specifically from Great Britain, France and Germany. Results of their analysis indicated that despite the fact that political traditions were still relevant in national differences explanation, in general national governments also aimed to attract prospective media investors by deregulating broadcasting.

Esser and Hanitzsch (2012) dated the second phase to mid-1990's. For this period was typical significantly higher increase in comparative research within media regulations. The

political changes and gradual increase of internet usage lead scholars to look at regulations from various perspectives. One of the most influential works within the field was written by Robilliard (1995). The author presents comparative analysis of 35 European countries. In his conclusions Robilliard stated that there is an organizational uniformity among particular states and regulatory organs are appointed by local governments and stay formally independent from the ruling parties.

For the third stage according to Esser and Hanitzsch (2012) there are more recent researches dated after 2000. From the Visegrád group perspective the most significant study was conducted by Beata Klimkiewicz (2005). The scholar was primarily interested in media regulatory policies and laws from the perspective of European Union as well as she analyzed the media law in Central-European countries such as Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia in context of media pluralism. The author also confronted the policies and media law of three Central-European states to strategy and ideal of European Union. According to Klimkiewicz (2005) media content is followed on individual basis, therefore we are not able to identify media generally with the public. On the other hand she proposes that media content and activities ought to follow individual media user's needs. Therefore in preserving of media pluralism in public sphere there is a need to maintain variety of opinions and voices within many aspects of human life.

The recent studies of media regulations emphasize several current challenges and topics which should be covered for the next periods. The most significant challenges are mainly connected with digital media regulation, preserving of media pluralism from ownership as well as diversity opinions point of view and efficient national media regulations in context of globalization, European integration and digitalization (Klimkiewicz, 2005; Puppis, 2010; Schultz et al., 2015).

2.3 Approaches to media regulations overview

Media landscape can be basically regulated by hard (hard law) and soft regulations (soft law) on the continuum starting from censorship and ending at complete deregulation and liberalization of the media system known as free market (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2012 in Gross, Jakubowicz, eds.). Hard regulations refer to the legal treaties, directives and regulations which are solemnly defined in constitutions, codex or codes (Trubeck, Cottrell & Nance, 2005). In other words hard law means that there are “*legally binding obligations that are precise and that delegate authority for interpreting and implementing the law*” (Abbot, Snidal, 2000, p. 421-422). On the other hand there are soft regulations. The scholars assume that the main principles of EU integration are based on soft law. In academia the term soft law seems to be not so clear to explain. The debate concentrates mainly on the ambiguous practical application of the soft law. In general I present the definition by Snyder, who played a key role in implementation of EU law in United Kingdom. He (Snyder, 1993, p. 16) sees the soft laws as “*rules of conduct which in principle have no legally binding force but which nevertheless may have practical effects.*” Soft law includes resolutions, declarations, statements, principles and code of good practice or action plans (Trubeck, Cottrell & Nance, 2005).

According to Costache (2014) one of the key pillars of my research, concept of media governance, especially emphasized the advantages and potential of co- / self-regulations. The scholar sees the future potential of soft governance in preserving media pluralism and freedom in European Union.

2.4 Regulatory bodies and their roles in Western-European democracies

Western-European democracies are typical for their liberal market and economy (Xing, 2001). Hoffmann-Riem (1996) points out on tendency for deregulation and later self-regulation perspective in order to maintain open and free market in Western-European countries. His findings indicate that the deregulation of broadcasting towards market model goes hand in hand with shift in responsibilities towards the media industry and the media users. The scholar concludes that such a development leads to emerging of self-regulations and media literacy improvement. On the other hand, Hoffman-Riem emphasizes the crucial need for regulation in sense of protection for public service broadcasters operating at liberalized markets which cannot compete with commercial media.

Besides the liberalized market there are also particular national specifications which may influence media regulation process. Humphreys (1996) examined the impact of legal regulation applied in press and television on media freedom, pluralism, and diversity. He concludes that national, cultural and political factors explain much of the differences among the 16 capitalist liberal democracies located in Western Europe despite of the ongoing technological economic progress leading to deregulation.

The historical development of media regulations, specifically audiovisual content (television and radio) in Western-European democracies were assessed by Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (2003). According to the author majority of the western democratic countries in Europe applied rather reactive approach to regulations especially within private broadcasting providers. During early 1990's European Supreme Court made decision that defined broadcasting as a service which ought to be freely accessible for citizens. Practically this normative meant almost deregulation of the audiovisual media in European Union and increase of market competition. This event caused that public TV and radios across EU countries decreased in quality and started to be strongly dependent from the

state while its content was often controlled by government (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2003). After the gradual accession of post-communist countries to EU and increasing importance of internet it was necessary to revise the media regulation concept.

2.5 Regulatory bodies and their roles in European Union's approach

One of the most recent approaches to media regulations considers the idea of media governance. The concept of media governance represents the ideal for European Union media regulation strategy. According to boarder definition media governance focuses on collective coordination of wide range of actors in the process of regulation. It merges opinions of civil society, broadcasting and producing companies, non-government institutions, experts as well as political actors and national governments. In other words media governance connects legal perspective with self-regulation (Puppis, 2010). The main aim of EU is to establish media pluralism and transparency in media ownership structures mutually in all member states (Klimkiewicz, 2005, 2009). EU aims to establish media pluralism by common regulatory framework valid for all EU members. Besides media pluralism establishment, EU media regulation strategy also focuses on maintenance of common European media landscape. The question of media pluralism establishment is mainly in competence of particular member states, however is strongly recommended by EU (Klimkiewicz, 2005, 2009).

Within European Union the role of media regulator is represented by European Commission (EC). EC developed the legal framework known as Audiovisual and Media Services Directive – AVMSD targeted on audiovisual media content (European commission, Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2018). Besides EC, media policies are recommended and proposed also by European parliament, Council of Europe and other

stakeholders relevant in media governance process (Llorens, Costache, 2014). Presently AVMSD is supposed to be updated in order to more efficiently deal with challenges of digital media and electronic communication (Brogi, Parcu, 2014). In actual process of revision EU organs appointed expert team so-called European regulators group for audiovisual media services. Group as well as EC are ready to take into account the recommendations from academia, citizens, legal advisors, NGOs as well as media services providers (European Commission, European Regulators Group for audiovisual media services, 2014). European commission regularly organizes public consultations. This activity enables EC to look at the opinions and remarks of all relevant groups of stakeholders on EU media regulations. Press is not included in AVMSD and according to latest public consultation it should remain so (ENPA-EMMA, 2013). The internet media landscape is in full competence of Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC). BEREC maintains the open internet regulations which ensure that EU citizens use internet without censorship and internet traffic is without discrimination (European Commission, 2018).

On the other hand the scholars point out on quite reactive approach of EU media law regulations. According to Costache who discusses the EU media regulations from the media governance prism (2014) there is a need for consistent legal framework development, specifically focused on transparency within media ownership. Updated legal framework should take into account complete independence of particular media regulators in combination with soft regulations relevant for each member state (Costache, 2014). Key characteristics and more detailed insights into media governance concept are presented in following paragraph.

2.6 Media governance as an analytical concept

Media governance is currently widely discussed concept. There are several points of views how we may look at media governance. In my project the analytical aspects of media governance are highlighted and utilized. Thanks to its analytical nature media governance enables the scholars to observe the elements of regulations which may have not been noticed in broad variety of practices and policies organizing media systems in countries.

Media governance acts as rather theoretically open and is flexible for combination with variety of theories. Media governance as analytical concept aims beyond the description and its goal is rather explanation of media regulatory systems (Puppis, 2010).

Media governance looks at the media from various angles and takes also into account its environment. It defines “*regulatory structure as a whole the entirety of forms of rules that aim to organize media system*” (Hamelink, Nordenstreng, 2007, p. 232). Another eloquent definition present (media) “governance as a way of viewing the world of politics and government” (Piere, Peters, 2000, p. 24).

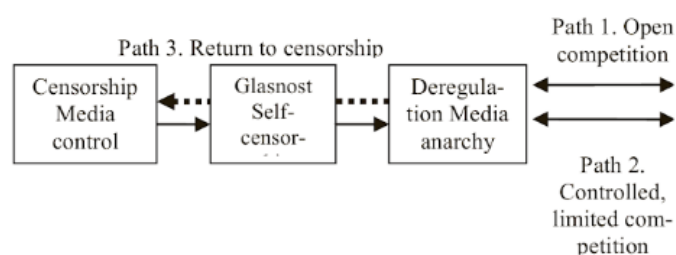
Additionally Puppis (2007) elaborated the concept of media governance on horizontal as well vertical dimension. On vertical axis he sees media regulatory system on national and governmental, regional and finally global level. On the other hand horizontal axis captures the national regulatory actions and government, co-regulation and self-regulation activities. The figure is presented in Appendix 1.

2.7 Approaches to media regulations in post-communist countries

V4 group members were part of the Soviet Union block. From the media regulation perspective majority of post-communist countries in emerging democracy status firstly decided to deregulate the media as reaction to previous long-term censorship. Mungiu-Pippidi (2000) again points out on the fact that quality operation of the public media in

highly competitive commercial free market was almost impossible. In communistic media system there was a monopoly of public broadcasting strongly controlled by state. However mainly during the seventies of 20th century the second public sphere was gradually created by intellectuals and dissidents. These individuals owned forbidden electronic gadgets used for catching the signal of foreign media and enabling illegal communication (Sükösd, 2000 in Gunther, Mughan Eds.). Complete and sudden liberalization of media services with no regulation policy enabled other broadcasters to enter the market and to take and competition advantage over public media (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2000). Interestingly, for post-communist states and especially for Visegrád group, there were strong anti-communist attitudes and strong motivation for “lustration” of the public media (Molnar, 1999). Reformation of media system was focused more on opening the market to private media rather than on improvement and protection of public media. Moreover, initial reformation rather followed the old control and power centralism dogma of communism (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2000). Another author who took a closer look at media regulations system development in post-communist countries (Votmer, 1999) also emphasized the lack of effort, time, resources and expertise in the process of establishment of pluralistic media landscape backed up with competent independent regulator in countries in question.

Figure 1 Divergent paths depicting directions of communist media control according to Mungiu-Pippidi (2012) in Gross, Jakubowicz (Eds.)



The diagram shows the process of how the media control evolved after the downfall of the Soviet Union from the full and partial censorship to complete deregulation and anarchy.

The period of early 1990's in Central-European post-communist countries can be characterized as the era of unregistered newspapers, radio stations and strong Western-Europe pressure for media market liberalization. However Mungiu-Pippidi (2012) argues that presently there is still doubtful autonomous role of (public) media in post-communist states. She emphasizes corruption issues which go through media, business, politics and in some cases also judiciary system.

Visegrád countries experienced several political transformations during one century. Despite long-term cultural and linguistic presence of four nations all of the Visegrád countries became to exist as autonomous states after the First World War. Their autonomies and democracies were later changed into regime of one ruling party subordinated to USSR. 44 years they were carrying the burden of totality. After the downfall of communism in 1989 completely new and young political parties were established. However these parties lacked the resources and networks. They used to compensate these deficiencies by so-called colonization and exploiting media and state which was also the case of V4 (Bajomi-Lazár, 2015).

2.8 Actor network theory and its utilization in media policy research

The third theoretical pillar of the project is connected to Actor network theory enabling us to think about relations and connections among regulatory bodies and various actors in its environment. These relationships may indicate the power flows between particular actors in the net. Actor network theory (ANT) may help to establish how the flow of relationships represents some form of powers (Couldry, 2008 in Hepp et al. Eds.).

Teurlings (2013, p. 103) simplified the main definition of ANT in one eloquent sentence:

“At the core of ANT is the idea that every existing phenomenon consists of actors that operate within a network. A network is not a given but it is something that has to be established.” Thanks to ANT I am able to look at the regulators from the broader perspective and visualize the basic relations to its environment. Regulatory bodies are the part of the broader systems and context. Their independence is affected by external and internal factors. Since my project rather focuses on external factors assessment, I decided to take into account also the view of ANT.

According to recommendations of the scholars (Cresswell, Worth & Szeikh, 2011; Teurlings, 2013) ANT should not stay as only one theoretical pillar of the research. Therefore I combine it with theories of regulation approaches in post-communist countries emphasizing return to centralization of power and media governance analytical framework.

2.9 Summary, research gap & research question

From existing literature I may assume that fully independent media regulator which takes into account also the remarks of all relevant stakeholders including citizens plays significant role in democracy maintenance. In my work I focus on four Central-European post-communist countries. Problematic development of efficient media regulation approach in emerging democracy conditions, centralistic media regulation perspective, neglecting the principle of subsidiarity and current disturbing events regarding media regulations in Hungary and Poland lead me to critically consider the real level of particular national media regulators' independence.

