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Institutionalization of Media Market in Greek Political System

Abstract: The article points to the process of the institutionalization of the Greek media market. This process began to take shape after the country's accession to the European structures, i.e. after 1981. Successively since the late 1980s, it has been shaped based on new initiatives, forms and activities. However, this process is not yet completed due to the changes that have taken place over the last decade. At that time, the members of the National Broadcasting Council, for procedural reasons related to the mode of appointment to this Council, were unable to grant or renew broadcasting licences, which led to a media crisis. In addition, the Greek state was on the brink of solvency due to the condition of its finances. The new government created another media related institution, this time the General Secretariat for Information and Communication, which reported directly to the Prime Minister, and its aim was to control the press, radio and television market. Apart from the leading institutions, supporting bodies are also responsible for the Greek media market. To a large extent, they (such as ministries or central offices like the Telecommunications and Postal Commission) existed much earlier and some media powers were handed over to them to assist the leading institutions in fulfilling their functions. Outside of this area, there was content disseminated on the Internet, which came under the control of a special unit established within the police structures.

Key words: Greece, political system, political institutions, media, media system

In the modern world, media have a significant role not only in providing various types of properly prepared and processed information but they also ensure communication between voters and politicians versus other economic, cultural or religious entities; they are responsible for the provision of entertainment, intellectual goods as well as publicization of various private messages. Hence, there is a special role of state institutions and bodies, which should protect citizens against their harmful effects. The promotion of pornography, violence, illegal trade, social inequality or racism in the media may and often does affect the subsequent behaviour of individuals within small and large social groups. Such behaviour is also expressed in the attitude accepted by the individual towards the ideas and values of a democratic state and, therefore, whether or not he or she respects this order. Democratic systems and a democratic legal order were at the heart of the formation of the European Union, which took a particular interest in public and private media. This is because it was perfectly clear that the media may influence not only specific individual attitudes but also entire social groups. Hence, control of the media market is exercised not only nationally but also on a pan-European basis, as the EU institutions issue legal acts and supplementary regulations in relation to this area.

Greece is an interesting example of how the media market operates under European conditions (*Konstytucja*, 2005; Kamiński, 2004; Sutkowska, 2004, pp. 77–134). This country, since the formation of its independent state, has been plagued by numerous internal and international conflicts over the subsequent decades, which resulted in about

30 attempted and actual coups d'état. These have influenced institutional changes in the country and have resulted in a clear division of the ruling elites, as well as of the society as a whole, into the supporters of either a democratic or an authoritarian regime. The last major power struggle between these groups took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when a military junta, led by the so-called "black colonels", took power in the country. Since then, the country has been opting for a democratic legal order and, over the next two generations, it has established civil rights and freedoms, which have been guaranteed and more or less respected by the state institutions (Brzeziński, 2002; Bonarek, 2005; Clogg, 2006).

The Greek media market played an important role in ensuring a consolidated democratic system, and it received attention from the government, which supervised it from the very moment of its formation. Due to the fact that modern Greece was for years perceived as a poor and backward state, in terms of ownership, the media system was strongly influenced by private capital, which was later supplemented by public funds. This also had a major impact on the legislation that was being formed and the creation of institutions for the supervision of private and public media (Fraszczyk, 2012–2014; Kaczmarczyk, 2009; Nowosad, 2016). The country's accession to the European Economic Community and later to the European Union, which frequently necessitated changes in the Greek media system, played an important role in these developments (Chałubińska-Jentkiewicz, 2016; Forst, 2015; Jaskiernia, 2010–2018). The excessively short period of time that elapsed between the fall of the black colonels' junta in 1974 and the country's accession to the European Economic Community in 1981 gave rise to the absence of a systematic, clear and transparent definition of those institutions that were supposed to be responsible for ensuring pluralism and clear supervision of the media by state bodies. This situation resulted in a distinction being made in the Greek market between basic institutions responsible for media freedom and institutions supporting them. Moreover, some media are free from direct institutional supervision (Żukrowska, 2013, pp. 109–113). This has influenced the content of this article, which is divided into four substantive parts referring to the institutional division of those bodies that are responsible for the functioning of the Greek media system today. Its aim became to specify the institutional position of the bodies and other agencies in charge of the control of the Greek media market and to demonstrate their position and place in the political system of the country (Knopek, 2016, pp. 11–16).

