

Turkey

Introduction

The first daily newspaper in Turkish (with Arabic script) was published in 1831 by the Ottoman State; followed by the first private newspaper in 1841. Since then and with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, in line with technological developments and the resulting new forms of media, namely radio, television and now the Internet, Turkey has had to build up new legislation with regard to media. The regulatory framework has not always been up-to-date with technological or political developments. The legal 'delay' the country has been experiencing since the 1980s has been largely compensated for by major constitutional amendments passed in 2001 and implementation laws in August 2002, adopted in conjunction with Turkey's candidacy to the European Union.

Today, Turkish media account for over 250 local, regional and national television channels, of which 16 are nationwide, around 1200 radio stations, approximately 150 of which are nationwide, over 30 nation-wide daily newspapers (900 local) and numerous weekly and monthly journals and magazines. Increasing access to the Internet has led to the development of numerous virtual news portals. The majority of the printed newspapers, national as well as local and regional, have Internet editions with regular updates throughout the day.

Compared to other countries with similar income and population levels, newspaper circulation is low in Turkey. The most pervasive media is television and radio. There are over 22 million television sets for a population of 68 million and more than 10 million radio receivers. The newspaper circulation varies between 2.5 to 3 million copies and Internet access is estimated at around 5 million.

Turkey's media boom started in the beginning of the 1990s with the establishment of the first private television channels and radio stations. Until then, TRT, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, had a monopoly on radio and television broadcasting.

Cable television services are available in nine highly populated counties (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya, Gaziantep, Konya, Kayseri, Bursa and Adana) with a total of 45 television channels (35 Turkish and 10 foreign). The Cable television network is also

extended to eleven smaller counties and some of the towns within these counties' administrative boundaries where a total of 60 television channels (50 Turkish and 10 foreign) are broadcasted.

Turk Telekom provides cable services to more than 900,000 subscribers. The current cable infrastructure can accommodate approximately 2,250,000 subscribers in the area already covered. Digital television via satellite is also available covering some Turkish and foreign channels¹. Since there is widespread use of satellite dishes, access to international media is not restricted.

Constitution

The Turkish Constitution² has specific articles pertaining to the freedom of press and dissemination of thought. These provisions have been further liberalised in conjunction with Turkey's candidacy to the European Union. In this light, comprehensive constitutional amendments were adopted on October 17, 2001.

Article 28. The press is free and shall not be censored. The establishment of a printing house shall not be subject to prior permission or the deposit of a financial guarantee.

The State shall take the necessary measures to ensure the freedom of the press and freedom of information.

In the limitation of freedom of the press, Articles 26 and 27 of the Constitution are applicable. [ed. Articles 26 and 27 relate to Freedom of Expression and Dissemination of Thought and Freedom of Science and the Arts.]

Anyone who writes or prints any news or articles which threaten the internal or external security of the state or the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation, which tend to incite offence, riot or insurrection, or which refer to classified state secrets and anyone who prints or transmits such news or articles to others for the above purposes, shall be held responsible under the law relevant to these offences. Distribution may be suspended as a preventive measure by the decision of a judge, or in the event delay is deemed prejudicial, by the competent authority designated by law. The authority suspending distribution shall notify a competent judge of its

¹ Of the satellite channels broadcasting into Turkey from abroad, MED TV, a United Kingdom-based Kurdish-language station founded in 1995, was one of the most well known. It boasted an audience of some 35 million across Europe and the Middle East. The Turkish government lobbied heavily for governments across Europe not to allow the station to operate, and was known to have jammed its signals on a number of occasions. MED TV was officially banned in Turkey because of pro-PKK sympathies. Kurdish-language Kurdistan-TV, which broadcasts from northern Iraq and is not banned, can be received in Turkey.

² The full text of the Turkish Constitution is available in English at <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/engconst/const.htm>.

decision within twenty-four hours at the latest. The order suspending distribution shall become null and void unless upheld by a competent judge within forty-eight hours at the latest.

No ban shall be placed on the reporting of events, except by the decision of a judge issued to ensure proper functioning of the judiciary, within the limits specified by law.