According to my literature search the summarization of media regulation historical development in V4 as well as identification of key legal frameworks and brief assessment

of regulators' formal independence have been already assessed. However, there is no such a project which focuses on particular regulator's formal and informal independence from the broad perspective of social, political as well as economic actor considering media governance concept. Using the term "Actor" also points out on my intention to utilize the perspective of actor-network theory on the functioning of the media regulating systems in Visegrád countries. In current scientific debate regarding media studies scholars widely discuss the contribution of actor-network theory to media production process from mechanics of power point of view (Teurlings, 2013). My research deals with independence of media regulators which act as important aspect in media production. In the eyes of actor-network theory as well as media governance the key networks and relations among regulators and stakeholders can be constructed. Additionally I look at the V4 regulatory bodies' independence in national (how is defined in national constitutions/laws) and European Union context.

My research aims to answer the main research question:

What is the degree of Visegrád countries audiovisual media regulators' independence on national and EU level in reflection to democratic values and principles of EU integration considering actor-network theory and media governance framework?

3 Methods

Analysis of independence level is assessed by several steps. The combination of particular steps enabled me to construct the network of the relationships among the key stakeholders (actors) connected to the regulatory body in the country. Below I present detailed sequence and description of methodological steps.

3.1 Establishment of the V4 country brief profiles in context of media landscapes and regulations development

Firstly the profile of each Visegrád country is established with respect to brief historical, political, social and economic development. Focus is primarily on the period of totalitarian regime and the special attention is taken on the time of transformation from the totality to democracy in context of media landscape development and media regulations frameworks implementation. Particular media systems developments in each country are summarized and described in chronological manner and with respect to the key literature dealing with media systems diversifications (Hallin, Mancini, 2004; Hardy, 2008; Jakubowicz, Sükösd, 2008 in Jakubowicz, Sükösd Eds.). The newest scores in World Press Freedom Index (Reporters without Borders), Index based on Media Pluralism Monitor, Democracy Index , Freedom of the Press Report (Freedom House) are included in order to compare countries in broader context to other EU member states and to each other. These indexes measure the level of media and economic freedom from various points of views and they are processed by credible think-tank and non-government organizations.

3.2 Brief overview of the particular media regulators in V4

Secondly I focus on the processing of the overview of audiovisual media regulators in each country. I map and summarize their key competencies, roles, position in national legislation, subjects of the regulation, organizational structure visualization and its assessment with respect to decentralization of power and subsidiarity principles implementation. Additionally the process of the board members election (including criteria for the board member candidates), appointment and dismissing is summarized. The mode of the funding and budgeting is identified and described. The guarantee of independence of

regulator is identified and summarized according to particular national legislation (independence on national level assessment). The sources for data collection are mainly the web-pages of the particular regulators as well as legal documentation (constitutions, codes, codex) in each country. Secondary resources of data are the previous researches and overviews elaborated by scholars and legal experts.

3.3 Profiles (biographical method) of regulatory bodies' board members

The third step of the independence assessment is connected to the in-depth mapping of the each regulator board member background. I focus on social (race, gender, education, ethnicity, social status, membership in institutions active in social sphere), economic (relations to any economic and commercial entity, economic status, membership in economic institutions or associations) and political (relation to the political party, government institutions, politicians) aspect of their lives.

In biography creation I do not conduct the qualitative interviews with particular members. On the contrary my approach reconstructs the profiles thanks the process of relevant information mapping. Smith (2012 in Goodwin Ed.) includes to the biographies also the reconstruction of profiles. The biography methodologists (Smith, 2012 in Goodwin Ed.) emphasize particular principles which are recommended to be followed in biography elaboration (choosing the right person about whom to write, identification of relevant and true information, identification of credible resources, development of the main theme in person's life etc.). In order to gather the relevant data about the persons various publicly available sources (webpages of regulator, registers of commercial subjects, webpages of board members' employers and civil associations, registers of political parties, webpage and archives of Parliaments, official Curriculum Vitae of board members, information and

posts on social networks – LinkedIn, Facebook, information obtained from official town webpages, land registers, trade registers) are utilized and their credibility is carefully considered. From the research ethics point of view I work only with data which are publicly available and may be processed in research with respect to public officials. The elaboration of the biographies enables deeper understanding of the particular person's background. This plays a crucial role in assessment of the regulatory body independence on national as well as EU level. Moreover, board member profiles enable me to directly observe if there are any indications of the connections of the board member to any political, economic or social entity.

3.4 Assessment of the particular regulator's independence according to INDIREG methodology

One of the most influential scholars in empirical assessment of regulator's independence status is Fabrizio Gilardi. He elaborated index focused on assessment of formal regulator's independence. Since in current research the audiovisual media regulators' independence on EU and national level is assessed, INDIREG methodology and ranking tool is utilized. This instrument was established on the logic of Gilardi's (2008) index. However, INDIREG refers to research with specific methodological approach conducted by European Commission (EC). The full name of INDIREG is "Indicators for independence and efficient functioning of audiovisual media services regulatory bodies." The studies are conducted under the premises of leading partner – Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research and other independent scientific institutions on demand of EC. The latest assessment was elaborated in 2011. The final report consists of brief profile of the each member state and its audiovisual media regulator overview. However into in-depth

analysis only Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia, and from non-member states Serbia and Albania were selected.

INDIREG methodologists emphasize the necessity for independent media regulators because of two basic grounds: need for market regulation, and guaranty of human rights protection. By the means of INDIREG the scholars and regulatory experts are able to assess the level of formal and informal (de facto) independence.

Scholars (INDIREG – Final report, 2011) following INDIREG approach usually conduct in-depth legal analysis of audiovisual media regulator as well as they assess the level of EU regulatory framework implementation in particular country. Additionally, after the in-depth analysis and literature review the INDIREG researchers have identified five crucial dimensions which play key role in establishment of IRA and they created tailor-made ranking tool. This instrument can be freely downloaded from INDIREG webpage in Excel format. Ranking tool enables evaluator to assess the formal and informal independence of the regulatory body (with focus on external actors influence) on five dimensions: status and powers; financial autonomy; autonomy of decision makers; knowledge; transparency and accountability mechanisms. Each dimension is assessed by several questions thanks to which researcher allocates the points and these are transferred to radar chart. The dimension may reach the score from 0 to 1. The tool also includes interpretation guide. In general the results may be interpreted in the sentence: the higher the value the more independent is the regulator (the example of ranking tool questions are presented in Appendix 2. The scholars warn that informal situation is usually assessed by IRA board members and their perception may be subjective. Therefore in my project de facto ranking will be replaced by the findings from the biographies of the regulator board members

which will focus on identification of the relationships with politicians and subjects of regulations (media services providers).

3.5 Establishment and description of networks diagram according to Actor network theory including the findings from all parts of the analysis

In the theoretical framework part I have discussed the roles of various stakeholders and actors which may take part in the media governance process. The aim of this study is to find out the degree of Visegrád countries audiovisual media regulators' (formal and informal) independence on national and EU level in reflection to democratic values and principles of EU integration considering Actor network theory approach. The national level is assessed by the definition of independence in national law. Afterwards there is a confrontation of this definition to particular media regulator status implementation. Independence of EU level is evaluated by INDIREG methodology framework with combination of particular regulator's board members biographies. Biographies are focused on social, economic and political backgrounds of the persons which enable us to observe the signs of relationships with the stakeholders. These relationships can be displayed in network diagram. Moreover the broader context of the ranking tool results, findings from biographies and historical background of particular countries may be depicted in this diagram. These relationships may indicate the power flows between particular actors in the net (Couldry, 2008 in Hepp et al. Eds.).

The results of INDIREG tool as well as biographies will not only function in assessment of the regulators independence but also shed more light on the so-called mechanics of powers in its environment.

4 Findings

4.1 Country profiles

4.1.1 Czech Republic – Brief country profile with respect to media landscape and regulations development

Independent Czech Republic as well as Slovakia was established in 1993 after the USSR breakdown and dissolution of Czechoslovakia to two separate republics. Czech and Slovak Republic were part of one state – Czechoslovakia since 1918 until 1992. Therefore they shared mutual media landscape. Thus till 1989 conditions of media censorship are typical for Czechoslovakia which was under the auspices of USSR (Kettle, 1996).

After the communism downfall in 1989 the period of media landscape transformation and democracy emerging was characteristic also by persistence of totality elements in behavior of media, journalist, society as well as politicians in Czech Republic. Since 1989 Czech and Slovak media streams well already well developed in each country and their outlets were spread around all federation. However, countries started to move apart in the process of political transformation. Therefore in 1993 they split peacefully. In Czech Republic the opening of media market was more agile. On the contrary in Slovakia at the beginning of transformation there was rather privatization of state property. Till 1994 Czech media market was solidly penetrated by players with foreign capital. 50% of press in Czech Republic is already owned by foreign media group or investor. In the area of radio and television broadcasting the entrance of private players was approved by Board for Radio and Television. Board members of this organ were appointed and dismissed by parliament. After the approval of strong commercial TV Nova license with top management consisting of former Slovak politicians a lot of objections have been raised from the coalition. The result of this action was resignation of Board for Radio and Television Chairman.

Additionally the personal purges of public media continued. On the case of Czech Republic the support of communistic regime among some journalist persisted (Kettle, 1996; Harcourt, 2003). Popularity of communistic party is present till nowadays when the Communist party of Czech and Moravia is still active in Czech parliament.

As in any other post-communist country the infiltration of Czech government influence in media sector occurred. The national regulatory authority was established from the Federal Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting by law approved by Czech parliament in 1992, shortly before Czechoslovakia dissolution (Collection of Laws of the Czech Republic, 2000/2019; Harcourt, 2003). Additional legislation in 2000 has clarified the role, position and competencies of the regulator (Collection of Laws of the Czech Republic, 2000/2019).

In Czech Republic the USA media regulatory approach was adopted. This approach is characteristic by little regulation in private media market. However according to the pattern of European framework public television and radio were not privatized. Later efforts to join EU caused further updates of Czech media regulatory framework focused on harmonization with EU laws. The legislation which was adopted in pre-accession period was focused primarily on enlargement of TV program spectrum about content produced in Europe in the area of entertainment. Other regulations were updated in the area of sponsorship and movie production cooperation among EU countries (Sükösd, Bajomi-Lázár, 2003).

Czech media system is also included in Democratic Corporatist Model group according to Hallin and Mancini (2004). Dobek-Ostrowska (2015 in Dobek-Ostrowska, Glowacski Eds.) also included Czech Republic to Hybrid liberal model together with Slovakia and

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIRECT METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

Poland. Presently Czech media landscape is far more varied (even more varied than in Slovakia). There is public audiovisual media – Czech Television and Czech Radio with relatively wide audience (33% of total market). Spectrum of private and commercial media in the area of television is created by private equity Agrofert (possession of Czech prime minister Andrej Babiš), Empresa Media (owned by Jaromír Soukup – prospective candidate on Czech president, prospective candidate on member of Czech national council), Time Warner USA media group, GES Media Asset, Media Bohemia, Lagardere Active Radio International, Helifreak Limited, VCM Worldcapital Ventures, O2 Telefonica Czech Republic (MediaGuru, 2019, ATO-Mediaresearch, 2019).

The report of Czech Republic is supported by scores in international indexes and monitors focused on media freedom, media pluralism. The country results are displayed in following table.

Table 1

<i>Czech Republic (scores in selected indexes and indicators)</i>			
Democracy Index in 2018 (The Economist Group) ^a	<u>Score</u> 7.69 (from 10)	<u>Ranking</u> 34 (out of 167) – flawed democracy	
World Press Freedom Index in 2019 (Reporters without Borders) ^b	<u>Score</u> 24.89	<u>Ranking</u> 40 (out of 180)	
Media Pluralism Monitor results in 2017 (European University Institute) ^c	<u>Low risk score</u> -Protection of freedom of expression (14%) -Journalistic profession standards and protection (15%) -Independence and effectiveness of media authority (5%) -Media and democratic electoral process (14%) -Access to the media for people with disabilities (6%) -State regulation of resources and support to media sector (33%)	<u>Medium risk score</u> -Protection of right to information (38%) -Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet (47%) -Cross-media concentration of ownership and competition enforcement (63%) -Media viability (60%) -Political independence of media (44%) -Access to media for minorities (38%) -Media literacy (50%)	<u>High risk score</u> - Independence of PSM governance and funding (67%) -Access to media for women (94%) -Transparency of media ownership (75%) -Media ownership

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

		horizontal concentration (68%) -Commercial and owner influence over editorial content (71%) -Editorial autonomy (88%) -Access to the media for local/regional communities and for community media (75%)
Freedom of Press Report in 2017 (Freedom House) ^d	<u>Score</u> Free (26/100)	

Notes:

^a the higher number of index the more established is democratic regime in the country

^b smaller the score the greater freedom (score range: 0-100)

^c percentage express the rate of the risk for particular areas (the lower percentage the lower risk)

^d the scores are on scale from 5 (most free) to 99 (least free)

(Elaborated according to World Press Freedom Index 2019 report, Media Pluralism

Monitor 2017, Freedom of Press Report 2017, Democracy Index 2018 by The Economist Group)

4.1.2 Hungary – Brief country profile with respect to media landscape and regulations development

Hungary as independent state has been established in 1918 in the form of republic.

