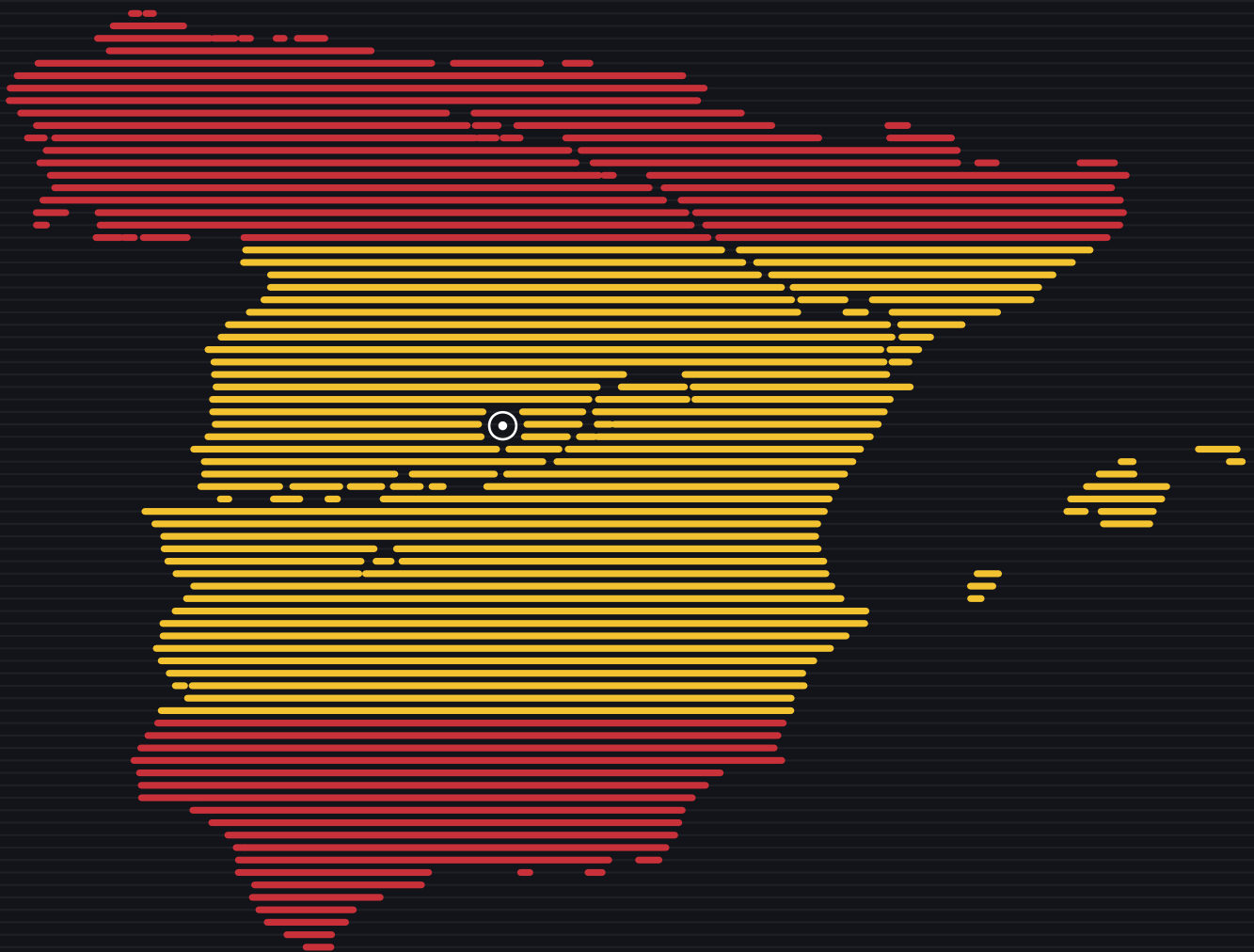


Spain



*Measuring compliance with the
European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)*

○ MADRID 40°24'N 3°41'W

AUTHORS

Tania Fernández Lombao
César Fieiras Ceide
Marta Rodríguez Castro
Martín Vaz Álvarez

EDITORS

Marius Dragomir · Jamie Wiseman



**MEDIA FREEDOM
RAPID RESPONSE**

An annual measure of media capture in the EU, and of how far Member States meet the standards the European Media Freedom Act sets against it.