Periodical and non-periodical publications may be seized by a decision of a judge in cases of ongoing investigation or prosecution of offences prescribed by law, and, in situations where delay could endanger the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation, national security, public order or public morals and for the prevention of offence by order of the competent authority designated by law. The authority issuing the order to confiscate shall notify a competent judge of its decision within twenty-four hours at the latest. The order to confiscate shall become null and void unless upheld by the competent court within forty-eight hours at the latest.

The general common provisions shall apply when seizure and confiscation of periodicals and non-periodicals for reasons of criminal investigation and prosecution takes place.

Periodicals published in Turkey may be temporarily suspended by court sentence if found to contain material which contravenes the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation, the fundamental principles of the Republic, national security and public morals. Any publication, which clearly bears the characteristics of being a continuation of a suspended periodical, is prohibited; and shall be seized following a decision by a competent judge.

Article 29 stipulates the rights provided for periodicals and non-periodicals.

ARTICLE 29. Publication of periodicals or non-periodicals shall not be subject to prior authorisation or the deposit of a financial guarantee.

To publish a periodical it shall suffice to submit the information and documents prescribed by law to the competent authority designated by law. If the information and documents submitted are found to be in contravention of law, the competent authority shall apply to the appropriate court for suspension of publication.

The publication of periodicals, the conditions of publication, the financial resources and the rules relevant to the profession of journalism shall be regulated by law. The law shall not impose any political, economic, financial, and technical conditions, thus obstructing or making difficult the free dissemination of news, thought, or beliefs.

Periodicals shall have equal access to the means and facilities of the state, other public corporate bodies, and their agencies.

The freedom of the press and limits placed upon it, and the right to publish periodicals and non-periodicals are further solidified with articles on the freedom of expression and dissemination of thought and the dissemination of science and art. The relevant articles of the Constitution read as follows:

ARTICLE 26. Everyone has the right to express and disseminate his thoughts and opinion by speech, in writing or in pictures or through other media, individually or collectively. This right includes the freedom to receive and impart information and ideas without interference from official authorities. This provision shall not preclude subjecting transmission by radio, television, cinema, and similar means to a system of licensing.

The exercise of these freedoms may be restricted for the purposes of protecting national security, public order and public safety, the basic characteristics of the Republic and safeguarding the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation, preventing crime, punishing offenders, withholding information duly classified as a state secret, protecting the reputation and rights and private and family life of others, or protecting professional secrets as prescribed by law, or ensuring the proper functioning of the judiciary.

The formalities, conditions and procedures to be applied in exercising the right to expression and dissemination of thought shall be prescribed by law.

IX. Freedom of Science and the Arts

ARTICLE 27. Everyone has the right to study and teach freely, explain, and disseminate science and arts and to carry out research in these fields.

The right to disseminate shall not be exercised for the purpose of changing the provisions of Articles 1, 2 and 3 of this Constitution.

The provisions of this article shall not preclude regulation by law of the entry and distribution of foreign publications in the country.

Regulations regarding printing facilities are also mentioned in the Constitution.

ARTICLE 30. A printing press or its annexes duly established as a publishing house under law shall not be seized, confiscated, or barred from operation on the grounds of being an instrument of crime, except in cases where offences against the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation, against the fundamental principles of the Republic or against national security leading to conviction are involved.

Constitutional amendments in October 2001 also address the right of political parties and the public to have access to the media and information. Before the October 2001 amendments, the Constitution did include these rights.

ARTICLE 31. Individuals and political parties have the right to use mass media and means of communication other than the press owned by public corporations. The conditions and procedures for such use shall be regulated by law.

The law shall not impose restrictions preventing the public from receiving information or forming ideas and opinions through these media, or preventing public opinion from being freely formed, on the grounds other than national security, public order, public morals, or the protection of public health.

According to the Turkish Constitution, the public broadcasting corporation, Turkish Radio and Television (TRT), is autonomous and impartial.

ARTICLE 133. Radio and television stations shall be established and administered freely in conformity with rules to be regulated by law.

The unique radio and television administration established by the state as a public corporate body and the news agencies, which receive aid from public corporate bodies, shall be autonomous and their broadcasts shall be impartial.

The Turkish Constitution attempts to strike a balance between freedoms and limitations. The constitutional framework is implemented and completed by two essential laws, namely the Press Law and the Law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and their Broadcasts.

Several issues considered sensitive by the state, such as national security, public order and public safety, the basic characteristics of the Republic and safeguarding the indivisible territorial and national integrity of the state, are also incorporated in the press and broadcasting laws.