However, like all V4 countries Hungary was also the part of Soviet Union since 1945 till 1989. Media landscape was strictly censored by the state. There was only one player in media environment – public state owned and controlled media. In 1989 communistic regime fell down also in Hungary and the process of democratic transformation and media pluralism started. Each Visegrád country has its specification in the process of media transformation. Compared to Slovakia and Czech Republic Hungarian media landscape was not regulated till 1996. Media policy was perceived as challenging and sensitive topic

and for any new media law there was two third majority of votes in parliament required to be approved. This legislative vacuum caused establishment of plenty unregistered TV and radio stations with mainly USA background. There were several attempts of local government to directly control public Hungarian media mainly concerning the right of president to assign its top management. This period was also typical for the frequent changes of public media staff. The reforms from 1996 were adopted following the pattern of EU media law framework because of further attempt to access EU. But, its implementation was not smooth especially in limitation of shares for one shareholder in private media. After the consolidation of Hungarian media system transformation the market was primarily divided to public broadcasting service, media with owners primarily from USA, Germany and Italy. The professionalization and improvement of journalistic profession standards were also identified as development area in the transformation process (Harcourt, 2003; Láncki, O'Neil, 1996; Sükösd, 2000 in Gunther, Mughan Eds.).

In 1996 the National Radio and Television Board (ORTT) was established as media regulator. It was responsible for supervision of private audiovisual media regulation and licensing till 2010 when the National Media and Infocommunication Authority was established as the new centralistic media regulator responsible for all media spheres regulations. Former ORTT's board was elected by parliament and president with prime minister together selected the chairperson (Harcourt, 2003; Collection of Laws of Hungary, 1996/2019, 2010/2019).

After the consolidation of Hungarian media landscape the media models theorists classified the Hungary to the group of Politicized media model. This model may be described by relatively weak democratic principles as well as low political culture in society and remarkably high political parallelism in media. Additionally public media are

strongly politicized and influenced by government. Private media do not stay neutral and professional. Media outlets and journalist presents their political opinions (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). Moreover, Bajomi-Lázár (2013) stresses the concept of political party colonization of media in Hungary. This actions lead to decreasing of media pluralism. Media colonization was even more getting worse after the process of massive hungarization of foreign-owned media which dramatically influenced media ownership system and overall public sphere in the country (Bajomi-Lázár, 2019; Urbán, 2016).

Nowadays audiovisual media landscape in Hungary is interwoven by primarily media with Hungarian owner with close ties to ruling party. In the area of private radio there are six main players. Five of them are owned by Hungarian owner and one is property of international investor. Owners of four private radios are affiliated to Fidesz ruling party and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The strongest radio is public radio controlled directly by government. TV market is dominated by eight private media groups and public television with its seven television channels. Five of TV media market players are pro-government or have indirect ties to Fidesz party and prime minister. Only two TV media groups are in foreign hands, the most followed channels are from German RTL group. The outlets and news from abroad are available only in limited amount (Bajomi – Lázár, 2019; Urbán, 2016).

The elaboration of Hungary country profile is supported by the scores of main selected indexes and indicators referring to media freedom and the status of democracy. The results are presented in table displayed below.

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

Table 2

<i>Hungary (scores in selected indexes and indicators)</i>			
Democracy Index in 2018 (The Economist Group) ^a	<u>Score</u> 6.63 (from 10)	<u>Ranking</u> 57 (out of 167) – flawed democracy	
World Press Freedom Index in 2019 (Reporters without Borders) ^b	<u>Score</u> 30.44	<u>Ranking</u> 80 (out of 180)	
Media Pluralism Monitor results in 2017 (European University Institute) ^c	<u>Low risk score</u> -Protection of freedom of expression (14%)	<u>Medium risk score</u> -Protection of right to information (38%) -Journalistic profession standards and protection (63%) -Independence and effectiveness of media authority (50%) -Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet (56%) -Cross-media concentration of ownership and competition enforcement (35%) -Political independence of media (63%) -Access to the media for people with disabilities (36%) -Access to media for women (64%) -Media literacy (50%)	<u>High risk score</u> -Independence of PSM governance and funding (67%) -Transparency of media ownership (70%) -Media ownership horizontal concentration (70%) -Commercial and owner influence over editorial content (67%) -Media viability (75%) -Editorial autonomy (88%) -Media and democratic electoral process (79%) -State regulation of resources and support to media sector (97%) -Access to media for minorities (75%) -Access to the media for local/regional communities and for community media (72%)
Freedom of Press Report in 2017 (Freedom House) ^d	<u>Score</u> Partly free (44/100)		

Notes:

^a the higher number of index the more established is democratic regime in the country

^b smaller the score the greater freedom (score range: 0-100)

^c percentage express the rate of the risk for particular areas (the lower percentage the lower risk)

^d the scores are on scale from 5 (most free) to 99 (least free)

(Elaborated according to World Press Freedom Index 2019 report, Media Pluralism

Monitor 2017, Freedom of Press Report 2017, Democracy Index 2018 by The Economist Group)

4.1.3 Poland – Brief country profile with respect to media landscape and regulations development

Since the end of World War II Poland media landscape was also highly controlled and censored by communistic representatives in the country till 1989'. However compared with other V4 states there was a minority of independent media (especially media of Catholic Church and some opposition party media) for which the free discussion was enabled (Jakubowicz, 1991 in Dahlgren, Sparks Eds.). The period of media transformation for Poland is typical for relatively inconsistent approach to media regulation. In Slovakia and Czech Republic the regulations and regulatory bodies were established relatively quickly after communism downfall. Hungary was exceptional for its long-term regulatory vacuum. There were several attempts to apply new media legislation in Poland, however majority of them have failed and the parliament did not approved them. The most significant was approval of Broadcasting Act in 1992 which meant the harmonization of Polish broadcasting legal framework with EU. Since 1993 the audiovisual media were regulated by KRRiT (National Broadcasting Council) which was tied to government by the way how its board members were assigned as well as their affiliations to government (Harcourt, 2003; The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, 1992). Sparks (2008) characterized the Polish media by relatively high level of political parallelism and significant state impact on the operation of the media (especially public media). She stresses that despite the Polish media market enlargement and diversification the media are still under the control of political elites.

After the consolidation of the Polish media system, the landscape remained highly diversified and politically polarized. Majority of the audiovisual media sphere belongs to the foreign owners. Therefore there are attempts to re-polonize the media in Poland (Jones,

Hinz & Koelle 2018). Despite of obvious political influence on the media Dubek-Ostrowska (2015) included Poland into the Hybrid liberal model thanks to the EU media regulation approach application in the past. She also adds that past and current political development in Poland moves Poland rather to the Polarized Pluralist Model.

The most serious point in development of Polish media regulatory framework is connected to the actions from 2016 when the National media regulator was established by the laws approved by government. National media regulator is fully responsible for supervision of public media and its members consist of ruling party members or persons who were recommended by ruling party PiS. This action allows the government to fully control public media. In the following scenario representatives of PiS exchanged the management board of public radio and televisions by their affiliates (Sejm/Polish parliament – Small Media Act, 2016; Chapman, 2017).

When we take a closer look at the composition of Polish TV media landscape 30% of the market is represented by media with Polish capital and 70% of the market is owned by foreign groups. The public television TVP operates approximately 14 TV channels. Main private players are Cyfrowy Polsat/Digital Polsat (29 TV channels), ITI Neovision (24 TV channels), Scripps Networks Interactive (18 TV channels), Discovery Communications (19 TV channels), Viacom (15 TV channels). Private media companies are owned by investors from USA or Poland. There are also plenty of small broadcasters with foreign capital. The most viewed channel is from Polsat Group. In general Polish TV market is relatively diversified (Szetela, Piech & Piech, 2018).

At the Polish radio market the media with foreign investors also prevails. 60% of radio companies are owned by foreign investors. The main radio groups are ZPR Media, Polskie

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

Fale Średnie SA/Polish Medium Waves, Agora, Eurozet, Bauer Media Group. Majority of private radio are owned by Czech, German and Polish holders. Public radio Polskie Radio/Polish radio operates across all Poland with its 34 radio stations (Szetela, Piech & Piech, 2018).

In order to summarize Poland profile the results from the indexes and media freedom monitors are processed into the table.

Table 3

<i>Poland (scores in selected indexes and indicators)</i>			
Democracy Index in 2018 (The Economist Group) ^a	<u>Score</u> 6.67 (from 10)	<u>Ranking</u> 54 (out of 167) – flawed democracy	
World Press Freedom Index in 2019 (Reporters without Borders) ^b	<u>Score</u> 28.89	<u>Ranking</u> 59 (out of 180)	
Media Pluralism Monitor results in 2017 (European University Institute) ^c	<u>Low risk score</u> -Journalistic profession standards and protection (20%) -Independence and effectiveness of media authority (30%)	<u>Medium risk score</u> -Protection of freedom of expression (64%) -Protection of right to information (44%) -Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet (63%) -Transparency of media ownership (50%) -Media ownership horizontal concentration (69%) -Editorial autonomy (63%) -Media and democratic electoral process (61%) -State regulation of resources and support to media sector (63%) -Access to media for minorities (44%) -Access to the media for people with disabilities (44%) -Media literacy (58%)	<u>High risk score</u> -Cross-media concentration of ownership and competition enforcement (90%) -Independence of PSM governance and funding (83%) -Commercial and owner influence over editorial content (79%) -Media viability (60%) -Political independence of media (77%) -Access to the media for local/regional communities and for community media (75%) -Access to media for women (96%)
Freedom of Press Report in 2017 (Freedom House) ^d	<u>Score</u> Partly free (34/100)		

Notes:

^a the higher number of index the more established is democratic regime in the country

^b smaller the score the greater freedom (score range: 0-100)

^c percentage express the rate of the risk for particular areas (the lower percentage the lower risk)

^d the scores are on scale from 5 (most free) to 99 (least free)

(Elaborated according to World Press Freedom Index 2019 report, Media Pluralism

Monitor 2017, Freedom of Press Report 2017, Democracy Index 2018 by The Economist Group)

4.1.4 Slovakia – Brief country profile with respect to media landscape and regulations development

Slovak Republic as independent country has been established after the division of Czechoslovakia in January 1993. Since 1945 (officially 1948) the country (as part of Czechoslovakia) performed as satellite of USSR till 1989. During the period of communistic regime there was strictly limited media landscape with absence of media pluralism. In media sphere there was only single one actor – public broadcasting media service directly controlled and censored by government with short period of media censorship cancellations during Prague Spring in 1968 (attempts of Czechoslovakia to leave Eastern block) (Školkay, 1996).

After 1989 and communism downfall immediate change of political system and democratization did not lead to full media pluralization and media freedom establishment. On the contrary new populist political movements were deliberately inhibiting establishment of independent media in the country. Within the transformation period the signs of “totalitarian inheritance” played significant role. Slovakia as other post-communist countries was not *tabula rasa* and in its society there were rooted elements which were incompatible to democracy and these are hardly vanishing (Gross, 2004). In this time Slovak media as well as all society did not understand the basic logic of democratic system and policies. Therefore for the media it was easier to inform about domestic populist

politics rather than contribute to the democratization process by educating society and contributing to form civil society. Additionally, the term public (media) as well as impartiality (of media) was not properly defined in legislation. For relatively long-time after 1989 public media was governed by state (and ruling party). The process of media privatization and market opening was not so smooth and first private media players had ties on the strongest political party in Slovakia. Transformation of Slovak media system was focused on imitation of Western European democracies media. Hallin and Mancini (2004) also included Slovak media system belongs to Democratic Corporatist Model group with high press freedom, pluralistic and rather impartial media and high level of professionalism in journalistic profession. Scholars (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015 in Dobek-Ostrowska, Glowacki Eds.) researching the media models in emerging democracies of post-communist states have identified Hybrid liberal model including western Slavic countries (Baltic states, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia) typical approaching to full democracy establishment the most. However there was real problem with practical application and interpretation of western approach. Western European experts encouraged Slovak representatives to create independent regulatory authority which will supervise media landscape in Slovakia (Školkay, 1996; Gross, 2004). Formally in 1992 Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting was established. However this organ supervised rather state media and after the gradual opening of private media market there were two legislation updates. Finally in 2000 present audiovisual media regulator Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission was established. According to the legislation Council is nongovernmental body independent from the government and financed from the state budget operating till present time (Collection of Laws of Slovak Republic, 2019).