National Broadcasting Council

[Greek: Ethniko Simvúlio Radhiotileórasis]

This institution was the first, after years of the transformation of the Greek political system, to be set up to control and supervise the electronic media market. The fact that it was only set up in 1989 further illustrates how difficult a challenge it is for state institutions to ensure the supervision of the radio, television and the internet. Previously, the military secured a major influence on the media market, a monopoly which the political system did not manage to break until the late 1980s and early 1990s (*Ethnico*).

The National Broadcasting Council was established as an independent administrative body, subject only to the judicial authority. The Council became the main regulatory authority for public and private broadcasting media as early as at the time of it being established by Act No. 1866/1989. Indeed, its primary goals included granting broadcasting licences to private media and ensuring compliance with national and European media law by licensees. The Council's tasks also included the appointment of three candidates to the Board of Directors of the state-owned broadcasting company: the Greek Radio and Television [in Greek: Elliniki Radiofonia Tileorasi]; issuing opinions on the dismissal of these members, preparation of media opinions for the Greek government and drafting and reviewing codes of journalistic ethics (Kaczmarczyk, 2009, p. 136). Until 2001, the duties and the status of the members of this body were regulated by the relevant legislation. After that time, in connection with the amendment of the Greek Constitution, these issues were regulated by the Basic Law. Since then, the Council has become an independent administrative body entrusted with the supervision of the broadcasting sector.

The operation of the individual radio and television stations was therefore dependent on this institution, in connection with which the broadcaster was and is liable to pay an appropriate licence fee. The licence fee was payable annually and its amount depended on the type of broadcasting.¹ The period for which the licence could be obtained depended on the availability of a given programme or station. A four-year licence was granted to free-to-air radio and television broadcasters. A five-year licence applied to nationwide free-to-air TV stations. The licence for pay-TV channel operators, on the other hand, was granted for a period between 5 and 15 years (Woźniak, 2008). At the same time, the establishment of radio networks and rebroadcasting of excessive programmes from other stations were prohibited. In addition, the legislator obliged the owners to donate a certain financial amount from their income to the development of Greek cinematography and organisations representing the blind.² Non-compliance with the conditions of the licence granted could result in certain financial sanctions, which depended on the individual broadcaster.³ In addition, breaches of media law could result in the suspension of licences for up to three months and the suspension of broadcasts or parts of broadcasts.

There was a prolonged institutional dispute in Greece in relation to the allocation of licences, which was, among other things, the reason for the establishment of the General Secretariat for Information and Communications. Indeed, the last tender for the granting of licences was held in 2002. The Greek government extended this licensing to cover successive years on several occasions, but eventually this practice was deemed unconstitutional. When the terms of several members of the Board – including the chairman – expired in 2012, the remaining members were deemed not to have the legal authority to take binding decisions. In addition, the institution was accused of a lack of impartiality and uneven implementation of rules and penalties based on the political connections of the media. This situation coincided with a financial crisis that affected significant sec-

¹ 1% of revenue is paid by free-to-air TV stations, 0.5% by pay channels broadcast via satellite and cable, 3.5% pay terrestrial channels (Woźniak, 2008).

² In the 1990s, this was 1.5 and 0.3% of individual income, respectively (Bartoszcze, 1997, p. 44).