Press Law

The Press Law³ No. 5680 dated July 15, 1950 lays down the legal provisions with respect to printed material and their publication. The law has been amended fourteen times since its adoption, the last amendment being in December 2002 in conjunction with the European Union harmonisation laws.

These recent amendments have strengthened the freedom of expression and reinforced libel laws. According to the amendments, journalists can no longer receive a prison sentences for expressing opinions; journalists can no longer be forced to reveal their information sources and such forcing constitutes a crime; and the protection of private life is also reinforced against slander and misinformation.

Internet newspapers and news portals have also been recognised as sources of information and the same freedoms and limitations apply to them, explicitly in the case of slander and misinformation.

Broadcasting Law

All broadcasts on all television and radio stations are placed under the supervision of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK). The Law on the Establishment of

³ The consolidated version of the Press Law is not available in Turkish or in English. The version available at the Ministry of Justice website does not account for recent amendments.

Radio and Television Enterprises and Their Broadcasts⁴ (Law No. 3984 of 20 April 1994) incorporated the broadcasting standards as well as the functions and powers of the Supreme Council⁵.

The RTUK Law has also been amended as part of the reform process in light of Turkey's candidacy to the European Union.

The Constitutional amendments of October 2001 freed the way for radio and television broadcast programs in languages and dialects other than Turkish that are used by Turkish citizens. The legislation package subsequently adopted in August 2002 introduces relevant clauses to the RTUK Law. The legislation has been completed in November 2002 with relevant regulations putting the law into practice. In this light, TRT will broadcast television in Kurdish for two hours per week, not exceeding 30 minutes per day. TRT will also broadcast radio programmes in Kurdish. These radio programmes will not exceed a total of four hours per week and 45 minutes per day. All content will also be given in Turkish in the form of subtitles for television programmes and subsequent translation for radio programmes. At the moment, only TRT is allowed to broadcast in languages and dialects other than Turkish.

Broadcasting in other languages and dialects will depend on the public demand for them and the technical and financial feasibility.

Broadcasting and publishing in 'non-local' languages, such as English, French, German, and in officially recognised minority languages, such as Armenian and Greek, are not covered by this amendment. The use of these languages in printed and audiovisual media have only been subject to general restrictions regarding programme content, structure, licensing or printing declarations.

Considering the political and social sensitivity surrounding the 'indivisible integrity of the state' and the use of 'local languages and dialects', the August 2002 amendment includes precautionary statements:

Article 4. (As amended by the Law No. 4756 on May 21, 2002 and by the Law No. 4771 on 9 August, 2002.)

⁴ Full text of the Law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and Their Broadcasts, Law No. 3984 of 20 April 1994 is available at <http://www.rtuk.org.tr/ying3984.htm>

Radio, television and data broadcasts shall be conducted within a spirit of public service, in compliance with the supremacy of the law, the general principles of the Constitution, fundamental rights and freedom, national security and general moral values. The broadcasts shall be in Turkish language. However, it may also be broadcast for the purpose of teaching foreign languages, which may have contribution to the formation of universal culture and scientific works or transmitting music or news in those languages.

Furthermore, there may be broadcasts in the different languages and dialects used traditionally by Turkish citizens in their daily lives. Such broadcasts shall not contradict the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic enshrined in the Constitution and the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation. The principles and procedures for these broadcasts and the supervision of these broadcasts shall be determined through a regulation to be issued by the Supreme Board.

The President of the Turkish Republic has brought several of the recent amendments to the RTUK Law to the Constitutional Court. The most controversial ones relate to nominations to the Supreme Council and shareholder composition of private broadcasting corporations.

The former stipulates that political party groups in the Parliament nominate candidates to the Supreme Council. Five of such candidates would then be officially appointed to the Supreme Council along with others. The latter foresees that in any nationwide broadcasting corporation attaining more than 20% viewing, one shareholder (this could be a corporation or an accumulation of shares owned by members of the same family) may not own more than 50% of that broadcasting corporation. In the case of the total shares exceeding 50%, the excess must be sold to the public. The Constitutional Court has suspended the application of these amendments in June 2002 until a final verdict has been made.