The second wave of the media reforms occurred before Slovakia's accession of EU, mainly since 1998. One of the main updates was targeted on the establishment of independent authority responsible for supervision of operation and funding of public media. There were also ownership rights updates with positive impact on public media. Additionally, members of public media management started to be elected by media council not by parliament. On the demand of EU the laws regarding media pluralism establishment, minorities and human dignity protection as well as more transparent laws concerning advertising in media were adopted. Updates and supervision of the law obedience was entrusted to the hands of national media regulator. In general Slovak lawmakers were gradually and solidly preparing country for EU accession in the area of media law (Collection of Laws of Slovak Republic, 2019; Johnson, Školkay, 2005).

30 years in democratic establishment and 15 years membership in EU contributed to grater variability in Slovak audiovisual media landscape. The public media is represented by Radio and Television of Slovakia financed from state budget, advertising and fees from the citizens. Its board members and chairman are elected by parliament (Collection of Laws of Slovak Republic, 2019). Spectrum of private television and radios are divided to Time Warner media group from USA, Bauer media house, Deutsche Telekom and several private equity groups in which also Slovak and Czech politicians possesses their shares. One of the most influential experts on Slovak media landscape development Andrej Školkay warns for increasing level of political parallelism in Slovak media (Školkay, 2019).

To summarize Slovakia country report the scores in international indexes and monitors focused on media freedom, media pluralism are presented. The results for Slovakia are displayed in following table.

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

Table 4

<i>Slovakia (scores in selected indexes and indicators)</i>			
Democracy Index in 2018 (The Economist Group) ^a	<u>Score</u> 7.10 (from 10)	<u>Ranking</u> 44 (out of 167) – flawed democracy	
World Press Freedom Index in 2019 (Reporters without Borders) ^b	<u>Score</u> 23.58	<u>Ranking</u> 35 (out of 180)	
Media Pluralism Monitor results in 2017 (European University Institute) ^c	<u>Low risk score</u> -Protection of freedom of expression (6%) -Journalistic profession standards and protection (15%) -Independence and effectiveness of media authority (15%) -Transparency of media ownership (25%) -Cross-media concentration of ownership and competition enforcement (25%) -Media and democratic electoral process (7%) -Access to the media for people with disabilities (19%)	<u>Medium risk score</u> -Protection of right to information (38%) -Universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet (47%) -Media ownership horizontal concentration (65%) -Commercial and owner influence over editorial content (50%) -Media viability (55%) -Political independence of media (63%) -Editorial autonomy (38%) -State regulation of resources and support to media sector (50%) -Access to media for minorities (50%) -Access to the media for local/regional communities and for community media (56%) -Media literacy (49%)	<u>High risk score</u> -Independence of PSM governance and funding (67%) -Access to media for women (69%)
Freedom of Press Report in 2017 (Freedom House) ^d	<u>Score</u> Free (26/100)		

Notes:

^a the higher number of index the more established is democratic regime in the country

^b smaller the score the greater freedom (score range: 0-100)

^c percentage express the rate of the risk for particular areas (the lower percentage the lower risk)

^d the scores are on scale from 5 (most free) to 99 (least free)

(Elaborated according to World Press Freedom Index 2019 report, Media Pluralism

Monitor 2017, Freedom of Press Report 2017, Democracy Index 2018 by The Economist

Group)

4.2 Overview of Audiovisual media regulators in particular countries

4.2.1 Brief overview of Czech Republic audiovisual media regulator (Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting / RRTV)

Elaborated according to the information available in the website of RRTV and according to the law 231/2001 in Collection of Laws of the Czech Republic and codex

(<https://www.rrtv.cz/cz/>; <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2001-231#f2209499>)

Key role, competencies and subjects of regulation:

Key roles and competencies of the body are defined in the law which guarantees establishment of the regulator. RRTV is responsible for supervision of media pluralism in Czech media landscape, it also supervises obeying the laws. It grants the licenses and deals with complaints from citizens. RRTV assess the questionable cases concerning media legislation violation and it can set a fines. The organ does not have policy-making competence, but it can provide a legal statement and present recommendations for new legislation to parliament.

The subjects of regulations are all audiovisual media services broadcasters active in Czech Republic (radio and television broadcasting).

Position in national legislation & Definition of body's independence:

RRTV's position is not defined in constitution. Its role and duties are stated in codex, specifically in Law 231/2001. Its independence is explicitly defined in this law. The Council is public authority, independent from the government and from any other commercial, civil or scientific organization. The members of the council are not allowed to be active in scientific, educational, journalistic, media or artistic area in case such actions threaten the independence of the council. The regulatory board members cannot hold any

other state function and cannot be active in political party or political movement. Its independence is supported by separate chapter in state budget and the selection criteria for board members as well as its overall operation.

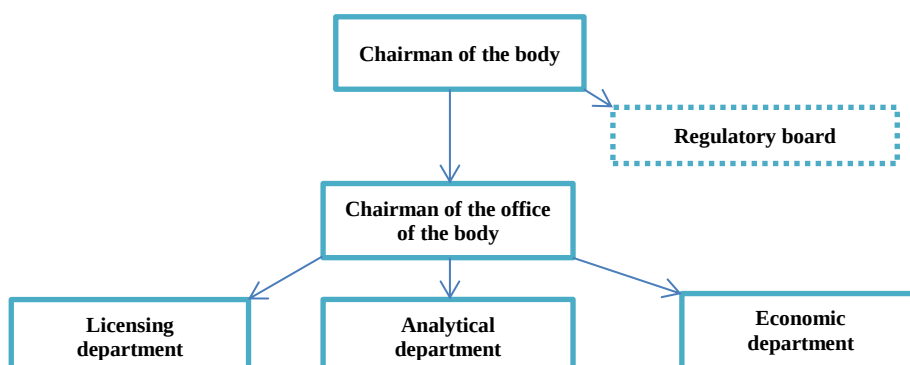
However, the Czech constitution defines the independence as “independent from any other kind of power or authority” (The Constitution of Czech Republic, 1992). I may then argue the full independence of Czech audiovisual regulators on national level. The government makes the decisions about its funding and board members are nominated as well as voted by the parliament. Body also is not allowed to create a new policies and laws.

Organizational structure, process of board members election:

RRTV consist of regulatory board with 13 members including one Chairman of the board. RRTV has also its Office which is managed by the Chairman of the Office. The Chairman of the office is subordinated to Chairman of regulatory board. Therefore I can classify the RRTV organizational structure as rather hierarchical. The power over the overall body – regulation competencies as well as the management of its operation is concentrated in one person’s hands. The Chairman of the office oversees three departments (radio broadcasting and licensing; analytical department; economic department).

The process of regulatory board members election is stated in a law 231/2000. The members and chairman are nominated and voted by the majority in parliament. The Czech prime minister assigns the members for their office period (six years). The parliament may suggest the dismissals of board members for various official reasons. Dismissal procedure is in the hands of Czech prime minister.

Figure 2 Sketch of visualization of RRTV organizational structure:



Financing:

The body and all its operations are funded from the state budget. The budget of the organ ought to be discussed and defended by the board members of the Council every year at Ministry of finance premises.

Public Consultations:

It is not stated in law that regulator should organize the consultations with various stakeholders (media, lawyers, citizens, NGOs, academia, etc.)

4.2.2 Brief overview of Hungary audiovisual media (merged) regulator (National Media and Infocommunications Authority – NMHH)

Elaborated according to the information available in the website of NMHH and according to the Act 84 of Law 2010 in Collection of Laws of Hungary and codex

(<http://english.nmhh.hu/>; <https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A1000082.TV>)

Key role, competencies and subjects of regulation:

NMHH acts as one central regulator for all media platforms (radio, television, internet, electronic communication, film industry, postal services and telecommunications). In the

end of 2010 according to new legislation two regulators (ORTT – National Radio and Television Committee and National Communication authority) were merged into convergent media regulatory body NMHH.

Key role of NMHH is to supervise and oversee obedience of media regulations in all media spheres across Hungary. The body holds policy making competence, grants the licenses to new media service providers, solves the complaints from the citizens and imposes the fines and sanctions in case of breaking the law. The body is defined as state organ which should be independent from the government.

Position in national legislation & Definition of body's independence:

NMHH is not constitutional body. Its establishment and activities are defined in national codex and laws. The independence of the regulator is explicitly defined in law. Organ should act as independent authority separated from the government as well as from any commercial entity.

Definition of the independence in Constitution of Hungary known as Fundamental Law of Hungary is not elaborated into detail. The constitution only says that Hungary independent and democratic country. The final version of Hungarian constitution was approved by Fidesz relatively late in 2011.

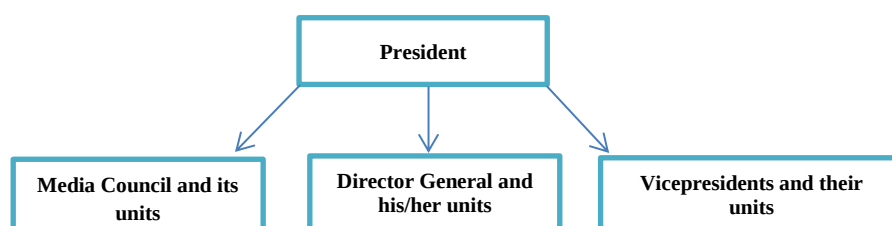
Organizational structure, process of board members election:

The organizational structure of the regulator is wide and hierarchical. The competences are concentrated in hand of the President of regulator. The body consists of two main separate sub-units/sub-roles: General Director and Media Council. President of NMHH is nominated and appointed by Hungarian prime minister for 9 year period. The president is

automatically nominated to be a chairman of Media Council (sub-regulator for public media). President then nominates and appoints the members of the board of the body – two Vice-presidents, Director General and Deputy Director. Media council also selects the top management of Hungarian public media.

The law specifically describes the criteria and expertise of the candidate for the president. It also prohibits the president to be a member of any political party or movements and to be active in any media organization (as well as president's relatives). The power and the competence over the body is highly centralized in president's hands who is subordinated only to prime minister.

Figure 3 Sketch of visualization of NMHH organizational structure:



Financing:

Body is funded from the state budget and revenues from collected fines and fees. The budget is considered and approved every year.

Public consultations:

The law does not order the organ to organize public consultations. However the regulator occasionally conducts them.

4.2.3 Brief overview of Poland audiovisual media regulator (National Broadcasting Council / KRRiT and National Media Regulator)

Elaborated according to the information available in the website of KRRiT, National Media Regulator and according to the Law 929/2016 in Collection of Laws of Poland, Article 213 – 215 in Constitution of Republic of Poland
(<http://www.krrit.gov.pl/en/krrit/about-the-national-broadcasting-council/>;
<http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20160000929>;
http://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm8.nsf/page.xsp/rmn_informacja)

Key role, competencies and subjects of regulation:

National broadcasting council was established in 1992 as the state body which is responsible for regulation of audiovisual (television and radio) media landscape in Poland. Till 2016 the body regulated private as well as public media. However in 2016 the new legislation (law 929/2016) ordered establishment of separate regulator for public media called National Media Regulator. In general KRRiT does not hold policy making competence. In the process of new legislation creation it rather acts as advisory organ for prime minister and government. It is able to provide critical statements within the new laws proposals. The body approves the licenses, solves the complaints, imposes the fines and supervises the media regulation obedience in Poland. Its mission is to maintain and cultivate the media pluralism in Polish audiovisual media environment.

National media regulator primarily focuses on regulation of public television and radio. This authority performs within the lower house of Polish parliament. This body has policy making competence and is able to submit a proposal of new legislation for parliament to discuss and approve it.

Position in national legislation & Definition of body's independence:

Comparing to other V4 countries the existence and competencies of both Polish audiovisual media regulators are defined in Constitution of Republic of Poland. KRRiT's establishment and the roles are basically defined in article 213 – 215. Despite that constitution was approved in 1997 and the law establishing KRRiT was valid since 1992, the supremacy of the organ was protected by constitution. Its independence is expressed by the word supremacy.

The term independence is in Constitution of Republic of Poland defined as independent/free from any kind of power/from anybody/anything.

The independence of National media regulator is not stated in the law.

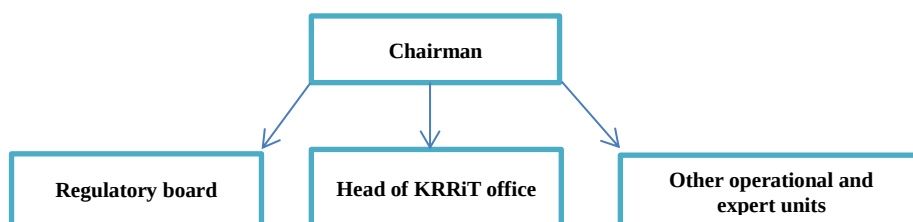
Organizational structure, process of board members election:

KRRiT has regulatory board consisting of five board members including one chairman. Their term of office is six years. Two members are elected by Sejm (lower house of parliament), one member is selected by senate (upper house of Polish parliament) and one is selected by president of the country. The members can be also dismissed by Sejm, senate as well as president. Within the constitution there is information regarding the limitations for the regulatory board membership. It mentions the fact that board member should not be active in political party, trade union or execute any activities which may be in conflict of interest to independent function of KRRiT board member. The detailed specifications for the board member profession and candidate limitations are stated in statutes.

