

A MISSION TO INFORM
Journalists at risk speak out



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A MISSION TO INFORM: JOURNALISTS AT RISK SPEAK OUT

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‘URGENT AND RESOLUTE RESPONSES’: RECOMMENDATIONS

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- “Implementation gap” between standards and real protections
 - Political commitment of member states: Council of Europe “Platform” for the safety of journalists, 2015
 - Committee of Ministers 2016 Recommendation on safety and protection
 - Inconsistent actions: protections must be “practical and effective”

I: ATTACKS AND INTIMIDATION

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- ***“People are scared because they see me under constant attack... It’s a climate of fear” - Daphne Caruana Galizia, 6 October 2017***
 - Stifles watchdog role of media
 - Chilling effect on free speech
 - **Responses:-**
 - Effective measures of protection (e.g. Italy)
 - Safe harbour
 - Democratic controls - parliament, law-enforcement, civil society, media

2: SMEARS, SCAPEGOATING & DEMONISATION

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- ***“It was a systematic effort at character assassination” – Kostas Vaxevanis***
 - “Traitors” and enemies of the people
 - Incitement to hostile acts
 - Marginalisation & exclusion
 - **Responses:-**
 - Public condemnation of anti-media outbursts
 - Counter hate speech/ stop targeting of women journalists

3: JUDICIAL HARASSMENT AND MISUSE OF LAW

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- Defamation & national security laws breach European Convention
 - Trumped-up/ vexatious charges
 - Disclosure orders & surveillance expose journalists' sources
 - **Responses:-**
 - Amend/ repeal bad laws
 - Review laws and practices on Article 10/ freedom of expression rights
 - Judicial independence

4: END IMPUNITY

Impunity kills

Creates climates of fear

Destroys trust in government

Responses:-

Prompt, impartial, effective investigations

Aggravated penalties for abuse of office

5: ECONOMIC PRESSURES

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- *“Media risk becoming propaganda megaphones for those in power” – Human Rights Commissioner Dunja Mijatovic*
 - Media capture by ownership, financial and regulatory control
 - Destroys media plurality
 - **Responses:-**
 - Fair media market regulation
 - Transparent ownership
 - Independence of public broadcasting

6: SELF-CENSORSHIP

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- ***“Most of those who call themselves journalists just do information services for their parties or business” – Elena Kostyuchenko***
 - Journalists coerced/ co-opted to act as mouthpieces of media owners
 - Journalists’ bodies serve interests of political & business elites
 - Ethics of journalists undermined

7: EROSION OF DEMOCRACY

■ “
“If you don’t report on corruption cases they will never be recorded” – Stevan Dojcinovic

- Corruption & abuses
- Flawed elections
- Authoritarian politics
- Remedies:-
- Independent police, civil service, Election Commission, Human Rights bodies etc.
- Vibrant civil society

8: WHAT JOURNALISTS MUST DO

“How can you work as a journalist if you don’t know the law?” – Jessikka Aro

- Understand the law
- Professional ethics
- Solidarity & autonomy
- Safety and security
- Collaboration

9: WHAT MORE SHOULD EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS DO?

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- *“I don’t feel that Europe is brave enough to defend its principles” – Erol Enderoglu*
 - Heed these concerns and expectations
 - States’ obligations: Protect; Prevent attacks; Prosecute crimes against journalists
 - Be consistent in actions
 - Execution of court judgements

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