The **Media Capture Monitoring Report (MCMR)** is produced by the International Press Institute (IPI) and the Media and Journalism Research Center (MJRC). Each country report assesses the four safeguards in the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) that bear most directly on media capture: the independence of public service media, the independence of media regulators, protection against the misuse of state funds to influence the media, and transparency of media ownership and safeguards for media pluralism.

The 2026 edition follows the EMFA's first year of full application, from 8 August 2025. Written by national experts and edited by MJRC and IPI, the reports are deliberately short: they track what has changed since the 2025 baseline assessment and identify the problems that remain.

The project is part of the **Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR)**, a Europe-wide mechanism which tracks, monitors and responds to violations of press and media freedom in EU Member States and Candidate Countries. It is co-funded by the European Commission.

This report covers developments up to September 2026.

AUTHORS

Tania Fernández Lombao
César Fieiras Ceide
Marta Rodríguez Castro
Martín Vaz Álvarez

EDITORS

Marius Dragomir (MJRC)
Jamie Wiseman (IPI)

PUBLISHED BY

International Press Institute (IPI)
Media and Journalism Research
Center (MJRC)

YEAR

2026

READ THE BASELINE

Media Capture Monitoring Report: Spain 2025

journalismresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/SPAIN-media-Capture-Monitoring-Report-Overview-1.pdf
ipi.media/spain-media-capture-monitoring-report-2025/

In the year to September 2026, Spain's alignment with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) advanced on paper but not in practice. The two bills that would give effect to the Regulation have not been adopted. The Draft Law on democratic governance in digital services and media regulation has been before Congress for more than a year. A new Public Sector Advertising Law was approved by the government at first reading in February 2026. Until they pass, the media regulator, the CNMC, lacks the legal basis for its new EMFA powers, and institutional advertising remains governed by a 2005 law, while the overhaul of the government's media-buying contract has missed its timetable. The CNMC's leadership was renewed in July 2026 under unchanged appointment rules, and its budgetary autonomy is still limited. RTVE's governance is unchanged, although a parliamentary sub-committee is drafting the broadcaster's first framework mandate since 2008. Ownership transparency beyond the audiovisual sector, and a pluralism test for media mergers, remain pending.

THE YEAR IN BRIEF

OCT 2025	A parliamentary sub-committee is set up to draft RTVE's new framework mandate, expired since 2017.
FEB 2026	The Council of Ministers approves the Draft Law on Public Sector Advertising at first reading.
APR 2026	The CNMC backs the advertising bill but questions its cap and warns again that it lacks the staff to apply it.
JUN 2026	Royal Decree-Law 16/2026 amends RTVE's financing law, writing off €940 million of debt to the Treasury.
JUL 2026	Juan José Ganuza becomes president of the CNMC, with three new councillors appointed under unchanged rules. The director of institutional communication resigns.
SEP 2026	RTVE's News Council criticises an interview with the Prime Minister on an externally produced programme. Draft Law 121/000068 is still at the amendments stage in Congress.
DEC 2026	The extended framework agreement for the government's media buying expires, unless replaced sooner.

01

EMFA compliance since the 2025 report

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

AVMSD ART. 30

CNMC council, July 2026

- Juan José Ganuza Fernández president, from 22 July
- Carmen Balsa Pascual councillor
- Joan Capdevila i Esteve councillor
- Marina Echebarría Sáenz councillor

Appointment rules **Unchanged**

The principal developments concern the renewal of the National Commission for Markets and Competition's (CNMC) leadership and the continuing delay in completing its EMFA-related legal framework¹. The documents and evidence reviewed do not establish a substantial improvement in effective regulatory independence compared with the 2025 assessment.