Organizational structure of KRRiT is hierarchical. On the top of the organogram stays the chairman who manages the regulatory board together with operations and back office of the body.

National media regulator consists of five members. Presently its chairman is prime minister of Poland. The remaining members are representatives of ruling party. The board of National media regulator appoints the top management of Polish public media.

Figure 4 Sketch of visualization of KRRiT organizational structure:



Financing:

Both regulators are financed from state budget. However KRRiT's funding has to be updated and reasoned every year.

Public consultations:

KRRiT is not obliged to organize public consultations. However in some cases the body organizes them.

4.2.4 Brief overview of Slovak Republic audiovisual media regulator (Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission / RVR)

Elaborated according to the information available in the website of RVR and according to the law 308/2000 in Collection of Laws of Slovak Republic and codex (<http://en.rvr.sk/>; <https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2000-308>)

Key role, competencies and subjects of regulation:

The Council is responsible for regulation of audiovisual media across Slovakia.

Audiovisual media covers radio and television broadcasting. Council is in charge of supervision of media law obedience, it solves all questionable moments in the area of radio and television broadcasting. The organ has a competence to set the fines and it also grants the licensing and registers new broadcasters. The body has policy making competence and is able to participate in new laws compositions which have to be approved by parliament and the president of the country.

Its role is also to watch out media pluralism and the freedom for common good of the citizens.

Position in national legislation & Definition of body's independence:

The council's establishment is not defined in the constitution. However its position and legitimacy is stated in the national codex. First law which granted the establishment of the regulator was approved during the process of independent Slovakia establishment in 1992. However the law was updated several times and the latest version 308/2000 defines the current scope of responsibilities of the regulator. Independence is defined in present law explicitly. RVR is state organ but should be completely independent from the government. Council's independence according to the law is guaranteed by separate budget and independence of its board members.

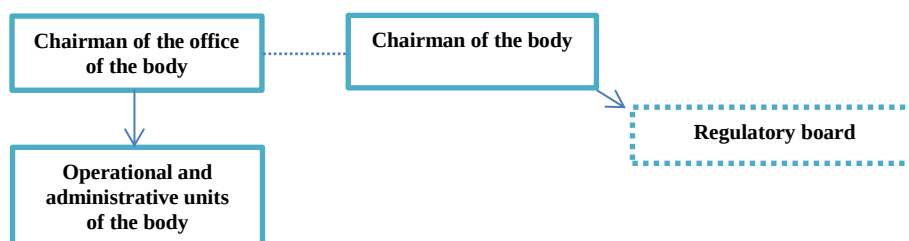
Definition of independence in Constitution of Slovakia is similar to Czech version. Being independent means "being independent from any kind of power" (Constitution of Slovakia, 1992). This point can be also questioned with regard to audiovisual media regulator. Its members are selected by Slovak parliament and the budget has to be properly reasoned each year.

Organizational structure, process of board members election:

Organizational structure of Slovak audiovisual media regulator is rather decentralized. The organ consists of regulatory board for which is responsible Chairman. The management of the regulator is in the competence of Head of Office. Both managers are independent from each other in the question of their duties execution.

The regulatory board consists of nine persons including one chairman. All members are elected and assigned by parliament. On the other side the candidates may be nominated not only by members of the parliament but also by professional institutions, civil associations active in audiovisual sphere. Selected nine members then vote for the chairman among themselves. Member of the regulatory board cannot hold any function in government, public service, political party, media organization (as well as his/her relatives). Including above stated limitations additionally, chairman of the board cannot have any other employment (except scientific, literary and artistic services). The other board members are allowed to have another employment besides board membership (however they have to respect above stated limitations). The members of board can be dismissed by parliament in case there is evidence that the criteria for membership are not respected. There are no requirements for experience and education for candidates on board members.

Figure 5 Sketch of visualization of RVR organizational structure:



Financing:

The council is finance from the state budget. The body has to prepare new proposal for its budget each year. The budget has to be reasoned and presented to Ministry of Finance of Slovak Republic which approves it.

Public consultations:

The obligation to organize public consultations is not specified in law.

4.3 Profiles of regulatory bodies' board members in particular V4 countries

Concerning the profiles of particular board members in Findings section I focus primarily on presentation of relevant information (especially information pointing on questionable status of independence). Referring to content efficiency matters, the composition (including the board members names and key information) of regulatory board is presented in table. In case the indications pointing to doubtful independence status were discovered I mention them in particular board member profile highlighted in bold.

4.3.1 Czech Republic: Audiovisual regulatory board composition and identified indications

Table 5

RRTV regulatory board composition with identified indications referring to ambiguous independence of the regulator

<u>Name</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Indications referring to ambiguous independence of the body and the result of examination</u>	<u>Term of office termination</u>
Bc. Ivan Krejčí	Chairman of the board	- to board member election process nominated by Czech Social Democratic (political) party/CSSD active in Czech government - studied movie production - currently acting as Stage-manager and Artistic Director in one of most successful Czech Theatres - in the past served as Stage-managers in several Czech theaters - in political area he has been active member of CSSD party (he is active member of political party which is in contradiction with national law about RRTV establishment) and has been holding function of Area Election Manager and Assistant of Czech National Council Member - he was an candidate on member of council within communal politics function RESULT: ties on politics and government currently and also in the past. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	May 2021
Mgr. Martin Bezouška	Deputy Chairman of the board	- to board member election process nominated by Czech Social Democratic (political) party active in Czech government - studied film and television screenwriting	June 2021

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

		- currently employed in academia (Charles University in Prague) - in the past employed in commercial media and communication agencies. Served also as Head of Communication Unit at Czech Ministry of Culture - in 2004 he was a candidate of political movement of Independent Candidates into Parliament of Czech Republic - he is and was officially politically impartial - to the RRTV he was elected for the first time in 2009 (at this time the chairman for Permanent Commission on Media within Czech Parliament was his previous superior at Ministry of Culture - Vítězslav Jandák who was also a member of Czech Parliament and CSSD political party). - in 2012 he was in examination process within his entrepreneurship activities besides the function in RRTV. RESULT: ties on politics and government and commercial media in the past. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	
Mgr. Ladilav Jakl	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by Freedom and Direct Democracy Party - studied journalism - currently working as Analyst and Management board member in Václav Klaus Institute (former President and Prime Minister of Czech Republic (the institute is financed by PPF bank – company with Russian roots connected to significant money laundering cases) - in the past employed as Member of Czech National Council, Advisor of Václav Klaus and Director of political department of President Klaus's office - in the area of politics he was a candidate in 2018 for the membership to National Council with support of Václav Klaus - officially he is not and was not member of any political party - serves as Chairman of civil association focused on beer promotion RESULT: ties on politics and government in the past and present. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	April 2025
Mgr., MgA. Dana Jaklová	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by right-wing party TOP 09 - studied Czech, French and dramaturgy - currently working on freelance as Journalist - in the past active in state media, she was member of liberal political party and till 2015 she was a member of liberal coalition party: Civic Democratic party - till 2012 she was chairman of Czech public radio council and with her name is connected controversial case of Czech radio Director dismissal - her former husband is also current RRTV board member Ladislav Jakl - during 2011 – 2014 cooperated with Czech media portal (member of commercial regional media group) RESULT: ties on politics and government and commercial media in the past. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	May 2021
Mgr. Václav Jehlička	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by right-wing party TOP 09 (active in Parliament). - studied education - currently active in RRTV and serves as Program Director of Masaryk University Center in Telč, Chairman of Association of Towns and villages within Czech inheritance UNESCO - in the past holding function in communal politics, acted also as Senator in Czech Senate and Minister of Culture of Czech Republic. - active member of TOP 09 political party (political party membership is in contradiction with law establishing RRTV and his function in RRTV) RESULT: ties on politics and government in the past as well as presently. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	June 2023

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

PhDr. Jana Kasalová	Deputy Chairman of the board	- to board member election process nominated by ANO 2011 (main coalition party with prime Minister Andrej Babiš who owns influential press and digital media) - studied journalism - in the past active in commercial as well as public media as journalist and Program Director. Since 2001 has been actively cooperating with several Czech ministries in the questions of communication strategies and public relations. - currently acting as advisor to Ministry of Interior in the area of communication trainings for its managers - employed also as Advisor for Legislation Council of Government of Czech Republic - in the past she was examined due to her external communication consulting activities, own business subject (PR and media agency) and her work at Ministries were discussed as conflict of interests with her function in RRTV. - politically inactive RESULT: ties on commercial media in the past, currently ties on government Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	November 2024
Ing. arch. Václav Měnl	Deputy Chairman of the board	- to board member election process nominated by coalition party Civic Democratic Party - studied architecture - in the past active in communal politics as well as government as Senator, Deputy Minister of Economy, Deputy Minister for Regional Development, Manager and Chairman of Election Committee within Civic Democratic Party - active as a member in Civic Democratic Party (contradiction with his current function in RRTV) RESULT: ties on politics and government in the past as well as presently. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	May 2021
Mgr. Bc. Radka Nastoupilová	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by ANO 2011 (main coalition party with prime Minister Andrej Babiš who owns influential press and digital media) - studied education, psychology and mass media - in the past active as spokesperson of various state organs: Ministry of Regional Development, National Controlling Office, Office of Vysočina Region. Spokesperson of ANO political party in the past. - currently Spokesperson of Czech Inspection for Environment RESULT: currently as well as in the past ties on government. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	May 2021
Doc. JUDr. Ing. Daniel Novák, CSc.	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia - studied cybernetics and law - active in science and academia currently as well as in the past - currently has his own law office in Prague and acts at Charles University in Prague and University of Matej Bell in Slovakia RESULT: Member is not risk for regulator's independence.	May 2021
Bc. Vádim Petrov	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by ANO 2011 (main coalition party with prime Minister Andrej Babiš who owns influential press and digital media) - studied andragogy and artistic guitar playing - in the past active in public media, Director of Communication in Office of Government of Czech Republic, Deputy Director of Prime Minister Office, activity in commercial PR area (also in his own business activities), top managerial positions in several companies, academic and educational activities at Universities and media houses. - currently acting as Deputy Chairman in ASIS International CZ (association of security professionals) - officially politically inactive RESULT: in the past ties on government. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	March 2025
Ing. Marek Poledníček	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak's peoples party - studied heavy-current technology - active in his own business activities (audio technology services) - till 2012 served as Director of Culture office in Czech town Ostrov - currently acting as Deputy Mayor of Ostrov town and Marketing Director of Jáchymov Spa	May 2021

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

		- active member of Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak's peoples party (political party membership is in contradiction with his function in RRTV according to law) RESULT: ties on politics and government in the past as well as presently. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	
Ing. Ladislav Šinčl	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by ČSSD political party - studied economy - in the past active in communal politics as member of Town Council and Deputy Mayor of town Karviná, till 2017 served as member of Czech parliament (member of budgeting committee and committee for environment) - member of political party ČSSD (political party membership is in contradiction with his function in RRTV according to law) RESULT: ties on politics and government in the past as well as presently. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	July 2023
Ing. Dagmar Zvěřinová	Board member	- to board member election process nominated by ČSSD political party - studied horticulture and journalism - in the past served as Deputy Mayor and Mayor of town Žďár nad Sázavou, Senator in parliament of Czech Republic, - currently member of town council Žďár nad Sázavou (which is debatable in relation to her function in RRTV) - member of ČSSD political party (political party membership is in contradiction with his function in RRTV according to law) RESULT: ties on politics and government in the past as well as presently. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	July 2021

(Elaborated according to author's examination of information obtained from webpages of RRTV, Register of commercial subjects in

Czech Republic, webpages of board members' employers and civil associations, registers of political parties, webpage and archive of Parliament of Czech Republic, official Curriculum Vitae of board members, information and posts on social networks – LinkedIn, Facebook, information obtained from official town webpages, Land register of Czech republic, Trade register of Czech Republic).

The findings in the table present that six of 13 board members may act as risk for the regulators independence thanks to their present political activities and close ties to political parties. These six persons were identified as current members of political parties active also in Czech government. Another six persons were evaluated as potentially risky for the independence of organ due to their previous functions in communal or government politics. There is also a case pointing to the connection with commercial media. In general majority of RRTV board members have political past or the connections at high profile political subjects in the country. Only one board member is not direct risk according to available information.

4.3.2 Hungary: Audiovisual regulatory board composition and identified indications

Considering merged structure of Hungarian media regulator/NMHH into the examination process were included members of main regulatory board. The members are: President

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

(acts also as Chairman of Media Council regulating public media), two Vice-presidents of Media Council, Director General and Deputy Director General. The names of Vice-president of NMHH, Deputy Director General are not stated in official regulator website. However there are names of Media Council members. All of the NMHH members are nominated and assigned by Fidesz party and therefore they are automatically evaluated as potential risky for regulator's independence.