³ These were determined in the first decade of the 21st century and were as follows: for television broadcasters: from €14,600 to €1,460,000, for radio broadcasters: from €2,900 to €29,000, and for paid broadcasters: from €29,000 to €2,900,000 (Woźniak, 2008).

tions of the country's economy and society. It was even decided to temporarily dissolve public television and lay off its staff. At the same time, a new board of the National Broadcasting Council was elected.⁴

This institution is currently headed by a body consisting of a president, a vice-president and five members. All of them are appointed by the Council of the Presidents of the Greek Parliament. This institution is currently headed by Athanasios Koutromanos, Honorary President of the Supreme Court of Justice. Other members elected by the legislature include (www.esr.gr):

- Kalliopi Diamantakou – a journalist;
- Vasileios Karapostolis – Professor of Culture and Communication at the Faculty of Communication and Media, the University of Athens, an author of scientific publications on media issues;
- Nikolaos Kiaos – a journalist;
- Evangelia Mitrou – a lawyer, a professor at the Faculty of Engineering, Information and Communications Systems of the Aegean University and a lecturer at the University of Piraeus, the Athens University of Economics and the Athens Harokopio University;
- Georgios Pleios – a professor, the Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Media, the University of Athens;
- Georgios Saridakis – an economist.

At present, the Council's activities could be characterised as those that fulfil three basic functions:⁵

- a regulatory function: because it drafts, in agreement with the competent minister, the conditions for broadcasters to carry out their activities [among other things, it sets the numbers and amounts of licence fees], it issues licences, it develops a code of good practice for broadcasters;⁶

⁴ In 2016, the political parties elected to the Parliament could not agree on the new members of the Council, which caused the so-called media crisis. After the Supreme Administrative Court ruled that it was only the Council that could grant TV licences, the party groupings reached an agreement and the institution was established with new members. Due to the increased number of political parties in the Greek Parliament, the number of the members of the Council's Executive Board was temporarily increased from 7 to 9 (www.medialandscapes.org.gr).

⁵ The legal framework for the functioning of the National Broadcasting Council is set out in the Greek Constitution [Article 15(2)], and in Law No. 3051/2002 on independent bodies guaranteed by the Constitution, in Law No. 2863/2000 and in other laws that regulate private radio and television [Laws Nos. 2328/1995, 3592/2007, 4339/2015 respectively], while its internal functioning is regulated by the act of the institution itself (www.esr.gr).

⁶ These regulations concern the following issues: 1. It establishes codes of ethics for news presenters, advertisers and entertainment programmes, which are then ratified by a presidential decree; 2. It issues statutory notices, it grants, renews or revokes terrestrial licences for radio and television stations and any authorisations under the existing broadcasting legislation; 3. It addresses instructions, recommendations or questions to public or private broadcasters and it expresses opinions on the application of the provisions of relevant laws and regulations; 4. It maintains a register of media companies containing information on the ownership of media companies and enterprises operating in the broadly understood media industry; 5. It verifies compliance with the provisions concerning property restrictions on the business ownership of radio or television stations, and it publishes information on the ownership of radio and television stations; 6. It expresses its opinions addressed to the Minister of the Interior related

- a supervisory function: in that it systematically monitors the content of radio and television broadcasts for compliance with ethical principles, programme completeness, media pluralism, protection of minors and respect for human rights;⁷
- a disciplinary function: by imposing fines or other administrative penalties in the event of an infringement of national or European laws.⁸

General Secretariat for Information and Communication

[Greek: *Geniki Grammateia Enimerosis ke Epikinonias*]

After the left-wing SYRIZA party won the 2015 parliamentary elections, some systemic changes took place in the country, leading to the establishment of, among others, the General Secretariat for Information and Communication.⁹ This institution became the main regulator of the media system in Greece, creating political content and overseeing the implementation of regulations in this public space. The former Ministry of Press and Media was replaced by the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Information, which nominally included the Secretariat, but which would report directly to the President of the Council of Ministers, i.e. the Prime Minister (*Geniki*).

This institution was established to shape public awareness and to provide public information, especially concerning the executive power: the government and the individual

to persons appointed as members of the Public Service Broadcasting Council [Greek: ERT SA]; 7. It supervises compliance with the provisions governing public and private broadcasters and it imposes the prescribed administrative sanctions (www.medialandscapes.org.gr).