A significant institutional change occurred in July 2026. The CNMC records the appointment of Juan José Ganuza Fernández as president on 22 July², succeeding Cani Fernández. Its current Council also includes new members Carmen Balsa Pascual, Joan Capdevila i Esteve and Marina Echebarría Sáenz. Ganuza brings an academic background in economics, regulation and competition (he is a professor at Pompeu Fabra University). The appointments followed the expiry of the president's and two councillors' six-year mandates and filled an additional vacancy. They were conducted in line with the procedure set out in Article 15 of Law 3/2013: government nomination, parliamentary hearings and formal appointment by royal decree. The process nevertheless drew criticism over political independence. Press reports described Carmen Balsa, Joan Capdevila and Marina Echebarría as backed by PSOE, ERC and Sumar, respectively, while the Council had no members proposed by PP or Vox.³ The Popular Party (PP) complained that it had not been consulted, and both opposition parties questioned the candidates' independence and unsuccessfully sought to block⁴ their appointments.⁵ Despite these objections, the parliamentary committee found all four candidates suitable for their roles and identified no conflicts of interest.

The legislative reforms anticipated in 2025 remain unfinished. At the cut-off date, Draft Law 121/000068 on democratic governance in digital services and media regulation remained at the amendments stage in the Congress of Deputies⁶, with the deadline for amendments continuously extended. The relevant development is therefore the continuation of the implementation delay, rather than the introduction of a new reform. The CNMC's own EMFA information page states that exercising the additional competencies envisaged for national regulators requires enabling legislation that remains pending.

1. Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia. (n.d.). www.cnmc.es/sectores-que-regulamos/medios-de-comunicacion-emfa.
2. Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia. (n.d.). www.cnmc.es/somos-cnmc/sobre-nosotros/organigrama/consejo/juan-jose-ganuza-fernandez.
3. El País (2026, June 23). El Gobierno propone al catedrático Juan José Ganuza como nuevo presidente de la CNMC. El País. elpais.com/economia/2026-06-23/el-gobierno-propone-al-catedratico-juan-jose-ganuza-como-nuevo-presidente-de-la-cnmc.html
4. Europa Press. (2026, July 14). El Congreso aprueba los candidatos del Gobierno para renovar la CNMC, pese al 'no' de PP y Vox. www.europapress.es/economia/macroeconomia-00338/noticia-congreso-aprueba-candidatos-gobierno-renovar-cnmc-pese-no-pp-vox-20260714120032.html
5. Europa Press. (2026, June 23). PP denuncia la falta de diálogo para renovar la CNMC: "Luego se extraña de que se dude de la independencia". www.europapress.es/economia/macroeconomia-00338/noticia-pp-denuncia-falta-dialogo-renovar-cnmc-luego-extrana-dude-independencia-20260623170034.html
6. Congreso de los Diputados. (n.d.). www.congreso.es/ca/proyectos-de-ley?_iniciativas_id=121%2F000068&_iniciativas_legislatura=XV&_iniciativas_mode=mostrarDetalle&p_p_id=iniciativas&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_mode=view&p_p_state=normal.

The CNMC's 2026 Action Plan provides further evidence of this uncertainty. The plan (p. 11) explicitly makes organizational adaptation and additional actions under the DSA and EMFA conditional on legal authorization, whose timing remains uncertain. It documents institutional preparation but does not show that the new media regulation functions have become fully operational⁷.

Budgetary developments likewise indicate continuity. The CNMC's transparency portal confirms that the absence of a new State Budget before January 2026 triggered the extension of the previous budget⁸. The CNMC has also published budget-execution information for the first two quarters of 2026. This supports financial transparency, although the continued reliance on an extended State Budget leaves uncertainty over the provision of the additional resources requested by the previous presidency.

The most immediate problem is the gap between European obligations and domestic enforcement capacity. The EMFA is directly applicable, but the pending national legislation leaves the CNMC's additional responsibilities insufficiently operationalized. This prolongs uncertainty over the authority's ability to provide the comprehensive oversight envisaged by the Regulation. It does not imply that existing audiovisual supervision has ceased or that EMFA obligations are suspended.