Table 6

NMHH and Media Council regulatory board composition with identified indications referring to ambiguous independence of the regulator

Name	Function	Indications referring to ambiguous independence of the body and the result of examination	Term of office termination
Dr. Monika Karas	President of NMHH & Head of Media Council	- to the president chair nominated by ruling party Fidesz - studied law - in the past active in publishing companies (mainly owned or connected political parties) as Legal Advisor, later as Deputy CEO - after communism downfall served as Legal Advisor for one of the oldest Hungarian communistic newspaper, later she moved to commercial television and radio as Legal Advisor (both media are favorable to Fidesz) - she was member of several national expert committees in media and authorship laws and bar association in Hungary. - acted in board of Publisher Association of Hungary - in the past had ties on Hungarian socialistic party - during her Legal Advisor profession she represented companies associated to Viktor Orbán (at court) - she acted as Legal Advisor for official organ of anti-Semitic party MIÉP RESULT: ties on the politics and commercial media in the past and presently. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	September 2022
Dr. Janka Aranyos-Börcs	Director General of the Office	- to the president chair nominated by ruling party Fidesz - studied law - in the past active in Infocommunication authority in various legal roles with focus on new media regulation development (the whole career path active in media regulation area) - holder of prizes for her contribution to media regulations - politically inactive, however is subordinated to Monika Karas RESULT: member may be potential risk for independence of the body	2019 (might be renewed)
Dr. János Auer	Member of Media Council	- to the president chair nominated by ruling party Fidesz - studied law - in the past acted as Lawyer for telecommunication companies - majority of his career he was active as independent attorney at law RESULT: cannot be assessed into details due to lack of information about member	Not stated
Dr. Tamas Kollarik	Member of Media Council	- to the president chair nominated by ruling party Fidesz - studied law and public administration - in the past active as Lawyer at the Office of Hungarian Prime Minister - member of Budapest city council (this function is debatable referring to his current position in media council), member of supervisory board of Budapestfilm zrt. - he is active in artistic work (screenplay writing, director, production manager and writer) - he serves as General Director of National Digital Library and	Not Stated

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

		multimedia center and he is also Coordinator of Hungarian Media managed by media council. RESULT: member may be potential risk for independence of the body	
Dr. András Koltay, PhD., LL.M	Member of Media Council	- to the president chair nominated by ruling party Fidesz - studied law - active in academia and science, chief editor in several scientific journals with target on media freedom and media law - he publishes the reports assessing Hungarian media regulations approved by Fidesz party (generated positive reports) RESULT: member may be potential risk for independence of the body	Not Stated
Dr. Agnes Vass	Member of Media Council	- to the president chair nominated by ruling party Fidesz - studied law - in the past primarily acted as independent Attorney at law within media law. RESULT: cannot be assessed into details due to lack of information about member	Not Stated

(Elaborated according to author's examination of information obtained from webpages of NMHH, Register of commercial subjects in Hungary, webpages of board members' employers and civil associations, registers of political parties, official Curriculum Vitae of board members, information and posts on social networks – LinkedIn, Facebook, Land register of Hungary, Trade register of Hungary).

The information about regulatory board members in Hungary is not so easily accessible.

On official regulator's webpage there are only couple lines of information about particular board members which are written only in Hungarian language. NMHH board members are experts on law who seem to be loyal to ruling Fidesz party. There is a lack of experts from the media and journalism practice.

4.3.3 Poland: Audiovisual regulatory board composition and identified indications

Table 7

KRRiT and National Media Council regulatory board composition with identified indications referring to ambiguous independence of the regulator

Name	Function	Indications referring to ambiguous independence of the body and the result of examination	Term of office termination
Witold Kołodziejewski, MA	Chairman of KRRiT board	- to board member election process nominated by Law and Justice political party (PiS ruling party) - studied philosophy - worked as journalist - in the area of politics former member of Warsaw city Council, Vice-mayor of Ursinov region, Councilor for Masovian Regional Assembly - performed as Vice-minister for digitalization - former member of PiS RESULT: ties on politics in the past. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence	July 2022
Teresa Bochwic, MA, PhD.	Deputy Chairman of KRRiT	- to board member election process nominated by Law and Justice political party (PiS ruling party) - studied education - in the past she was active in several political and civil movements opposing communism - she worked in private and state media as Journalist - worked for Polish President and Prime Minister	July 2022

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

		- co-founded several expert journals RESULT: ties on politics in the past. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence	
Prof. Janusz Kawecki	Member of KRRiT	- to board member election process nominated by President of Poland - studied civil engineering - his life is connected to academia and research. He also served as external advisor for several expert magazines in the area of construction - he also wrote opinion statements to press media (primarily religious) - he has been member of various expert committee in the area of construction and higher education - he is co-founder of one of religion and educational TV channel and radio station supported by Catholic Church (in Poland backed by Tadeusz Rydzyk known for his controversial media imperium) - member of Association of Catholic Journalists RESULT: direct ties on catholic media in Poland. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	September 2022
Andrzej Sabatowski, MA	Member of KRRiT	- to board member election process nominated by President of Poland - studied history - in the past performing in state and commercial media (press, TV) as journalist and Program Manager and Finance Director. - he is future father in law of the daughter of Polish President Andrzej Duda - he served in Rzeczpospolita newspaper as a representative of journalistic ethics which was criticizing the right-wing journalists work RESULT: direct ties on politics and government. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence	September 2022
Elżbieta Więclawska-Sauk, MA	Member of KRRiT	- to board member election process nominated by Law and Justice political party (PiS ruling party) - studied Polish philology - in the beginning of the career working as journalist in public media and specializing on social issues programs and media corruptions cases in Poland. - she performed in Sejm in 2001 and in 2005 she was elected as Senator (as a member of PiS) - she served as a Member of state committee for culture and media - her former husband was also member of Sejm in PiS party - she is member of supreme arbiters tribunal - former member of PiS RESULT: direct ties on politics and government in the past. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence	July 2022
Krzysztof Czabański	Chairman of National Media Council	- to board nominated by Law and Justice political party (PiS ruling party) - studied political science - in the past active as President of Polish Press Office, President of Polish Information Agency, Chairman of Polish Radio board and former member of Sejm - he was appointed to participate of preparation of new media reform in Poland (during his function of State Secretary on Ministry of Culture) - member of PiS political party RESULT: ties on politics and government currently and also in the past. Member is risk for regulator's independence	October 2020
Juliusz Braun	Member of National Media Council	- to board nominated by Law and Justice political party (PiS ruling party) - studied geology and journalism - long term member of Sejm since 1989, in the past acting as journalist, former Chairman of KRRiT (before time of his mandate expiration he resigned from the function due to lack of support from other team members) - former Director of movie and audiovisual media within Ministry of Culture, former Head of Council for Advertisemnt - ex Head of Strategy and Analysis Unit at Ministry of Culture - former member of supervisory board of Polish National Television - ex Chairman of Polish National Television - his nephew is well-known Polish movie director	October 2020

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

		RESULT: ties on politics and government currently and also in the past. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence	
Elzbieta Kruk	Member of National Media Council	- to board nominated by Law and Justice political party (PiS ruling party) - studied public administration - acted as Assistant of National Controlling Authority President - former Head of President's National Security Office - direct ties and cooperation with Lech Kaczyński (as his Assistant and Head of his Offices) - former member of Sejm, member of PiS and co-founder of PiS party and one of PiS leaders - in the past served as Chairman of KRRiT - member of European parliament RESULT: ties on politics and government currently and also in the past. Member is risk for regulator's independence	October 2020
Joanna Lichocka	Member of National Media Council	- to board nominated by Law and Justice political party (PiS ruling party) - studied literature - in the past acted as journalist of public and commercial media - she was examined by ethical committee for her performance during presidential campaign discussion where she performed as moderator (she was accused to be biased in favor of Jarosław Aleksander Kaczyński) - she created several documentaries about Lech Kaczyński (Polish president dead by plane accident) - former member of Sejm and representing PiS - member of PiS party RESULT: ties on politics and government currently and also in the past. Member is risk for regulator's independence	October 2020
Grzegorz Podzorny	Member of National Media Council	- to board nominated by Kukiz'15 (right-wing populist party) - studied political science - before communism downfall acted in civic movement and association fighting against regime - now active in civil and trade union associations - in the past acted in Press agency of Poland and commercial media - is not officially member of political party RESULT: ties on politics currently and also in the past. Member is potential risk for regulator's independence	October 2020

(Elaborated according to author's examination of information obtained from webpages of KRRiT and Senat, Sejm, Register of commercial subjects in Slovakia, webpages of board members' employers and civil associations, registers of political parties, official Curriculum Vitae of board members, information and posts on social networks – LinkedIn, Facebook, Land register of Poland, Trade register of Poland).

Officials in boards of two regulators active in audiovisual media sphere in Poland have certain ties (in the past or in the present) mainly with the most influential political party in Poland called PiS. Most of the board members is or was politically active in this party and served in Sejm or Senat. The new media reform allows the prime minister to choose and appoint members of National Media Council (who are probably loyal to PiS politics). However according to examination in present research board of KRRiT are created by majority of former politicians and PiS party members.

4.3.4 Slovakia: Audiovisual regulatory board composition and identified

indications

Table 8

RVR regulatory board composition with identified indications referring to ambiguous independence of the regulator

<u>Name</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Indications referring to ambiguous independence of the body and the result of examination</u>	<u>Term of office termination</u>
PhDr. Marta Danielová	Chairman of the board	- to board member election process nominated by civil association active in sport area - in the past employed in public media as journalist and member of media council - studied journalism - politically inactive presently as well as in the past - inactive in civil and social organizations RESULT: member is not risk for independence of the body.	15.12. 2024
Mgr. Ingrid Fašiangová	Board member	- to board election process nominated by civil association active in sport and city community development - in the past active in public media in the area of culture and art, member of media council - studied theater science - co-founder of artistic agency - besides membership in regulatory board she is employed as General Manager of professional and reputable theater in Slovakia - politically inactive presently as well as in the past - inactive in civil and social organizations RESULT: member is not risk for independence of the body.	16.12. 2020
Mgr. Gabriela Rothmayerová	Board member	- to board election process nominated by artistic organization active in radio area and by Association of towns and villages in Slovakia - studied journalism, now works as writer - in the past active in public media as journalist and member of media council - in political area she was active as Advisor for Robert Fico (Slovak Prime Minister till 2018 who resigned after the murder of journalist Ján Kuciak) - after the communism down-fall she acted as member of Slovak National Council till 1994 - In the area of social sphere she is member of New Word Club (civil association established after communism downfall – it was a new political movement platform specializing on left-wings politics). - Currently politically inactive RESULT: ties on politics and government in the past. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.	13.01. 2021
PhDr. Peter Kolenič, PhD.	Board member	- to board election process nominated by his current employer University of Constantine Philosopher - studied journalism and German language - in the past worked in public media till 2012, since 2013 active in academia and media research - currently as well as in the past politically inactive - in the area of social sphere he serves as Chairman of the board in Clear Word Foundation (organization supporting work of journalists with handicaps and realization development activities in journalism professionalization) RESULT: member is not risk for independence of the body.	16.02. 2023
Mgr. Milan Blaha	Board member	- to board election process nominated by Union of Slovak Journalists - studied law - in the past acted as Spokesperson in National Controlling Office, Confederation of Trade Unions - in the past active in public media (his program in Slovak National Television was controversial for nonobjective speakers selection, he tended to choose hosts close to ruling party HZDS and SMER) - his son (Ľuboš Blaha) is a member of Slovak National	16.02. 2023

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

		Council and SMER ruling party - worked as Journalist for daily newspaper called National Revival which was pro-government in times of HZDS and Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar (the newspaper were owned by HZDS party) - before communism downfall he worked for weekly newspaper called New word which was official propagandist media of Communist party in Czechoslovakia - till recently he cooperated with think-tank company ASA with direct ties on SMER ruling party - his function in council RVR is in contradiction with law (his close relative(son is active in government) RESULT: ties on politics and government currently and also in the past. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	
PhDr. Pavol Holeštiak, PhD.	Board member	- to board election process nominated by Consumer Information Agency - studied at Faculty of Philosophy - in the past worked in public service (Head of Žilina region office/function in communal politics) - currently working as Branch Office Head of state public health insurance company and member of Čadca town council (the function in town council is incompatible with his current position in RVR according to law) - member of political party SMER and previously member of SNS political party - has close ties to high government officials (also friendships on Facebook) - co-author of the poetry collection celebrating former president of Slovak state Jozef Tiso with pro-nationalism regime during World War II. - former Editor in Chief of pro-nationalism oriented magazine - he presents and shares populist and nationalistic posts on Facebook - politically active presently as well as in the past - active in social sphere (Association of Slovak Writers) RESULT: active in politics and political party currently and also in the past. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	28.03. 2023
Mgr. György Batta	Board member	- to board election process nominated by political party Most – Híd (party representing Hungarian minority in Slovakia called Bridge in translation) - studied journalism - currently working in Hungarian state media on external basis and acting also as member of town council Komárno (this function is in contradiction with position in RVR) - member of political party Most – Híd (incompatible with position in media regulator) - politically active in present and in the past RESULT: active in politics and political party currently and also in the past. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	13.12. 2023
Mgr. Peter Kubica	Board member	- to board election process nominated by civil association Institute for Social Values - studied journalism - currently working as journalist (external cooperation with various media) - member of Association of Slovak Writers - in recent past member of political party SNS and SMER ruling party - co-author of the poetry collection celebrating former president of Slovak state Jozef Tiso with pro-nationalism regime during World War II. - former spokesperson of Žilina region (function in communal politics) RESULT: active in politics and political party currently and also in the past. Member is risk for regulator's independence.	26.01. 2023
PhDr. Anikó Dušíková, CSc.	Board member	- to board election process nominated by political party Most-Híd - studied education of Hungarian and Slovak Language - currently working at Comenius University, active in academia and research of Slovak and Hungarian language, literature and media production - her family relative Františka Dušíková acts as Secretary of political party Most-Híd. - Anikó is and was politically inactive	13.12. 2025

RESULT: indirect ties on politics and government. Member may be potential risk for regulator's independence.

