**Draft Media Act: "Society has never needed journalists more than today"**

A discussion about the draft Media Act, held today at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana, revealed that many stakeholders are still not satisfied with the text, particularly in the section concerning media concentration regulation. One of the suggestions was that the Ministry of Culture should take more time and submit a more refined draft to the government.

Lenart J. Kučić, media adviser to Minister of Culture Asta Vrečko, stated at today’s public debate—organized by the Department of Journalism at the mentioned faculty—that inter-ministerial coordination is in its final phase. The proposal is still undergoing changes, but the main guidelines are known. The law aims to ensure greater independence and pluralism of the media. It also follows the main points of European acts on media freedom, digital services, and artificial intelligence.

"Society has never needed journalists to keep an eye on politics more than it does today," emphasized Gašper Andrinek, president of the Slovenian Journalists' Association. According to him, state aid schemes are essential for the survival of journalism. He pointed out trends from the U.S. that are gradually appearing in Europe as well: layoffs and the formation of large media conglomerates that buy local newspapers, resulting in the same content being published everywhere.

**Unprecedented concentration of decision-making in Slovenia**

Professor Marko Milosavljević from the Department of Journalism criticized the assignment of additional responsibilities to the Agency for Communication Networks and Services (AKOS), as proposed in the draft law. The draft introduces a new process of notification and assessment of concentrations in the media market, for which AKOS would be responsible.

Professor Milosavljević noted a level of decision-making concentration “unprecedented in Slovenia.” In addition to these new powers, AKOS would continue to carry out its duties in many other areas, such as postal services and railways.

Sara Žibrat, chair of the parliamentary Committee on Culture (Freedom Movement party), is also concerned about the accumulation of responsibilities within AKOS. According to her, MPs from the Freedom Movement want the law to prevent developments in the media sector similar to those seen in some other European countries, such as Hungary. She stated that the law should address all concerns and be ready for government review as soon as possible.

Print media also see many uncertainties in the draft that cause concern, said Nataša Luša, director of the publishing company *Delo*. According to her, print media want measures that are independent of the ruling political party. “We have been facing various crises for ten years now, and the state has yet to remember us,” she said.