As stipulated in the RTUK Law, numerous issues are determined through regulations⁶, among which are:

- Regulation on the Working Procedures of the Supreme Council (Official Journal no. 22117, dated November 20, 1994)
- Regulation on the Radio and Television Broadcasting Corporations' Broadcasting Standards and Principles and Advertisement Incomes (Official Journal no. 22117, dated November 20, 1994)
- Regulation on Awarding a Contract (Official Journal no. 22139, dated December 12, 1994)
- Regulation on the Licences for Radio and Television Broadcasting (Official Journal no. 22223, dated March 10, 1995)
- Regulation on the Obligations to include Educational, Cultural Programmes and Turkish Folk and Classical Music in the General Broadcasts of Radio Television Organisations (Official Journal no. 22275, dated May 2, 1995)

⁶ The Turkish versions of these regulations are available at www.rtuk.org.tr/Ayonet.htm

- Regulation on the Principles and Procedures of Protecting the Rights of Copyright Holders (Official Journal no. 22710, July 28, 1995)
- Regulation on Satellite Broadcasting Licences (Official Journal no. 24357, March 29, 2001)

Application of the Legal Framework

Recent constitutional amendments and amendments to the Press Law and the RTUK Law have provided for a more open media environment in Turkey. Yet, there are still some deficiencies and lack of clarity in the application of the legal framework.

For example, the following paragraph has been added to Article 159 of the Turkish Penal Code. ‘Written, oral or visual expressions of thought made with the intention of criticising involving no deliberate attempt to insult or deride the bodies and institutions listed in paragraph one do not require a penalty’. What constitutes ‘criticism’ is open to judicial interpretation. Yet, with this amendment, it is expected that intellectuals and writers will no longer be jailed for criticizing certain state organs. Also, the number of confiscated books is expected to diminish.

One reason for the lack of clarity is that these amendments are very recent and some of the implementation regulations have not yet been finalised. With pressing urgency to comply with the Copenhagen political criteria to obtain a negotiation date with the European Union, the Turkish Ministries have accelerated their revisions of the regulations. Although the law requires the completion of these regulations by August 2003, the Turkish government had declared its tentative deadline to be October 2002. The current AKP government elected in 3 November 2002 has also declared itself committed to the reform process. Therefore, it is possible to expect further improvements in the short term. As Turkish legislation is modified to conform with European norms, the test will come in the application of these new laws.

There are still numerous cases in courts against Turkish journalists. The overwhelming majority of these cases are not defined as ‘crimes’ under the Press Law. They are often based on articles of the Penal Code referring to national security and the integrity of the Turkish State. The government, particularly the police and judiciary, limits freedom of expression through the use of constitutional restrictions and numerous laws including: Article 8 of the 1991 Anti-Terror Law (disseminating separatist propaganda); Penal Code Articles 312 (incitement to racial, ethnic, or religious enmity);

159 (insulting parliament, the army, republic or judiciary), 160 (insulting the Turkish Republic); 169 (aiding an illegal organisation); the Law to Protect Atatürk; and over 150 articles of the Press Law (including a provision against commenting on ongoing trials).

In 2001, more than 50 members of the press of all ideological tendencies appeared before the courts for their writing. Journalists casting doubt in one way or another on the army were systematically harassed. Five journalists are currently in jail for their responsibility in the circulation of news and publications considered by the authorities to threaten public order or state unity.

Apart from the laws limiting the freedom of the press, self-censorship plays a major role in limiting freedom of expression. Many journalists consciously avoid certain subjects and filter some of the news in order to avoid sanction. Furthermore, the “carrot and stick” system employed by the government, consisting of punishing dissident media and dissident journalists and rewarding mainstream media that defends the existing system (through public grants and subsidised materials), has created state-media relations that jeopardise the independence of media owners and their employees.

Since the 1990s the transfer of ownership of newspapers from their previous owners, who were usually families, to owners of financially strong enterprises with a wide variety of industrial interests in construction, banking, or finance, has allowed these media conglomerates to use their power to obtain government tenders⁷. Today, there are two large groups that control more than half of the total circulation of newspapers amounting to 3.5 to 5.5 million copies. These two groups, Dogan and Uzan, also own many television channels and radio stations.

Arguably, recent constitutional amendments provide the necessary legal framework guaranteeing protection of journalists and ensuring greater freedom of expression. Providing this protection for journalists may reduce the practice of self-censorship in journalism. Since the reforms are so new, it will be necessary to evaluate their implementation and practice over time.

