THE INDEX ON INTERNATIONAL MEDIA FREEDOM SUPPORT (IMFS) **2026**

The International Media Freedom Support (IMFS) Index evaluates and ranks 30 states based on their support for media freedom beyond their borders. It does this by analysing the contributions they have made to international diplomatic, financial and refuge / protection initiatives that promote media freedom in the previous calendar year. The IMFS Index includes all states that are members of both the OECD-DAC and the Media Freedom Coalition.

STRONG PERFORMANCES

— **Sweden (1st)** is the highest ranked country in the 2026 IMFS Index - moving up one place from 2025 - largely due to its significant financial support for international media development.

— **Lithuania (3rd)** was the highest scoring country under the diplomatic theme of the IMFS Index – for the second year running.

— **Belgium (8th)** moved up four places into the silver category in 2026. For the second consecutive year, Belgium allocated the second-highest proportion of its ODA to international media development (0.33%) and, at short notice, stepped in to host World Press Freedom Day in 2025.

— **Finland (10th)** recorded the largest improvements in the rankings between 2025 and 2026 - climbing nine places from 19th to 10th - largely due to taking on the role of MFC co-chair in 2025.

— **The European Union** spent $68 million on international media development in 2024 - an increase of over $20 million compared 2023 (not including individual member states' direct contributions).

CONCERNING FINDINGS

— Half of all countries in the IMFS index awarded less than 0.1% of their ODA to media development in 2024. For the second year running, Latvia (18th), Greece (24th) and Slovenia (29th) allocated none of their ODA to media development.

— Just 0.15% of ODA was allocated to media development in 2024 among all 30 states in the Index - a decline of 0.01% from 2023. In total, $332 million was allocated to media development in 2024 from the 30 IMFS Index countries - a decline of over $10 million from 2023. This funding fell further in 2025.

— No country in the Index has both an active emergency visa scheme and at least one initiative domestically for media workers in exile.

— Half of all countries (15 out of 30) did not award funding to any multilateral pooled funds focussed on media freedom in 2025.

— Italy (26th), Spain (27th) and Japan (28th) were all among the five lowest-ranked countries in the 2026 IMFS Index, despite their size and influence.

— Latvia (18th) and Australia (19th) both saw the greatest decline in their rankings – falling 9 places each in 2024.

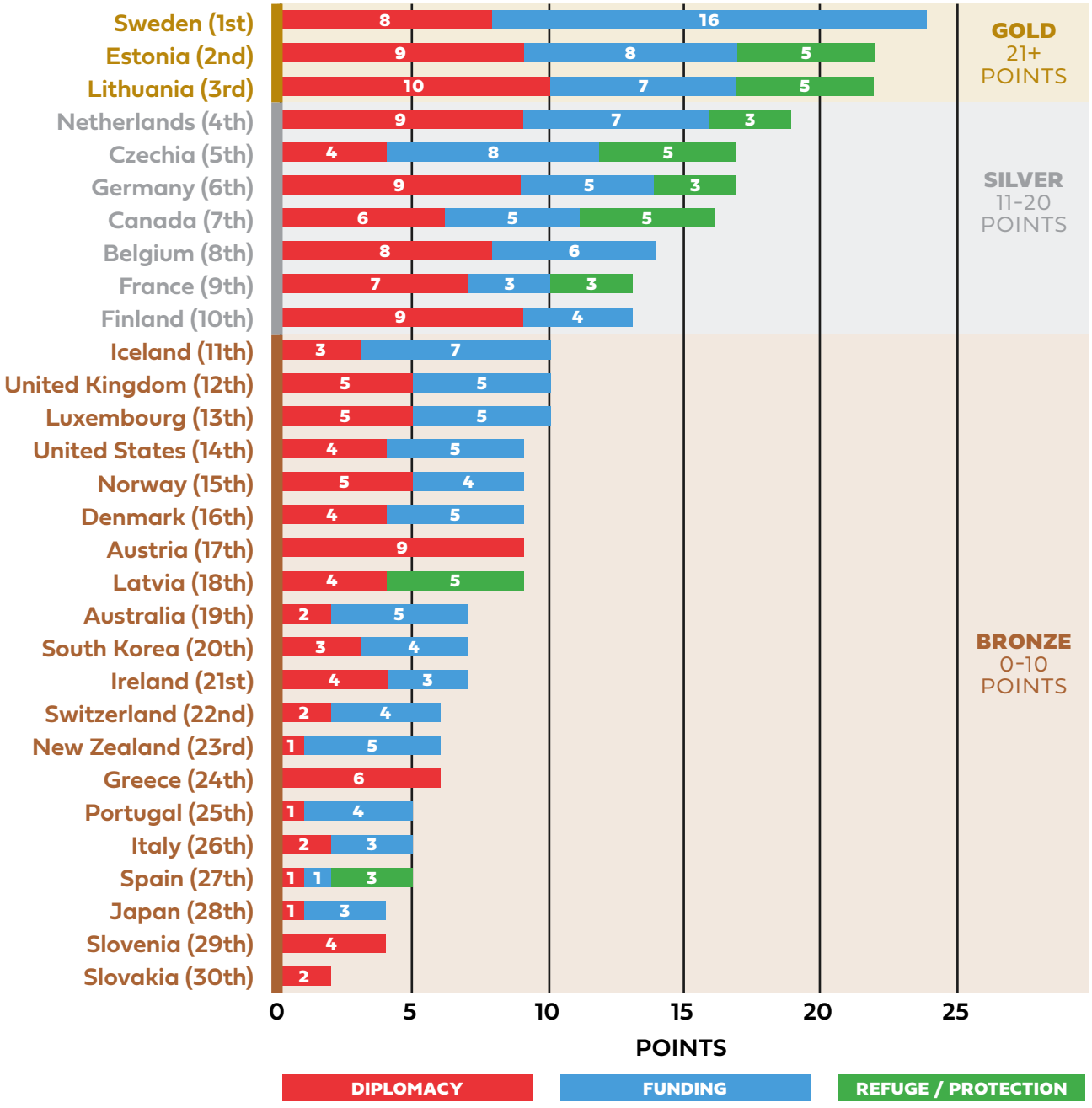
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THE INDEX ON INTERNATIONAL MEDIA FREEDOM SUPPORT

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RANKING & SCORING FOR EACH COUNTRY IN THE 2026 INDEX FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDIA FREEDOM SUPPORT*



METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

Theme 1 **Diplomatic support for media freedom:** Assessed through measures of states' leadership, membership and advocacy within multilateral initiatives.

Theme 2 **Financial support for media development:** Assessed through measures of states' funding levels, fulfillment of financial commitments and contributions to pooled multilateral funds.

Theme 3 **Support for journalism refuge and protection:** Assessed through states' provision of safe refuge and assistance programmes for journalists at-risk or in exile.

* The Index draws on data from the previous calendar year (2025), except for the ODA figures, which are for 2024, due to the time lag in reporting.