(Elaborated according to author's examination of information obtained from webpages of RVR, Register of commercial subjects in Slovakia, webpages of board members' employers and civil associations, registers of political parties, webpage and archive of National Council of Slovakia, official Curriculum Vitae of board members, information and posts on social networks – LinkedIn, Facebook, information obtained from Literature Information Center of Slovakia, Land register of Slovakia, Trade register of Slovakia).

The examination of board member profiles shows that six board members from nine may act as potential risk for the independence of the regulatory body. The risk is mainly connected to direct or indirect relationships with political parties. Two board members are active in communal politics and are members of coalition political parties besides their function in RVR. Another board member's son is member of ruling party as well as the son is active member of National Council of Slovakia. These circumstances point to the breaking the national law according to which the regulator was established and conditions for board member function were set.

In the area of social and economic sphere there were not identified any questionable connections. Board members are not active in entrepreneurship, media ownership structures and the activity in social or civil organizations were not evaluated as risky.

4.4 Assessment of the particular regulator's independence according to INDIREG methodology

Within this section the results for particular media regulators according to INDIREG tool are specified. INDIREG assess regulators' independence on EU level.

4.4.1 Czech Republic audiovisual regulator's independence score according to INDIREG ranking tool

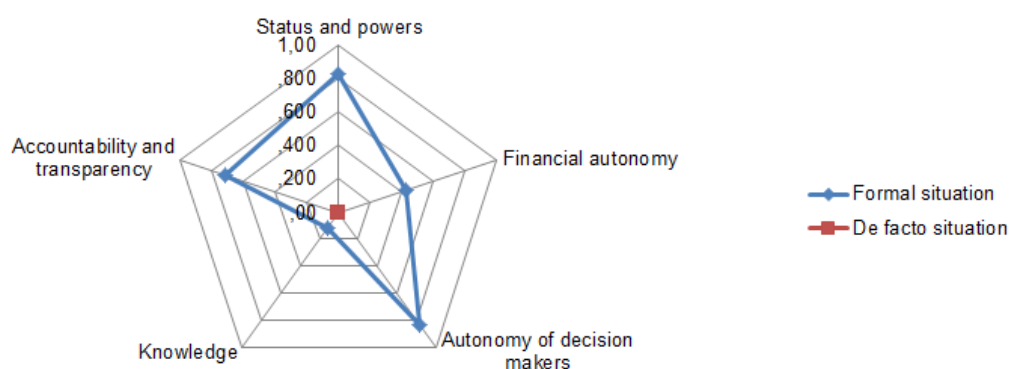
Thanks to INDIREG ranking tool the formal situation in regulator's independence was evaluated. The assessment was done via detailed analysis of law 231/2001 (Radio and Television Broadcasting Law). The results are presented in following figures.

Table 9

Czech Republic INDIREG scores

<u>Independence dimension</u>	<u>Formal situation score</u>
Status and powers	0.830
Financial autonomy	0.420
Autonomy of decision makers	0.830
Knowledge	0.120
Accountability and transparency	0.720

Figure 6 Radar chart displaying the scores of particular independence dimensions



There are favorable results within status and powers and autonomy of decision makers. The law clearly and sufficiently specifies the competencies of the body as well as the autonomy aspects within regulatory board. However the slight decrease of the score maybe seen in accountability and transparency of the regulators. This lower score points out the vague statements in legislation regarding the duties to publish the reports of body's activities and to consults its decisions with external environment. The worst results may be observed in knowledge and financial autonomy dimensions. The requirements on members expertise and education level are not stated in the law. Moreover the regulator is quite dependent on the finance from the overall state budget.

4.4.2 Hungary audiovisual media regulator's independence score according to INDIREG ranking tool

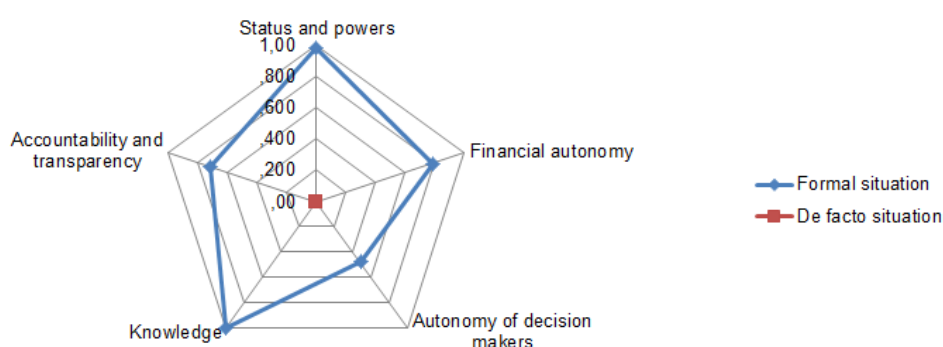
Thanks to INDIREG ranking tool the formal situation in regulator's independence was evaluated. The independence assessment was elaborated through detailed analysis of Act 84 of Law 2010 (Act on media services and mass communication). The results are presented in following figures.

Table 10

Hungary INDIREG scores

<u>Independence dimension</u>	<u>Formal situation score</u>
Status and powers	0.980
Financial autonomy	0.790
Autonomy of decision makers	0.480
Knowledge	1.000
Accountability and transparency	0.720

Figure 7 Radar chart displaying the scores of particular independence dimensions



The situation in Hungary merged media regulator points out not favorable results in formal independence within almost all dimensions. In national legislation there are plenty details and specifications regarding regulatory board member education and professional background requirements. The same may be observed in question of competencies and instruments through which the body can execute its duties. Financial autonomy dimension results also pointing on relatively comfortable situation. The Hungarian legislation specifies how the body participates in partially self-financing mode. On the other side

there are visible insufficiencies in autonomy of decision makers dimension from EU point of view. The dimension accountability and transparency shows slight decrease, but still holds fine results.

4.4.3 Poland audiovisual media regulator's independence score according to INDIREG ranking tool

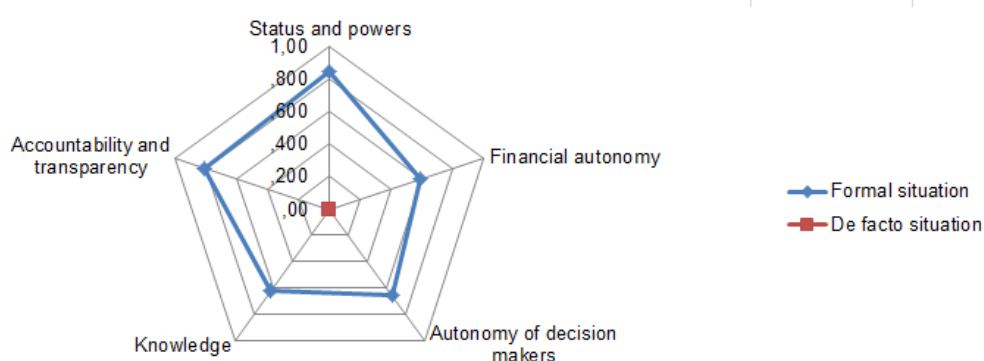
Thanks to INDIREG ranking tool the formal situation in regulator's independence was evaluated. The assessment was elaborated through detailed analysis of Article 213 – 215 in Constitution of Republic of Poland (The National Broadcasting Council). The results are presented in following figures.

Table 11

Poland INDIREG scores

<u>Independence dimension</u>	<u>Formal situation score</u>
Status and powers	0.850
Financial autonomy	0.590
Autonomy of decision makers	0.660
Knowledge	0.620
Accountability and transparency	0.810

Figure 8 Radar chart displaying the scores of particular independence dimensions



From EU media regulation point of view Poland's score is relatively favorable in status and powers dimension and accountability and transparency dimension. Poland legislation

guarantees the regulators competencies and autonomy from external environment and sets clear requirements within reporting of the body activities. On the other side we may see lower scores in three remaining dimensions. Media legislation regarding media regulatory body could be improved within knowledge requirements, more detailed and more specified autonomy of decision makers' requirements definition. The lowest score in financial autonomy dimension points out deficiencies in granting proper economic autonomy for the regulator which is still dependent from the parliament's final decision.

4.4.4 Slovakia audiovisual media regulator's independence score according to INDIREG ranking tool

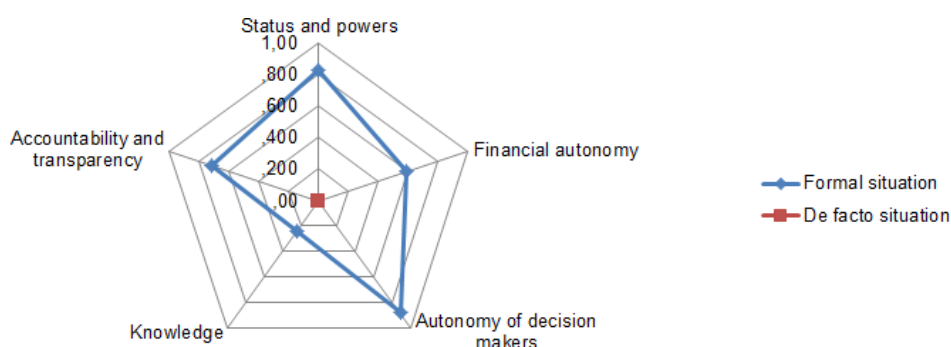
Thanks to INDIREG ranking tool the formal situation in regulators independence was assessed. The assessment was executed via detailed analysis of law 308/2000 (Broadcasting and Retransmission Law). The results are presented in following figures.

Table 12

Slovakia INDIREG scores

<u>Independence dimension</u>	<u>Formal situation score</u>
Status and powers	0.830
Financial autonomy	0.590
Autonomy of decision makers	0.880
Knowledge	0.240
Accountability and transparency	0.720

Figure 9 Radar chart displaying the scores of particular independence dimensions

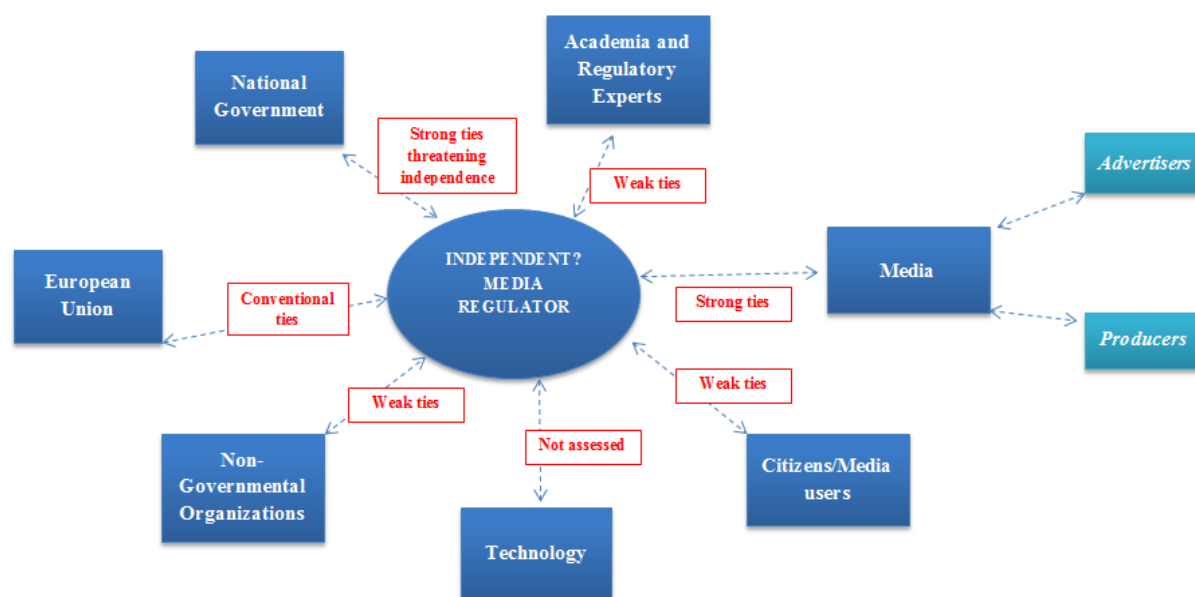


The scores show that Slovak audiovisual media regulator RVR has solid and sufficient formal situation in status and powers of the body and autonomy of decision-makers. This means that that national law clearly and into detail defines the competences and duties of the regulator and its members as well as it guarantees and specify the autonomous status of board regarding external influences. On the other side there is slightly decreased score in accountability and transparency as well as financial autonomy. The results indicate that within RVR there are insufficiencies in reporting activities, public consultation organization and board appointment and dismissal procedures according to EU media regulatory framework. Specifications of financial autonomy pillars and guarantees could be also revised and elaborated. The most critical are knowledge dimension results. Slovak legislation neglects the requirements on expertise and education of RVR board. Practically, there are no such specifications.

