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Protection of the safety of journalists and of media freedom in Europe

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2062 (2015)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers welcomes Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2062 (2015) on the “Protection of the safety of journalists and of media freedom in Europe”, which it has transmitted to the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI), for information and possible comments. The Committee agrees with the Parliamentary Assembly that freedom of the media is a necessary condition for democracy and that further determined action should be pursued to ensure the protection of the safety of journalists and other media actors.²

2. Therefore, the Committee is pleased to inform the Assembly that the CDMSI is working on a draft recommendation on the protection of journalism and the safety of journalists and other media actors which will be submitted to the Committee of Ministers for adoption at the beginning of 2016. The draft recommendation will follow the approach expressed by the Committee of Ministers in its Declaration of 30 April 2014 with respect to the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which it views as an urgent and vital necessity.

3. The Committee observes that the draft recommendation will deal, *inter alia*, with the incorporation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights at the national level, including the full and timely execution by member States of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights dealing with violations of media freedom.

4. The Committee of Ministers attaches great importance to its supervision of the execution of the Court's judgments and will be considering how co-operation and assistance activities can be better targeted to support member States in this process. This may include the development of targeted training programmes for police and law enforcement authorities in member States regarding the protection of journalists and media freedom.

5. The Committee of Ministers notes that the CDMSI has the general task of reviewing the implementation by member States of the Committee of Ministers' declarations and recommendations in the media field and of making any necessary proposals for updating these texts.

6. As regards the Committee of Ministers' thematic debates on media freedom and related matters, it appreciated the participation of Mr Gvozden Flego, Rapporteur on Protection of Media Freedom in Europe of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media of the Parliamentary Assembly, in its debate on “Safety of journalists – Further steps for the better implementation of human rights standards” in December 2013. It recalls that the Secretary General made concrete proposals for the setting-up of the online Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists following that thematic debate. The Committee will continue to invite Assembly rapporteurs to future debates on a case-by-case basis.

1. Adopted at the 1231st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (17 June 2015).

2. The Russian Federation made a reservation concerning this Parliamentary Assembly recommendation, specifically denying its application to “other media actors”, as it considers this term to be unspecific and without any basis in binding international legal documents.



7. Finally, the Committee agrees with the Assembly that co-operation with NGOs and the media should be intensified to fully evaluate and react to serious violations of media freedom. In this context, it is pleased to note that the above-mentioned Platform has now become operational. It considers that co-operation with representative professional organisations should also be intensified.