Financial and organizational autonomy also remain unresolved. As discussed in the 2025 report⁹, Article 34 of Law 3/2013¹⁰ maintains a budget with binding expenditure limits, processed through government ministries. The 2026 Action Plan itself reiterates that efficient management requires autonomy over budgets and human resources. The documents and sources reviewed for this update do not establish that the resource concerns identified in 2025 have been resolved.

The relevant benchmark is Article 7 of the EMFA, which extends the independence requirements of Article 30 AVMSD to EMFA functions and requires adequate financial, human and technical resources. Against that benchmark, the evidence supports retaining the previous distinction between formal safeguards and only partial effective independence. The priority remains to complete the allocation of enforceable responsibilities and demonstrate that the regulator can exercise them with sufficient resources and without political interference.¹¹

There have been no changes to the regulation of RTVE. The procedure for appointing the members of the Board of Directors and the President remains unchanged. The mechanisms for external oversight and governance also remain in place. The main development lies in the progress made on drafting the RTVE Corporation's Framework Mandate (mandato-marco), which has been extended since 2017, the year in which the first (and so far only) operational framework for the public service broadcaster expired.

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

EMFA ART. 5

7. Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia. (2026). www.cnmc.es/sites/default/files/editor_contenidos/CNMC/Plan%20de%20actuacion%202026.pdf.
8. Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia. (n.d.). www.cnmc.es/somos-cnmc/transparencia/informacion-con-repercusion-economica-o-presupuestaria/informacion-presupuestaria.
9. Rodríguez-Castro, M., Vaz-Álvarez, M., Fernández-Lombao, T., & Fieiras-Ceide, C. (2025). *Media capture monitoring report: Spain. Measuring EMFA compliance*. International Press Institute & Media and Journalism Research Center.
10. Ley 3/2013, de 4 de junio, de creación de la Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia. (2013). *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 134. Consolidated text updated March 21, 2026.
11. European Parliament & Council of the European Union. (2024). Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act). *Official Journal of the European Union*, L, 2024/1083.

RTVE framework mandate

2017

YEAR IT EXPIRED

The first and so far only mandate. A parliamentary sub-committee has met more than 20 times since October 2025 to draft the next.

The drafting of the new framework mandate now falls to the Joint Committee for Parliamentary Control of the RTVE Corporation and its Companies, which in turn has set up a specific sub-committee dedicated to this purpose¹². Since its creation in October 2025, this sub-committee has met on more than 20 occasions. The committee's work has involved the participation of specialists, academics and RTVE staff to discuss models of funding, independence, pluralism and new indicators for evaluating the public service¹³.

However, the draft of the new framework mandate has not yet been made public, and it remains to be seen when it will finally be approved. It should be borne in mind that the Joint Committee for Parliamentary Control of RTVE (and therefore also the sub-committee responsible for drafting the proposed framework mandate for Corporación RTVE) is controlled by the PP and Vox (the two main opposition parties), which could slow down or even block this initiative.

Whilst there have been no regulatory or structural changes affecting RTVE's independence, there have been some controversial developments. With regard to news coverage, the Consejo de Informativos (News Council) criticised the interview with the Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, broadcast on the programme *Mañaneros 360* on 9 September. The reason for the criticism is that the interview was carried out on an externally produced programme, rather than by RTVE's News Services.¹⁴ The News Council's complaint is based on the provisions of the current framework mandate, which sets a target of 100 % in-house production for news and institutional programmes.

This latest episode shows the tense relationship between the News Council and the news programmes outsourced by RTVE, primarily *Mañaneros 360* and *Malas Lenguas*. In January 2026, the News Council drew up a report accusing these programmes of being biased and failing to comply with RTVE's fundamental guidelines for news reporting.¹⁵

Furthermore, RTVE's funding continues to come mainly from the General State Budget, which remains in force. The main development in this area is the reform of the Law on the Financing of Radiotelevisión Española in June 2026, under which the government writes off RTVE's debt to the Treasury amounting to 940 million euros. In view of the numerous ongoing legal cases concerning the deductibility of certain tax liabilities borne by the public broadcaster, the government decided to amend the RTVE Financing Act by means of Royal Decree-Law 16/2026, which stipulates that "taxes that are not deductible by RTVE shall be considered part of

RTVE debt written off

€940m

OWED TO THE TREASURY

Royal Decree-Law 16/2026 (June 2026) treats non-deductible VAT since 2015 as a public service cost.