⁷ The RTUK Law (see Broadcasting Law) has been criticised even by members of RTUK for opening the way for the creation of media monopolies and cartels by allowing one person to own numerous television stations and newspapers. Furthermore, the law grants media owners the opportunity to bid for state contracts which not only gives them the power to influence these contracts but also compromises their independence.

The most controversial issue with regard to the application of new amendments concerns the Supreme Council's interpretation of the RTUK Law. It is often criticised for being excessively severe. Between 1994 and 2001, the Supreme Council pronounced 454 official warnings for nation-wide television channels and a total of 272 days of ban on broadcasting. Regional channels have been warned 49 times and were banned from broadcasting for 256 days. Local channels received 477 warnings and were banned for 2,766 days. The list is shorter for cable channels, with only 6 warnings and one day of ban, and for channels broadcasting through satellite receiving only 5 warnings and no ban. Radio stations have received 756 warnings and have been closed for 12,904 days. The main offences were for programmes deemed to be against the integrity and the secular nature of the Turkish State. Only a small portion of the bans and warnings was for the protection of public morals and children.

Several criticisms have already been voiced with respect to deficiencies in the legal framework and possible misinterpretation of the recent amendments. For example, the amendments in the Press Law aimed at adjusting the monetary value of fines to the creeping inflation Turkey has been experiencing since the 1960s have resulted in very high fines which could be a very large burden for small local newspapers or magazines. Although these fines may not seriously affect the nation-wide newspapers, they are exorbitant for local and regional media, whose stakeholders are often personally liable.

Similar amendments were also adopted in the RTUK Law. The high monetary value of the fines could force small radio and television stations to close down. The RTUK Law, however, foresees the possibility of reducing these fines to one third for local and regional media.

As mentioned before, a large part of the Turkish private media is conglomerated under two holding groups, each controlling several daily newspapers and television channels. Legislation undermining the local and regional media could therefore lead to a 'bipolarisation' of the media. This bipolar structure, however, is currently weakening with the establishment of new independent newspapers and television channels. Two Islamist conglomerates, TGRT and Zaman are growing in strength.

A number of criticisms address the inclusion of Internet in the media legislation, where it is recognised as a new medium. Such a definition could hinder the development

of virtual communication and the freedom to disseminate information. In response to strong public opposition, several clauses enlarging the Supreme Council's supervision over web sites have been removed. Only slander and misinformation cases have been explicitly mentioned in the RTUK Law.

During the conflict in the Southeast region of Turkey between government forces and the PKK (Kurdish Worker's Party) a large part of that region was put under a state of emergency, starting in 1987 in some counties. The state of emergency in the last two remaining counties, namely Diyarbakir and Sirnak, was lifted at the end of November 2002. According to Emergency Rule Law no. 2935, for example, the governor of a region under emergency rule can 'ban or confiscate any book, newspaper, magazine, announcement etc.' that he feels necessary. Over 20 opposition magazines and newspapers had been banned from the region during this period.

Licences for Broadcast Media

As stated in Article 16 of the RTUK law, the Supreme Council has the exclusive 'power to allocate channels and frequency bands⁸ and to issue broadcasting permits and licences to all public and private radio and television enterprises, as well as the power to revoke such allocations and permits' on the condition that other provisions of the Radio Communication Law No. 2813 are observed.

The recently amended Article 4 of the RTUK Law lists principles by which all broadcasts must abide. These range from not 'inciting hatred and discrimination' to not violating 'the national and moral values of the community and Turkish family structure'. Any broadcast that violates these standards can be subject to sanctions. In the case of violation of items a, b, or c (territorial and national integrity of the state, instigating violence, terror or ethnical discrimination and broadcasting in a manner that serves to unfair interests of broadcasting enterprises) broadcasting can be suspended for up to a month without prior warning. If the offence is repeated, the licence permit may be revoked.

The Supreme Council requires the fulfillment of a number of financial and technical prerequisites to issue a licence. Among these are the detailed description of the

⁸ With the new amendments the assignment of broadcast frequencies is the responsibility of the Telecommunications Council.

aim and program content of the channel/station, a guarantee that the media institution will employ qualified staff and an advance payment of 2.5 billion TL (2,000 USD) for television and 500 million TL (350 USD) for radio stations.