⁷ That is, to apply supervision of radio and television programmes in terms of their content, so that: 1. they meet the objectives of objective and equal transmission of information, news, literature and works of art; 2. they ensure the quality level of programmes, they respect human dignity and the special rights of children and young people (www.medialandscapes.org.gr).

⁸ Act No. 2863/2000 empowers this body to impose a number of administrative sanctions and measures. In the case of a violation of the law [i.e. national, European, international law] concerning broadcasting services and copyrights, or in the case of a violation of broadcasting ethics, the Council may decide ex officio [or at the request of the competent minister or upon complaint] to impose the following sanctions: 1. a recommendation of compliance with a specific provision of the law, including a notice imposing other penalties; 2. imposing a fine; 3. temporary suspension, for up to three months, of broadcasting of a specific programme; 4. temporary suspension, for up to three months, of broadcasting of any programme; 5. temporary suspension of a station's licence or revoking a station's licence; 6. application of moral sanctions, e.g. compulsory publication of notices of penalties imposed. In urgent cases of manifest violation of broadcasting regulations, the President of the Media Regulatory Authority may order a postponement or interruption of certain broadcasts (www.medialandscapes.org.gr).

⁹ Act No. 4339/2015 Article 24 (3) runs as follows: "The General Secretariat for Information and Communication supervises ministries and legal entities of public and private law of the broadly understood public sector" within the meaning of the provisions of Chapter A of Act No. 3429/2005, as amended by the provisions of Paragraph 1a of Article 1 of Act No. 3899/2010, in the implementation of communication programmes and operations. In accordance with the provisions of Resolution issued by the Council of Ministers No. 50/22.12.2015, the General Secretariat for Information and Communication shall, after an examination of the programme documentation, issue a relevant approval for its implementation. In the case of non-approval, such a decision must be substantiated in detail and include the reasons for such a rejection. In addition, no programme of communication relevance with the value exceeding €30,000 may be broadcast without electronic submission of a relevant application to the Secretariat (www.media.gov.gr).

ministries. In addition, the duties of this unit included the provision of public information advisory services, monitoring and the formulation of proposals, and the implementation of legislation concerning the press and the broadly understood media environment. In addition, the Secretariat is responsible for ensuring the coordination of state policy measures in the area of audiovisual media, in accordance with current technological developments, to shape appropriate communication with national and international public opinion, and to promote the correct image of the state abroad, and to ensure that the needs of the public for free information are duly served.

The structure of this body includes several internal units corresponding to the activities it undertakes: Directorate of Information; Directorate of International Communication; Directorate of Media Surveillance; Directorate of Media Diplomacy; Independent Department for Strategic Planning and Coordination of Interdepartmental Communication (*Geniki*).

In order to carry out the tasks entrusted to the Secretariat this unit undertakes the following activities (*Geniki*):

- it coordinates the information policy of state bodies and of the leading political institutions: the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, the heads of individual departments, as well as of the leading political parties;
- it ensures an up-to-date and, as far as possible, objective and polyphonic information policy in relation to Greek citizens;
- it assists the Prime Minister, the relevant minister and the Government representative in the performance of their duties;
- it draws up the communication policy through the implementation of a national strategic plan aimed at systematic and coordinated promotion and improvement of the country's international image;
- it provides advisory support to public sector bodies on information and communication;
- it regulates the media and those who exercise state supervision under the constitution and national legislation;
- it supervises the public radio and television, the Athens News Agency [Greek: ANA], the Macedonian Press Agency [Greek: MPA] and the National Centre for Media and Audiovisual Communication [Greek: EKOME];¹⁰
- it supports the development of the audiovisual media sector that complies with international standards, and it implements digital and audio-visual policy;
- it monitors and implements national and EU broadcasting legislation, it formulates suggestions and proposals; it prepares studies concerning the regulation of the press, audiovisual and other media;
- it maintains and makes use of the archives of modern and contemporary history, with particular reference to media documents.¹¹

¹⁰ What has been the main public information agency since 2006 is the Athens-Macedonian News Agency [Greek: AMNA], which was formed by the merger of the Athens News Agency [founded in 1895] and the Macedonian News Agency [founded in 1991].