12. Subcomisión propuesta mandato-marco RTVE (n.d.) www.senado.es/web/actividadparlamentaria/sesionescomision/detallecomisiones/subcomisionrtve/index.html?lang=en

13. Diario de Sesiones del Senado (2026, 8 April). www.senado.es/legis15/publicaciones/pdf/senado/ds/DS_P15_120.PDF#page=73

14. El País (2026, 8 September). Nuevo choque del consejo de informativos de TVE con la dirección por una entrevista a Pedro Sánchez. elpais.com/comunicacion/2026-09-08/nuevo-choque-del-consejo-de-informativos-de-tve-con-la-direccion-por-una-entrevista-a-pedro-sanchez.html

15. El Mundo (2026, 13 January). Demoleedor informe en RTVE contra los programas de Javier Ruiz y Jesús Cintora: "Las decisiones de *Mañaneros 360* y *Malas Lenguas* las toma gente ajena a RTVE". [El Mundo. www.elmundo.es/television/2026/01/13/6966049521efa08b3a8b456f.html](https://www.elmundo.es/television/2026/01/13/6966049521efa08b3a8b456f.html)

the cost of the public service provided by the corporation”.¹⁶ Consequently, the State would compensate for non-deductible VAT from the 2015 financial year onwards as a public service cost, estimated at a total of 940 million euros.¹⁷

The consolidated assessment as of September 2025 described a regulatory framework grounded in Law 29/2005, with no verifiable criteria for the allocation of institutional advertising, no breakdown by media outlet or platform in annual reports, and reactive oversight by the CNMC. This amounted to only partial compliance with Article 25 of the EMFA. The year that followed did not alter the regulatory framework in force, but it set in motion two parallel reform processes: one legislative and the other contractual.

Regarding developments in this area, on 24 February 2026 the Council of Ministers approved at first reading the Draft Law on Public Sector Advertising¹⁸, which is intended to repeal Law 29/2005 and transpose the EMFA. Its main provisions include: a cap of 35% of a media outlet’s or platform’s annual net turnover that may be derived from advertising from the three levels of government, with a safeguard for those whose turnover does not exceed €2 million and whose audience is concentrated in no more than three neighbouring autonomous communities; the inclusion of online platforms as regulated recipients; the requirement for certified audience measurement systems and tariff transparency; registration in a public register maintained by the CNMC; and an annual report, to be submitted to Parliament before 30 June, identifying the beneficial ownership of recipients. Monitoring responsibilities are assigned to the CNMC, which will also collect information from autonomous communities that lack an independent authority. At the institutional level, the Commission for Institutional Advertising and Communication is renamed the Commission for Advertising and Communication and is granted expanded powers covering commercial advertising by the State and price-setting, while the Secretary of State for Communication assumes technical assistance functions.

The CNMC report of 30 April 2026¹⁹ assesses the Draft Law favourably but draws attention to three issues: the asymmetry of the cap, which would allow media outlets operating within a specific geographical area to derive up to 100% of their turnover from public advertising; the desirability of explicitly stating the transitional nature of the autonomous communities’ supplementary regulatory provisions; and, once again, the inadequacy of organizational and staffing resources. This is compounded by the concurrent consideration of Draft Law 121/000068 on democratic governance in digital services and media regulation, which remains under consideration by the Committee on Economy, Trade and Digital Transformation under full legislative competence and for which hearings were held throughout the first half of 2026. Both initiatives envisage registers and transparency obligations concerning public funding, raising a potential issue of coordination between the two frameworks.

MISUSE OF STATE FUNDS

EMFA ART. 25

Draft advertising law

35%

CAP ON PUBLIC ADVERTISING

Maximum share of an outlet's annual net turnover from public advertising. Outlets with turnover up to €2m whose audience is concentrated in up to three neighbouring regions are exempt.