Journalists' Unions and NGOs

Turkiye Gazeteciler Sendikasi (TGS) is the only trade union with the authority to negotiate collective agreements for journalists in Turkey. The union is limited in its ability to build membership by a legal restriction that requires that the union recruit journalists as defined under Law 212. If a media employer does not provide a contract under this law (and most don't as they find the law too 'generous' to journalists) the employee is unable to obtain a press card and cannot join the TGS. Furthermore, the threat of victimisation and dismissal by media employers discourage union membership.

Until the 1990s, the TGS could negotiate collective agreements with most major newspapers. However, at the beginning of the 1990s pressure from media owners diminished the influence of the TGS and discouraged union organizing. Some journalists that did not comply were forced out.

According to official statistics issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, there are approximately 9,800 workers in the journalism sector and the number of registered members in TGS is 3,398. However, the number of active members of TGS is about 1,000. The number of journalists who actually have unfettered access to union rights is hardly 5 percent of the total number of journalists in the sector (about 450-500 people).

Journalists suffer from a lack of job security as witnessed in 2001 when approximately 4,800 media workers lost their jobs. Many media employers used the downturn in the economy as an excuse to dismiss staff.

Collective agreements are carried out only with Anadolu Ajansi (Anatolian News Agency). Other workplaces are either financially too weak or do not have 50% of the staff as union members.

The development of civil society in Turkey, as in other sectors, goes hand in hand with Turkey's accession process to the EU. There are many NGOs active in developing, monitoring and protecting the media sector, especially journalists. Most significant

among these are the Turkish Journalists Association, the Human Rights Association and the Organisation for Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed Peoples (Mazlum-Der).

With the expansion of the Internet, many NGOs and alternative media organisations have found an outlet. For example, BIANET, the Independent Communication Network⁹ aims to support local and regional media outlets through a network, and to diversify news. Its law section provides pro bono legal assistance to local newspapers, radio and televisions.

Foreign NGOs such as the Committee to Protect Journalists and the Reporteurs Sans Frontiers are also active in monitoring human rights violations against journalists.

Informal Media

Anyone wishing to address the public through a speech or demonstration must inform authorities 48 hours in advance as stipulated in the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911 of 1983. The content of public speeches is subject to the Penal Code. For example, Article 312 of the Penal Code was cited to ban the leader of the AKP (a pro-Islamic Party) Tayyip Erdogan from politics because of a speech he gave in 1998.

International Agreements

Turkey ratified the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in 1954, formally recognized the right of individual petition to the European Court in 1987 and the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court (Article 46, ECHR) in 1990. In January 1994 it ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (ECTT), which entered into force in May 1994, and the Amending Protocol thereto by tacit acceptance in 2000.

Turkey has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), but has yet to ratify this instrument. It has not yet signed or ratified either the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages or the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

International Scene and the Media

As a significant international political event, the effects of September 11th could be observed in media in Europe. However, it did not have significant consequences for the media in Turkey. Reporting on the event and its aftermath has been incredibly

⁹ www.bianet.org

diverse, ranging from Islamist opposition and criticism of the US to mainstream acquiescence.

Turkey's candidacy to the EU has been a positive stimulant for democratic change in Turkey and an increase in freedoms and liberties. This has a direct effect on the freedoms and liberties of the media. In conjunction with its candidacy to the European Union, Turkey has adopted a National Programme for the Implementation of the Acquis, which consists of a calendar for harmonising Turkish legislation with the European Union *acquis*. Turkey has to comply with the political criteria to become a full member of the EU, which requires full democratisation both legally and in practical terms, including in the media. The swift reforms that were lately adopted were made in this light. One might thus assume that their implementation and application would be put in force soon. The requirements of the political criteria will surely affect freedom of expression in general, and specifically its usage in the media.

In terms of coverage, again the voices have been diverse with regard to Turkey's candidacy to the EU. Islamist opposition papers write in favor of the EU and its human rights policies. Mainstream liberal papers support the EU for economic reasons. Some nationalist and extreme left papers report against the EU. None of these papers are sanctioned for the opinions they express.

Another international political pressure that receives wide coverage in the media is the IMF. Again the reporting on the IMF is diverse, at the same time, the voices of opposition are not as loud as those of praise.