¹¹ This provision resulted in the acquisition of the Greek Media Library – established in 1955 – by the General Secretariat for Information and Communication, which now holds over 16,500 recorded volumes of books and over 14,000 volumes of newspapers (*Geniki*).

The producers and owners of the Greek media are obliged to submit relevant reports on the implementation of communication programmes for each year to the Media Directorate, which forms a part of this institution, by 31 March of the following year. This report is then published on the Secretariat's website (www.media.gov.gr).

Supporting institutions

The National Media and Audiovisual Communication Centre [Greek: *Ethnikó Kéntro Optikoakoustikón Méson kai Epikoinonías*] was established by Act No. 4339/2015 at the request of the then Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media, which subsequently changed its name to the Ministry of Digital Management. The institution commenced its formal activities in December 2017 (*Eθνικό*). Although this entity has legal personality, it continues to be supervised by the Ministry of Digital Management, which is directly responsible for the support and promotion of initiatives in all the sectors of the audiovisual industry, regardless of the ownership structure or the country of origin. The establishment of the Centre was intended to bring about not only a revival of Greek audiovisual production, after a period of one of the most serious financial crises in the history of the modern state, but also to restore confidence on the part of entrepreneurs and potential investors in the market and to coordinate media education activities. This fact determined the personal composition of those responsible for the Centre's functioning. For, on the one hand, the Centre is headed by the undersecretary in the Prime Minister's Office and the spokesman of his government [Stelios Petsas] as a political factor and, on the other hand, these functions are fulfilled by the Secretary General for Information and Communication [Giannis Mastrogeorgiou] as a representative of the Greek media (*Eθνικό*).

As Greece needed to be media-conscious as regards its perception in the EU countries after the financial crisis, it became the objective of the Centre to create a suitable platform between the producers of media programmes and their audiences. This initiative, in cooperation with relevant ministries, regional and local authorities, was to significantly strengthen the national audiovisual market. The intention of the initiators was for this Centre to become not only a media centre but also an incubator of ideas and activities, ones that would allow young people to enter the path of creative work. Owing to this, they would then be able to realise their ideas at home and abroad and, consequently, find employment commensurate with their knowledge and education.

The Centre's core tasks include the following:

- investment in the production of Greek audiovisual works and the setting up of National Film Offices by providing tax reliefs for broadcasters;
- preservation of cultural heritage through digitisation of archives;
- development and implementation of programmes for audiovisual and digital education (media intelligence, youth education, training of professionals) (*Eθνικό*).

Another institution that fosters media freedom is the Greek **Authority for Communication Security and Privacy** [Greek: ADAE] (*Αρχή Διασφάλισης*). This Office acts as an independent institution and, therefore, it has its own separate administration. In

accordance with Article 19 of the Constitution, this Office was established to protect the secrecy of official letters and correspondence and freedom of speech; in addition, it is responsible for the form of communication between the public and media institutions in other ways, and it ensures the maintenance of security in the Internet. The notion of protecting the confidentiality of communications includes monitoring compliance with administrative deadlines when these institutions provide replies, which must also comply with the procedure for declassifying such documents. This Office is subject to control by the Greek legislature, the scope of which is determined after each election of deputies in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. The main duties assigned to this Office are as follows: 1. Carrying out regular and extraordinary inspections of public facilities or private companies engaged in postal, telecommunications or other services; 2. Inspections undertaken from the perspective of legality concerning the conditions and procedures for the application of declassification provisions, in accordance with the legislation in force; 3. Conducting hearings of the providers of electronic communications and postal services in connection with possible violations of the legislation in force ensuring the confidentiality of communications; 4. Imposing stipulated administrative sanctions in the case of violations of the applicable provisions ensuring confidentiality of communications; 5. Adopting subordinate legislation in which the Office may request an adoption of measures and tools to ensure the confidentiality of such communications; 6. Issuing opinions, recommendations and suggestions on matters within the competence of the Office; 7. Investigating complaints regarding violations of the confidentiality of communications via telephone and the Internet or through postal services (*Αρχή Διασφάλισης*).