16. BOE (2026, 17 June). www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2026-13107

17. El Mundo (2026, 16 June). El Gobierno reforma la Ley de RTVE y le perdona el 'agujero' de 940 millones por el IVA. El Mundo. www.elmundo.es/economia/empresas/2026/06/16/6a318905e4d4d8c97f8b4581.html

18. Ministerio de la Presidencia, Justicia y Relaciones con las Cortes (2026). www.mpr.gob.es/servicios/participacion/audienciapublica/paginas/2026/2025-1787%20apl%20publicidad/anteproyecto-de-ley-de-publicidad-del-sector-p-bli.aspx

19. CNMC (2026, April 30) www.cnmc.es/prensa/ipn-publicidad-institucional-20260430

In parallel, Framework Agreement 50/2023 was extended by the Directorate-General for the Rationalization and Centralization of Procurement (DGRCC) until 18 December 2026, or until a new agreement enters into force.²⁰ The model currently under development would reverse the prevailing approach, under which economic criteria account for 100% of the weighting, by applying 70% technical criteria and 30% economic criteria²¹; replacing competition based on discounts (which reached as high as 99%) with remuneration through a fee; and reducing the weight assigned to social media in favour of media outlets subject to editorial responsibility.

Award criteria for the government's media-buying framework agreement

Weighting of criteria, %

■ Technical criteria ■ Economic criteria

Framework Agreement
50/2023 (current)

100%

Model under development

70%

30%

Source: Dircomfidencial, 3 March 2026 (see note 21).

From a political perspective, the resignation of José Manuel Nevado as Director of the Department of Institutional Communication²² on 7 July 2026 was due, according to *El Español*, citing government sources, to disagreements with the government about the future of the department that distributes institutional advertising.²³ He was succeeded by María Teresa Velilla de la Rocha, previously head of the SEC's Institutional Advertising Unit.²⁴

The planned timetable (the tendering process in June and the award in September) was not met, while the extension expires in December. The conclusion is that one year on, convergence with Article 25 of the EMFA remains largely programmatic: the 2026 Institutional Advertising and Communication Plan²⁵ provides for 124 campaigns and €155.6 million in expenditure, which will still be implemented under the 2005 framework. The reform therefore comes after the spending cycle it is intended to regulate.

The 2025 report identified two main shortcomings in relation to Articles 6 and 22 of the EMFA: a national ownership-transparency framework largely confined to the audiovisual sector, and the absence of a specific procedure for assessing media market concentrations from the perspective of media pluralism and editorial independence. As of September 2026, neither shortcoming has been fully

2026 institutional advertising
plan

€155.6m

124 CAMPAIGNS

To be spent under the 2005 law,
before the reform takes effect.

MEDIA PLURALISM AND
POLITICAL INFLUENCE

EMFA ART. 6 & 22

20. Dirección General de Racionalización y Centralización de la Contratación (Ficha AM 50/2023). Servicios de compra de espacios en medios de comunicación y demás soportes publicitarios para la difusión de las campañas de publicidad institucional. contratacioncentralizada.gob.es/web/dgrcc/-/ficha-ami-publicidad-institucional.
21. Dircomfidencial (2026, 3 March). El próximo acuerdo marco publicitario reducirá al 30 % el peso de los criterios económicos para elegir agencias. Dircomfidencial. dircomfidencial.com/marketing/el-proximo-acuerdo-marco-publicitario-reducira-al-30-el-peso-de-los-criterios-economicos-para-elegir-agencias-20260303-0405/
22. BOE (2026, August 27) www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2026-18208
23. El Español (2026, 7 July). José Manuel Nevado presenta su dimisión como director de Comunicación Institucional del Gobierno tras dos años y medio. El Español. www.elspanol.com/invertia/medios/20260707/jose-manuel-nevado-presenta-dimision-director-comunicacion-institucional-gobierno-anos-medio/1003744313432_0.html
24. Real Decreto 734/2026, de 15 de septiembre (BOE, 16 September 2026, BOE-A-2026-19256). www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2026-19256
25. Comisión de Publicidad y Comunicación Institucional (2026) Plan 2026 de Publicidad y Comunicación Institucional. transparencia.gob.es/content/dam/transparencia_home/publicidadactiva/planificacion/planes-comunicacion-institucional/Plan2026.pdf

addressed. The main legislative development is Draft Law 121/000068 on democratic governance in digital services and media regulation, introduced on 30 July 2025, which remains at the amendments stage before the Congress Committee on Economy, Trade and Digital Transformation.

