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29 April 2010

## **We should protect interpreters in conflict zones!**

### **Written declaration No. 442**

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This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

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In conflict zones, interpreters are on the front line. No register records interpreters' deaths, but it is believed that, between 2003 and 2008, 360 were killed in Iraq.

Interpreters – frequently ill-informed about their duties and rights – have inadequate (physical and legal) protection. With their families, they are often left unprotected in post-conflict situations and no priority whatsoever is given to their asylum requests.

Lacking any official status, interpreters run serious risks. While the Geneva Conventions recognise the need for linguistic mediation in order to protect the rights of individuals, the rights of interpreters, for their part, are not dealt with in any way.

We hereby:

- call on member states to provide better protection for interpreters during and following conflicts;
- remind member states of the need to be scrupulous in their application of the few provisions of international law that do exist in order to provide interpreters with better protection, inter alia by assimilating them into other categories of staff mentioned in the Geneva Conventions;
- emphasise the neutrality and impartiality of interpreters, whose safety should be ensured in conflict zones in the same way as that of ICRC staff.

*Signed (see overleaf)*



*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

MARTY Dick, Switzerland, ALDE  
ALIGRUDIĆ Miloš, Serbia, EPP/CD  
BECK Marieluise, Germany, ALDE  
BEMELMANS-VIDEC Marie-Louise, Netherlands, EPP/CD  
BRASSEUR Anne, Luxembourg, ALDE  
BUGNON André, Switzerland, ALDE  
FARINA Gianni, Italy, SOC  
FRANKEN Hans, Netherlands, EPP/CD  
GARDETTO Jean-Charles, Monaco, EPP/CD  
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC  
GUȚU Ana, Republic of Moldova, ALDE  
HERKEL Andres, Estonia, EPP/CD  
HOLOVATY Serhiy, Ukraine, ALDE  
JOHN-CALAME Francine, Switzerland, SOC  
JONKER Corien W.A., Netherlands, EPP/CD  
KOÇ Haluk, Turkey, SOC  
KÜHNEL Franz Eduard, Austria, EPP/CD  
LAAKSO Jaakko, Finland, UEL  
LINDBLAD Göran, Sweden, EPP/CD  
MARCENARO Pietro, Italy, SOC  
MAURY PASQUIER Liliane, Switzerland, SOC  
MEIKAR Silver, Estonia, ALDE  
MIGNON Jean-Claude, France, EPP/CD  
OMTZIGT Pieter, Netherlands  
PASHAYEVA Ganira, Azerbaijan, EDG  
POURBAIX-LUNDIN Marietta, de, Sweden, EPP/CD  
POURGOURIDES Christos, Cyprus, EPP/CD  
POZZO DI BORGO Yves, France, EPP/CD  
REPS Mailis, Estonia, ALDE  
ROWEN Paul, United Kingdom, ALDE  
SASI Kimmo, Finland, EPP/CD  
SCHUSTER Marina, Germany, ALDE  
SEYIDOV Samad, Azerbaijan, EDG  
SLUTSKY Leonid, Russian Federation, SOC  
STUMP Doris, Switzerland, SOC  
SYDOW Björn, von, Sweden, SOC  
TOSHEV Latchezar, Bulgaria, EPP/CD  
VOLONTÈ Luca, Italy, EPP/CD  
VRIES Klaas, de, Netherlands, SOC  
ZERNOVSKI Andrej, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", ALDE

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Total = 40

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EDG: European Democrat Group  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
SOC: Socialist Group  
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left