The Office for the Protection of Personal Data [Greek: APDP] is also an independent administrative authority that upholds personal freedoms (*Αρχή Προστασίας*). It was created by Law No. 2472/1997 “on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data”, which incorporated European Directive 95/46/EC into the Greek law. This Directive established common rules for the protection of personal data in all the Member States of the European Union. This Office, which became operational on 10 November 1997, is run by three organisational departments: 1. the Department of Auditors; 2. the Department of Communications; 3. the Department of Administrative and Financial Affairs (*Αρχή Προστασίας*).

The authorities of the Greek state, which became a member of the European Economic Community before democratic institutions had been consolidated on its territory, had to fulfil certain norms related to the respect for and protection of human dignity, as well as to take into account the private lives of the citizens and to ensure freedom of development for the whole community. This period coincided with significant advances in information circulation, the use of new visual technologies, the initiation of new types of advertising or electronic commerce. In addition, there was a need to develop e-government services, which was particularly urgent and necessary in the territory of an island state. Along with this, the need for the creation of personal databases from the public and private sectors increased. At the same time, following the example of the Member States of the European Union, it was necessary to provide adequate safeguards for the entry and processing of the personal data of citizens as well as of businesses, economic organisations and social associations. In this way, the intention was to prevent any potential

penetration of such data to individuals and institutions who could use them, for example, through the media (*Αρχή Προστασίας*).

At the inception of this Office, it was highlighted that modern electronic technologies compound the risks of processing huge amounts of personal data using a computer and then transmitting that information around the world via the Internet. The storage of large amounts of data, which used to require significant disk space and tedious administrative work, has fundamentally been simplified and made cheaper. Traditional guarantees and institutional regulations were therefore not enough to protect the individual in the information society, as new systemic solutions became necessary (*Η Αρχή*). In order to best fulfil the tasks entrusted to it, the institution was required to cooperate closely with the Greek Communications Security and Privacy Authority and the European Data Protection Supervisor.

The TV Audience Survey Control Committee [Greek: TV ARCC] is an institution related to audience measurement in the private and public sectors. It is composed of representatives of the Union of Greek Advertisers, the Union of Greek Advertising Agencies, the public broadcaster [Greek: ERT], the main commercial broadcasters and the Association of Greek Media Research Companies (www.edee.gr). The Assembly of Viewers and Listeners [Greek: ASKE] plays an advisory role in television broadcasting and advertising.

The State Telecommunications and Postal Commission [Greek: Ethniki Epitropi Tilepikoinonion kai Tachydromeion] is the main institution for the transmission of information through telecommunications and postal services (www.eett.gr). It is responsible for the management of numerical resources, licensing and controlling the provision of data, as well as ensuring regulation in the telecommunications market. Consequently, all competition related issues in the Greek telecommunications market are decided by this institution and not by the Greek Competition Committee.

This Commission is an independent body with specific rights set out in the Greek Basic Law. Its members, like those of the National Broadcasting Council, are elected by the Council of the Presidents of the Greek Parliament. According to the new draft law, this body is to be appointed directly by the Minister of Transport and Communications. This situation is in line with the guidelines contained in the Greek Basic Law, which does not mention the exclusive independence of this institution as an organ of the Republic and, therefore, the provisions regarding the election of the Board can be amended by law (www.eett.gr).

