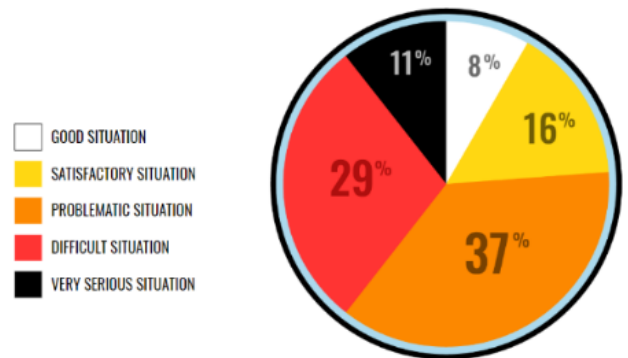


### Document A (Source: <https://rsf.org/en/ireland>)

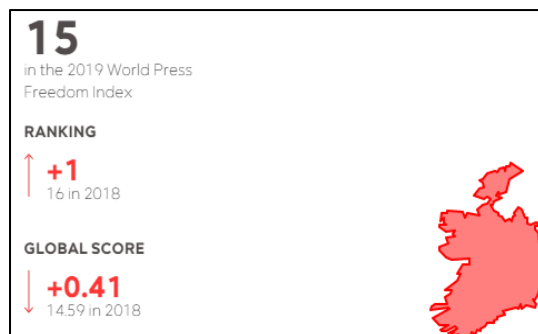
This document is drawn from the “World Press Freedom Index – 2019” issued by the organization *Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF)* (*\*translated as Reporters Without Borders*) *\*\*Adapted for Examination Purposes\*\**

The 2019 World Press Freedom Index compiled by *Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF)* shows how hatred of journalists has degenerated into violence, contributing to an increase in fear. The number of countries regarded as safe, where journalists can work in complete security, continues to decline, while authoritarian regimes continue to tighten their grip on the media.

Only 24 percent of the 180 countries and territories are classified as “good” or “fairly good”, as opposed to 26 percent last year. As a result of an increasingly hostile climate that goes beyond Donald Trump’s comments, the United States (48th) has fallen three places in this year’s Index and the media climate is now classified as “problematic” (orange). Never before have US journalists been subjected to so many death threats or turned so often to private security firms for protection.



### Ireland 2019



The highly concentrated nature of media ownership remains the single largest threat to press freedom in Ireland.

*Independent News and Media (INM)* controls much of the daily and Sunday newspaper market, while broadcasting is dominated by the semi-state company RTE. The 1937 constitution guarantees media freedom, but defamation\*\*\* suits are common.

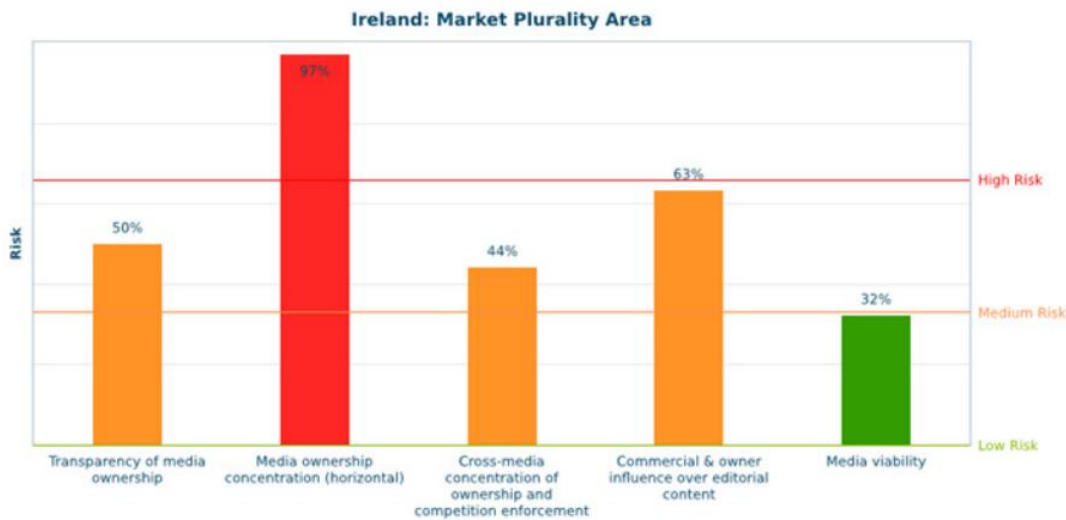
The extraordinarily high damages awarded by Irish courts in defamation cases have prompted calls for a review of the 2009 Defamation Act. In 2017, the European Court of Human Rights found that a €1.25 million award in a defamation case in Ireland was a breach of the right to freedom of expression. The possibility of exorbitant (extremely high) damages, combined with the high legal costs of defending defamation suits, has resulted in a climate of self-censorship, in which prominent individuals known to be litigious (frequently start law suits) become largely untouchable by the Irish media. The vote by referendum in October 2018 to decriminalise blasphemy was a welcome move for press freedom.