4.5 Establishment and brief description of networks diagram according to Actor network theory including the findings from all parts of the analysis

The combination of the media governance prism with the findings obtained from biographies, INDIREG assessment as well as summarization of countries profiles with respect to media freedom and media pluralism allowed me to outline basic relations among regulators environment. There were identified several tendencies and signs mutual for all V4 states. However few unique specifications for each country were observed. In following diagram the suggestion of the relationship between regulator and external environment for all V4 countries is presented. Findings of the research are discussed from media governance point of view in discussion section.

Figure 10 Regulatory body and its environment/stakeholders in V4 countries



5 Discussion & Conclusion

In the beginning of the present research there was an assumption that media regulation frameworks in post-communistic countries were not established properly according to the model of Western European democracies (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2000). Neglecting the principles of subsidiarity and omitting the standards for power decentralization pointed on tendencies deeply rooted into the whole post-communistic society. Despite that these countries won the first battle for the freedom there was and still is much to improve.

This project focuses on examination of one of the key areas in development and cultivation of democracy. Democratic countries are characterized by the free and pluralistic media system. In order to protect the opinions and public interest of all citizens and groups within society the media landscape has to be overseen and regulated by the independent institution. Media regulators maintain the freedom and diversity of media landscapes. From the past we know that in post-communist countries, media was regulated by the

government consisting of one ruling party. Transition to democracy and establishment of independent and efficient media regulator was not easy and probably were not executed completely till nowadays. Therefore this research aimed to assess the current independence status of audiovisual media regulators in Visegrád countries on EU and national level considering social, political as well as economic actors according to Actor-network theory. The independence status is then discussed from media governance perspective.

V4 was established as alliance of countries which are close not only geographically, but also historically, culturally and politically. However, my examination shows several mutual and few different developments and directions regarding media regulators characteristics in the V4 countries.

When we take a closer look at the findings Slovakia ranks as flawed democracy with hybrid liberal media model. This is only country where board members of regulators can be nominated by non-government, civil or expert organizations. The organizational structure of Slovak regulator stands out thanks to the decentralization of power.

Decentralization was achieved by division of the body to two independent units: separate regulatory board and separate office of the body. On the other hand the closer examination of particular board members backgrounds showed their close connections primarily to coalition political parties. Moreover, some of the board members were still holding function in political party (which is not allowed by law). Additionally according to INDIREG ranking results the specifications of knowledge and expertise within board members is almost nonexistent in Slovak legislation. The body is also highly dependent on the governmental funding.

Similarly to Slovakia Czech Republic also lacks the further specification of board officials' professional background and education. From INDIREG point of view there is also large area for improvement in financial autonomy which should be guaranteed legally. Czech audiovisual media regulator's board also consist of politically or commercially engaged persons. Some of them are also still active in political party, which is not allowed according to the law.

Hungary and Poland are rather similar thanks to the precise and detailed description of expertise of future regulatory board members. The whole Hungarian regulatory board is composed of lawyers. These two countries are specific also by updating their media regulations in favor of ruling government. The board members are chosen primarily by Prime Minister, President or by combination of parliament and government. In Poland as well as Hungary there is a specific regulatory body responsible for public media. These sub-regulators consist of ruling political party members or nominees of government. Such a set-up enables government to control public media and to influence public opinion. In addition on EU level the results also indicate imperfections in the area of autonomy of decision makers and in Poland also in financial autonomy of the body.

The independence on national level is defined as being independent from any kind of powers in all V4 states (synonymously). When we consider the data obtained in board members profiles construction we may see that all of the regulatory bodies are probably not independent due to political and media (in Poland also religious ties) ties of its board members. On EU level there is still plenty of space for further development and updates. There is visible trend of Hungary with its strong regulatory board full of lawyers nominated (and in the past cooperated with) by Fidesz party, who granted them also

policy-making competence in media law reform. Media regulatory approach in Poland and Hungary creates the current rather moving away from EU.

Another current is represented by Slovakia and Czech Republic. These countries try to regulate their media systems according to EU approach. Especially Slovakia includes elements of power decentralization and enables various civil and non-profit organizations to propose the members of regulator. The boards in Czech and Slovak Republic are more diversified and consist of politicians, journalist or experts on culture and arts. The common trait of V4 states still lies in political influence on their media regulators board.

When we look at media regulation approach in V4 from media governance perspective, the legislation enabling various stakeholders to influence the media regulations is missing. None of the bodies exercises open public consultations. Only Slovak regulator invites stakeholders apart from politics to regulatory board nomination. Additionally, only RVR in Slovakia has decentralized organizational structure. None regulator has majority of politically independent board members. None body encourages the media and creates the platform for self or co-regulations.

These findings indicate that although political transformation implemented 30 years ago was executed, there are still significant imperfections in basic democratic principles. Connection of the media regulator with political elites shows that communist heritage still persists. As Mungiu-Pipipidi (2000) said the status of democracy is the product of particular civil society in the country. In Poland and Hungary we see the tendencies of citizens to steadily vote for the conservative parties (Fidesz, PiS) which seem to neglect the views and needs of all citizens. Moreover these parties have tendencies to create contact networks with oligarchs and strengthen their power over the country and throughout the

media they are able to shape public opinion (Bajomi-Lazár, 2013). The political landscape in Czech Republic rather shows instable tendencies switching between liberals, conservatives and populists. In Slovakia there was large support of conservatives and social democrats, however massive money laundering cases and power abuse by the strongest political party caused creation of new liberal political movements, which reinforce their position in the country.

On the case of Visegrád countries we can see that the journey to democracy is not smooth, easy and quick. It is not sufficient only to change the political system and legislation. Democratic values need to spread and cultivated throughout whole society. Media ought to serve the society by informing and educating. Media should play as one of the key instruments in democracy strengthening process. Therefore it is necessary to supervise quality and diversity of media content. In this process the role of independent media regulator is substantial. In this research I found out that audiovisual media regulators in V4 states are not fully formally and informally independent on national and EU level. The key areas for further improvement were identified primarily in the area of political ties.

In this research only publicly available data were examined. This fact can act as main limit of the study. In the further research the independence of regulatory bodies can be more deeply evaluated via interviews with particular regulatory board members with utilization of media governance analytical framework in more depth.

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ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

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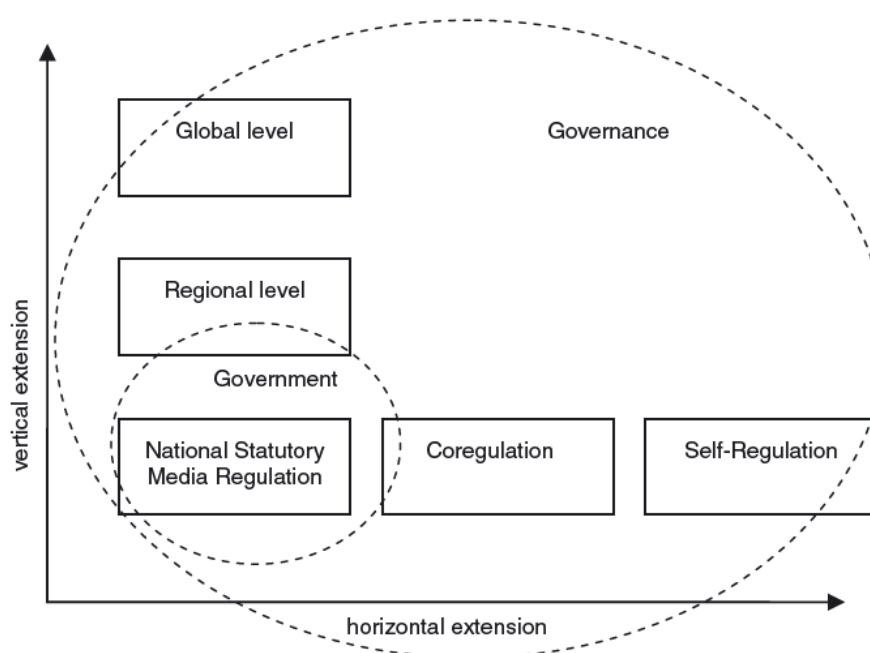
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Depiction of media governance concept in vertical and horizontal extension (Puppis, 2007, p.331)



Abstract

Present research examines formal and de facto independence of audiovisual media regulators in four post-communist states so called Visegrád group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) at national and EU level from media governance and actor-network theory point of view. Assessment of formal independence was executed by analysis of laws establishing media regulator in particular country. Informal independence was evaluated by gathering publicly available data about regulatory board members into brief biographic profiles. In the process of independence assessment the historical background of countries were taken into account. Short countries profiles were established including scores in relevant indexes focused on media freedom monitoring. Furthermore, brief characteristics of regulatory institutions (organizational structure, funding, board member electoral criteria, legal status of the body) were elaborated. EU level of independence was further assessed by official INDIREG ranking tool developed on demand of European Commission. The national level independence was assessed according to the definition of independence in particular national constitutions. The diagram outlining the basic relationships between regulator and its environment was created. The findings are discussed from perspective of media governance framework. Outputs obtained in examination shows that there is doubtful independence on national as well as EU level in all V4 countries. Especially political actor plays significant role in independence threatening.

Key words: media regulations, media governance, Visegrád group, independence of media regulators

Abstrakt

Die vorliegende Studie untersucht die formale und informelle Unabhängigkeit der Regulierungsbehörden für audiovisuelle Medien in vier postkommunistischen Staaten, der sogenannten Visegrád-Gruppe (Tschechische Republik, Ungarn, Polen, Slowakei) auf nationaler und EU-Ebene unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Media Governance und der Akteur Netzwerk-Theorie. Die Bewertung der formalen Unabhängigkeit wurde durch Analyse der Gesetze zur Festlegung der Medienaufsichtsbehörde in einem bestimmten Land durchgeführt. Die informelle Unabhängigkeit wurde bewertet, indem öffentlich verfügbare Daten über Aufsichtsratsmitglieder in kurzen biografischen Profilen gesammelt wurden. Bei der Beurteilung der Unabhängigkeit wurden die historischen Hintergründe der Länder berücksichtigt. Kurze Länderprofile wurden erstellt, einschließlich Punktzahlen in relevanten Indizes, die sich auf die Überwachung der Medienfreiheit konzentrieren. Darüber hinaus wurden kurze Merkmale der Aufsichtsbehörden (Organisationsstruktur, Finanzierung, Wahlkriterien der Vorstandsmitglieder, rechtlicher Status des Gremiums) erarbeitet. Der Grad der Unabhängigkeit der EU wurde weiter durch das offizielle INDIREG-Ranking-Tool bewertet, das auf Anfrage der Europäischen Kommission entwickelt wurde. Die Unabhängigkeit auf nationaler Ebene wurde gemäß der Definition der Unabhängigkeit in bestimmten nationalen Verfassungen bewertet. Das Diagramm mit den grundlegenden Beziehungen zwischen Regler und seiner Umgebung wurde erstellt. Die Ergebnisse werden aus Sicht des Media Governance diskutiert. Die bei der Untersuchung erzielten Ergebnisse zeigen, dass in allen V4-Ländern sowohl auf nationaler als auch auf EU-Ebene eine zweifelhafte Unabhängigkeit besteht. Insbesondere der politische Akteur spielt eine bedeutende Rolle bei der Bedrohung der Unabhängigkeit.

ASSESSMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA REGULATORS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES ACCORDING TO INDIREG METHODOLOGY WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN PARTICULAR STATES

Schlagwörter: Medienregulierung, Media Governance, Visegrád-Gruppe,

Unabhängigkeit der Medienregulierungsbehörden