One of the main undertakings initiated by this Commission was the development of a new national numbering plan for the entire territory of the country, in addition to the liberalisation of landline telephone systems and data markets, and the issuance of the fourth GSM licence to Q-telecom in 2001. Apart from this, the Commission issued licences for the provision of land-based wireless services. For the 2004 Olympic Games, which took place in Athens, a high-tech telephony control system was developed through an initiative taken by the Commission, which met the high telephony requirements of the Games. As a result, it subsequently began to be used for national telephone transmissions (www.eett.gr).

The Ministry of Culture is the body that is responsible for regulating the cinema sector, working closely with **the Greek Film Centre** [Greek: EKK], with the aim of ensuring “the protection, support and development of the art of film in Greece” and “the presentation, dissemination and promotion of Greek cinematography at home and abroad” (www.cmpf.eui.eu).

Although it is a non-profit private law entity, the Greek Film Centre is supervised by the Greek Minister of Culture and Sports under Act No. 3905/2010, which abolished its previous legal form as a joint stock company. To carry out its tasks, the Centre receives at least 50% support from the state budget, i.e. the Ministry of Culture and Sports, which it is affiliated with. The Centre is headed by a Board of Directors [7 members] and a Director General, who are appointed by a decision of the Minister of Culture for a 3-year term of office with the possibility of it being extended for further terms. The structure of this body includes the following units: a) Development and Production; b) International Audiovisual Producers; c) Film Promotion; d) Financial and Administrative Support. The Centre has an independent legal staff at its disposal (*Προφίλ EKK*).

The main objectives in the operations of the Greek Film Centre include: a) the protection, strengthening and development of film production in Greece; b) the dissemination and promotion of Greek film art at home and abroad; c) the promotion of Greece abroad as a suitable location for the realisation of ideas by radio and television creators and the attraction of foreign film and audiovisual producers to Greece (*Προφίλ EKK*).

The Statistical Office [Greek: ELSTAT], which is an independent institution with operational independence as well as administrative and financial autonomy, also possesses some competence in the regulation of the Greek media. It is not subject to supervision by government bodies or other administrative bodies. It collects ex officio data related to the Greek media (www.statistics.gr).

Non-institutional bodies

In Greece, there is no independent entity to monitor or supervise content that is published online.¹² The only protection in this respect is provided to Internet users by a unit of the Greek police known as the Cybercrime Unit. It is responsible for the prevention of crime and other anti-social behaviour via the Internet. The police can, ex officio, investigate such cases of crime committed on the Internet or other electronic communication media and, if necessary, apply sanctions prescribed by law (www.medialandscapes.org.gr).

The Association of Internet Consumers [Greek: Safenet] is a non-profit social institution that has been operating since November 1999 with the aim of making the Greek public aware of the benefits and risks associated with the Internet. This foundation was

¹² This market, like others in Europe, was one of the more developing ones, with the advent of satellite connectivity. Social media statistics in Greece, according to a survey conducted in September 2020, clearly favoured Facebook, leaving other social networks far behind: Facebook – 92.13% of users; Pinterest – 4.14%; Spruce – 1.50%; Instagram – 1.06%; YouTube – 0.76%; Tumblr – 0.24% (www.gs.statcounter.com).

created on the initiative of the three main Internet service providers in the Greek market: the National Research Network, the Greek Internet Users Association and the Greek Consumers Association [Greek: Ekpizo]. Its activities consist in combating illegal and offensive content posted and transmitted via Internet services and other means of electronic communication. The Foundation's personnel follow the media, reporting, among other things, to the Greek police, any violation of the rights of the recipient and the consumer. Children are of particular concern, as they are vulnerable online to exploitation by broadcasters who publish the so-called indecent content [pornographic, violent or racist] in the media (www.medialandscapes.org.gr).

Similarly, this issue is related to the area of the Greek press, which is not subject to any regulatory body; however, its freedom is enshrined in the Constitution [Article 14] as an institutional guarantee. Consequently, the state authorities considered that there was no need to create any separate institutions to regulate this media, and that the words published in the press are only subject to the assessment of the industry's ethical codes and the judiciary (Karakostas, Tsevas, 2012).