In the area of transparency, the bill would extend the scope of Law 13/2022 to press media services and establish a public State Register of media service providers, administered by the CNMC and coordinated with the regional registers. State-level providers would be required to enter and keep up to date the information specified in Article 6(1) of the EMFA: the identity of direct or indirect owners capable of exercising influence, beneficial owners, the total annual amount of public funds allocated for state advertising, and advertising revenues received from third-country public authorities or entities. The register would be informational only and would not constitute an authorisation to operate. The bill would also classify as infringements failures to comply with these transparency obligations, to put in place proportionate measures safeguarding freedom in editorial decision-making, or to disclose conflicts of interest that could affect the provision of news and current affairs content. These provisions remain subject to adoption and, as regards the organisation and operation of the register, subsequent regulatory development.

In the area of media market concentrations, the bill would establish a specific procedure for assessing their effects on media pluralism and editorial independence, in addition to the general merger-control regime under competition law. The CNMC would assess operations with a national or multi-regional scope, together with the other cases specified in the bill, while regional authorities would assess concentrations confined to their respective territories. The assessment would have to apply the criteria set out in Article 22(2) of the EMFA and could result in a favourable assessment, the imposition of commitments or conditions, or an unfavourable assessment. Where significant negative repercussions on media pluralism and editorial independence were found to be very serious, the bill would allow the CNMC to prohibit the concentration or make it subject to specific commitments. The detailed procedure would require subsequent regulatory development.

The EMFA itself is already directly applicable. Article 6(3), concerning safeguards for the independence of editorial decisions and the disclosure of conflicts of interest, has applied since 8 February 2025; the Regulation has applied generally since 8 August 2025, including Articles 6(1) and 22. It is therefore not a directive awaiting transposition. What remains outstanding in Spain is the completion of the domestic rules, authorities, registers and procedures needed to give effect to those EMFA provisions that require national institutional arrangements, including the national media ownership database envisaged in Article 6(2) and the substantive and procedural rules for assessing concentrations required under Article 22.

Assessments published in 2026 show that the gap between directly applicable EU rules and their national implementation continues to have practical consequences. The European Commission's 2026 Rule of Law Report notes that concerns persist regarding ownership transparency for media other than audiovisual media services, video-sharing platforms and influencers while the new

legislation remains pending²⁶. The Media Pluralism Monitor 2026 continues to rate Spain at very high risk for the plurality of media providers²⁷. At the same time, the specific ownership-transparency indicator improves from very high risk in 2025 to medium-low risk in 2026; the Commission itself links this improvement to the legislative reforms envisaged, particularly the creation of the State Register and the new transparency requirements. Stakeholders consulted by the Commission consider that, until those reforms take effect, the current legal framework will remain insufficient to guarantee ownership transparency.

The Euromedia Ownership Monitor 2025²⁸ corroborates this diagnosis through its analysis of corporate ownership structures. Its study of Spain, published in December 2025 using information available up to 15 September of that year, identifies complex or highly complex ownership structures in 13 of the 24 media outlets analysed and notes that very few outlets directly disclose the identity of their beneficial owners. It also finds limited availability of financial information at the individual media-outlet level. Given its cut-off date, these findings should be treated as a baseline rather than as evidence of deterioration during 2026.

As of September 2026, progress is primarily legislative rather than operational. The bill directly addresses several of the shortcomings identified in 2025: it would extend ownership transparency beyond the audiovisual sector, establish a dedicated registration infrastructure, strengthen obligations linked to editorial independence, and create a concentration-assessment procedure expressly focused on media pluralism and editorial independence. These changes, however, are not yet part of the national framework in force. The main challenge is to complete their adoption and implementation and translate the obligations already established by the EMFA into effective, verifiable national mechanisms subject to adequate oversight.

