



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1495
Vienna, 7 November 2024**

**EU Statement on the occasion of the International Day to
End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists**

1. On the 10th International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, we commend the fearless frontline journalists and media actors covering conflicts, crises, and emergencies. Their work is essential to expose human rights violations, abuses, and war crimes that would otherwise remain hidden from public view.
2. The OSCE rests upon the comprehensive concept of security, with respect for human rights at its core. Media freedom and the safety of journalists are essential components and there can be no security, nor democracy, without it. All participating States have committed, including by the Ministerial Council Decision in Milan 2018, to take effective measures to end impunity for attacks and crimes committed against journalists, by ensuring accountability as a key element in preventing future attacks.
3. Still, many journalists and media actors, including in the OSCE area, perform their duties in extremely dangerous contexts. Too many of them pay an unacceptably high price only for doing their job to produce and disseminate reliable and independent information. Threats, harassment, arbitrary detentions, violence and even killings are all too prevalent. This is unacceptable and must stop. We remain deeply concerned about the number of killings and the alarmingly high rate of impunity for crimes committed against journalists and media actors.

4. Women journalists and media actors continue to be subjected to specific and disproportionate attacks, both online and offline. This is a serious threat to democracy as it in practice often constitutes a barrier to women's and girls' public and political participation.

Madame/Mr Chair,

5. Journalists and media actors continue to be at risk daily while reporting on Russia's continued unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. According to the Council of Europe Safety of Journalists Platform, at least sixteen journalists and media actors have been killed, and at least five journalists are in detention following Russia's full-scale invasion. The Moscow Mechanism report in April also found that journalists are among the thousands of Ukrainian civilians arbitrarily detained by Russia.
6. We deeply mourn the death of Ukrainian journalist Victoria Roshchyna, who went missing in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and was confirmed dead while in arbitrary detention in Russia. There must be a prompt, effective and impartial investigation into her death. We reiterate our call on Russia to protect journalists and other media actors in accordance with international humanitarian law, and to respect, protect and fulfil the right to freedom of opinion and expression in line with its OSCE commitments and obligations under international law. In this regard, we also demand an end to the persecution of journalists and media actors in territories of Ukraine illegally and temporarily occupied by Russia, including the Crimean peninsula.
7. According to the 2023 Moscow Mechanism report on Belarus, journalists were among those targeted, prosecuted and detained in the regime's repression. Belarus has not acted upon the report's recommendations. On the contrary, the situation has further deteriorated. We strongly condemn the persecution and intimidation campaigns against all segments of Belarusian society, including independent journalists and media actors. All those arbitrarily detained or imprisoned on politically motivated charges, including on grounds of so-called

“extremism” or “terrorism”, must be released immediately and unconditionally, and their effective rehabilitation must be ensured.

8. In Azerbaijan, there has been an unsettling rise in arrests of independent journalists on politically motivated charges. This includes cases such as Abzas Media, Toplum TV, Kanal 11 and Kanal 13. We call on Azerbaijan to ensure due processes to all its citizens in line with its commitments to the OSCE and to release all those imprisoned for exercising their fundamental rights, including journalists. COP29 is an opportunity for Azerbaijan to demonstrate that it is committed to the protection of a free and independent civil society and media landscape.
9. In Kyrgyzstan, we are very concerned about the ruling by the Leninsky District Court in Bishkek in the case against the 11 Temirov Live investigative journalists. Two of the journalists, Azamat Ishenbekov and Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy, were sentenced to five and six years in prison respectively. Two other journalists were sentenced to three years' probation; and seven others were acquitted. Independent, fact-based journalism is vital to democracy, and media actors should never be punished for doing their job.

Mr/Madam Chair,

10. The RFoM has pointed out that prevention of attacks against journalists requires that States create and maintain a safe and enabling environment so that journalists can work without fear or undue interference. Where attacks against journalists and media actors occur, they must be promptly, effectively, and impartially investigated, and accountability must be ensured. The EU remains steadfast in its commitment to protect media freedom and pluralism in our global action and at home.
11. In this context, we express our hope that a new RFoM will be appointed without further delay. We encourage all participating States to make use of the tools and expertise offered by the RFoM, including in the field of safety of journalists and ending impunity for attacks against them.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA* and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.