Pursuant to Act No. 1092/1938, the press was entitled to certain privileges, which included discounts on telephone and postal tariffs. At the same time, writers, publishers or owners were obliged to respect human dignity and to preserve the privacy of citizens, as well as to present news in accordance with existing facts. As a result of the financial crisis in the recent years, these privileges were significantly reduced or abolished altogether. In the event of false or misleading facts being published, there is still an obligation to publish a rectification in the same periodical. There is also an obligation on the press to respect pluralism and therefore to offer the possibility to express different opinions on a given topic. It is also stressed that the press bears a responsibility to shape public opinion and to publish news in a way that does not cause panic among the public (www.medialandscapes.org.gr).

The process of the institutionalisation of the Greek media began to take shape after the country's accession to European structures, i.e. after 1981. In the past, they were dominated by private capital, which resisted the control function of the state. Even the Greek television was the product of private initiative, and when it passed into state hands, its supervision was entrusted to the military, which continued to strive for autonomy and resisted control by state institutions. It was only Greece's integration into the European communities that forced changes in the country's political system. The Greek media were brought under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, and state institutions were established to oversee the granting of licences and to control the content published by the media.

Successively since the late 1980s, the institutionalisation process has been shaped based on new initiatives, forms and activities. However, it is not yet over due to the changes that have taken place in the last decade. At that time, the members of the National Broadcasting Council, for procedural reasons related to the mode of the appointment to this Council, were unable to grant or renew broadcasting licences, which led to a media crisis. Apart from this, the Greek state was on the brink of solvency due to the condition of its finances. The shortage in the budget resulted in the termination of employment contracts in entire media industries, including several thousand Greek television employees. The new government, dominated by the representatives of the left-wing

SYRIZA party, created another media institution, this time the General Secretariat for Information and Communication, which reported directly to the Prime Minister, and its objective was to control the press, radio and television market.

In addition to the leading institutions, supporting bodies are also responsible for the Greek media market. To a large extent, they [such as ministries or central offices like the Telecommunications and Postal Commission] existed much earlier and some media powers were handed over to them to assist the leading institutions in fulfilling their functions. Outside of this area, there was content disseminated on the Internet, which came under the control of a special unit established within the police structures.

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Instytucjonalizacja rynku medialnego w greckim systemie politycznym

Streszczenie

W artykule wskazuje się na proces instytucjonalizacji greckiego rynku medialnego. Proces ten zaczął kształtować się po wstąpieniu tego kraju do struktur europejskich, czyli po 1981 r. Sukcesywnie od końca lat 80. XX w. kształtował się on w oparciu o nowe inicjatywy, formy i działania. Jednakże proces ten jeszcze się nie zakończył ze względu na zmiany, do jakich doszło w ostatnim dziesięcioleciu. W tym czasie członkowie Krajowej Rady Radiofonii i Telewizji, ze względów proceduralnych związanych z trybem powoływania tego gremium, nie byli w stanie rozdzielać ani przedłużać koncesji radiowo-telewizyjnych, co wywołało kryzys medialny. Dodatkowo państwo greckie stanęło na krawędzi wypłacalności ze względu na stan jego finansów. Nowy rząd stworzył kolejną instytucję medialną, tym razem Sekretariat Generalny ds. Informacji i Komunikacji, który podlegał bezpośrednio premierowi i miał kontrolować rynek prasowo-radiowo-telewizyjny. Poza instytucjami wiodącymi za grecki rynek mediów odpowiadają także gremia wspomagające. W dużej mierze istniały one (jak ministerstwa czy urzędy centralne typu komisja telekomunikacji i poczty) znacznie wcześniej i do ich kompetencji oddano niektóre uprawnienia medialne, które pomagać miały instytucjom wiodącym w wypełnianiu swoich funkcji. Poza tym obszarem występowały treści upowszechniane w internecie, które znalazły się pod kontrolą specjalnej jednostki powołanej w ramach struktur policyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: Grecja, system polityczny, instytucje polityczne, media, system medialny