Ownership structures

13

OF 24 OUTLETS ANALYSED



have complex or highly complex ownership structures. Euromedia Ownership Monitor 2025, data to 15 September 2025.

26. European Commission (2026). 2026 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Spain. eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52026SC0909

27. Media Pluralism Monitor (2026). Spain country report. cmpf.eu.eu/country/spain-2026/

28. Pérez Altable, L., Camps Durban, E., Ramon Vegas, X., Rodríguez Martínez, R., & Mauri de los Rios, M. (2025). Spain: Country Report 2025. Euromedia Ownership Monitor. media-ownership.eu/2025-edition/country-reports/spain/

02

Has the situation improved?

Only on paper. Spain now has two bills that would, if passed, close most of the gaps identified in the 2025 report. Draft Law 121/000068 would extend ownership transparency beyond the audiovisual sector, create a State Register of media service providers and introduce a pluralism-focused assessment of media concentrations. The Draft Law on Public Sector Advertising would replace the 2005 framework, cap the share of an outlet's revenue that can come from public advertising and require reporting on the beneficial owners of recipients. At present, neither has been adopted. The first has been before Congress for more than a year; the second has been approved by the government only at first reading, and the CNMC has questioned its cap and warned, once again, that it lacks the staff to apply it. In the meantime, the CNMC's new EMFA competences depend on enabling legislation, its budget remains tied to an extended State Budget, and its new council was appointed under an unchanged procedure. RTVE's governance is unchanged, and its framework mandate, expired since 2017, is being drafted by a committee controlled by the opposition. The 2026 institutional advertising plan, worth €155.6 million, will be spent under the old rules.

03

Outstanding problems

MEDIA REGULATORS

AVMSD ART. 30

The CNMC's additional EMFA competences still depend on Draft Law 121/000068, which remains before Congress. Its budget is still subject to binding expenditure limits processed through government ministries, and it has limited autonomy over its budget and staff just as it takes on DSA and EMFA tasks. The July 2026 renewal of its council left the appointment procedure unchanged.

PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

EMFA ART. 5

The rules for RTVE's governance and for appointing its board and president are unchanged since the 2025 report, which found effective independence lacking. The framework mandate, expired since 2017, is still being drafted, has not been made public and depends on an opposition-controlled committee, leaving RTVE's funding without long-term criteria.

MISUSE OF STATE FUNDS

EMFA ART. 25

Institutional advertising is still allocated under Law 29/2005, with no verifiable allocation criteria and no breakdown by outlet. The Draft Law on Public Sector Advertising has not been adopted, the CNMC has warned that its cap could let regional outlets depend entirely on public money, and the new framework agreement for media buying has missed its timetable, with the current one extended to December 2026.

OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY AND PLURALISM

EMFA ART. 6 & 22

Ownership transparency obligations still cover only audiovisual services, and there is no procedure for assessing media concentrations for their impact on pluralism and editorial independence. Draft Law 121/000068 would fill both gaps but has not been adopted. Complex ownership structures and scarce disclosure of beneficial owners remain common, and the Media Pluralism Monitor still rates Spain at very high risk for the plurality of media providers.

An annual measure of how far EU Member States have fallen under media capture, and of how well they meet the standards set by the European Media Freedom Act to combat it.



[JOURNALISMRESEARCH.ORG/MCMR](https://journalismresearch.org/mcmr) · [IPI.MEDIA](https://ipi.media)

INTEGRITY NOTE

This report is independent. Its research, analysis and writing are the work of the named authors, reviewed by editors at MJRC and IPI, and every factual claim is sourced in the notes. The funders had no role in the report's content or conclusions. Digital tools, including AI-assisted software, were used for design and layout only.



ipi.media
info@ipi.media



journalismresearch.org
mjrc@journalismresearch.org



Co-funded by
the European Union



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.