Ranking since 2013					
Year	Ranking		Year	Ranking	
2018	16 / 180	↓	2014	16 / 180	↓
2017	14 / 180	↓	2013	15 / 180	=
2016	9 / 180	↑			
2015	11 / 180	↑			

\*\*\*Defamation is the communication of a false statement that harms the reputation of an individual, business, or specific group. Its use in law varies from country to country.

This extract is drawn from the European University Institute’s ‘Centre for Media Pluralism’ and their Media Freedom report, entitled “*Monitoring Media Pluralism in Europe, 2017*”. \*\*Adapted for Examination Purposes\*\*

The Market Plurality\*\*\* indicators examine the existence and effectiveness of transparency and disclosure requirements with regard to media ownership. In addition, they assess the existence and effectiveness of legal safeguards (protections) to prevent *cross-media concentration* (across different types of media) of ownership and the role of competition enforcement and State aid control in protecting media pluralism.



The indicator on Media ownership concentration scores a high risk (97%). This is largely explained by the lack of defined limits on media ownership. The 2014 Competition and Consumer Protection Act, which deals with media mergers, does not specify quantitative thresholds (maximum permitted limit) to prevent an increase in media ownership concentration. Section 25 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 requires the *Broadcasting Authority of Ireland* to maintain open, pluralistic and diverse media markets, but again does not specify limits on ownership thresholds. In its 2012 Ownership and Control Document the BAI argues that, in the absence of a practical guidelines defining what a reasonable share of media markets is, media acquisitions and mergers (buying out or joining two companies) should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Despite this, the high risk figure perhaps overstates the extent of concentration in Ireland where, in any case, some awareness of the impact of small market size should be acknowledged. Although the score measuring the market share of the ‘top four’ owners for the newspaper sector is considered as high at 79%, the figures for radio (61%) and television (52%) would be regarded as constituting medium levels of concentration.

The indicator on cross-media ownership scores a medium risk (44%) due in part to – again - the absence of specific upper limits on ownership. For the most part media mergers since 2014 have proceeded without significant regulatory intervention. Since 2015, *TV3*, *UTV Ireland* and *Setanta* have all been acquired by larger players, namely *Liberty Global*, *ITV Plc* and *Eir*. In the radio market, *UTV*’s former Irish radio holdings were acquired by *News UK* in July 2016 as part of the latter’s purchase of *UTV*’s Wireless Group. The only recent example of active intervention with regard to a media merger relates to *Independent News and Media*’s September 2016 move – subsequently abandoned - to acquire the *Celtic Media Group* regional newspaper chain. The overall risk figure would be higher still, were it not for the presence of annual monitoring of the level of state funding paid to public service media in Ireland.

\*\*\* ‘Pluralism’ in the media refers to the state of having a wide range of different voices, opinions and analyses on media system and/or the coexistence of different and diverse types of medias and media supports.





(f) Which Document, A or B, presents its data (both qualitative and quantitative) in a more accessible and user-friendly manner? Justify your answer with reference to **both** documents. (20 Marks)

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[Question G on next page]

