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The position of the Russian Federation regarding the alerts about Russia posted on the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists

Written question No. 711 to the Committee of Ministers

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The Federal Financial Monitoring Service of the Russian Federation publishes on its official website lists of thousands of alleged terrorists, which include opposition journalists such as the journalists Mykola Semena and Anna Andrievska, who have worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in the illegally Russian-occupied territory of Crimea in Ukraine. This practice follows the publication of lists of individuals who are critical of the current Russian Government, such as the “Hit List of Enemies of the Motherland” which was published in 2014 by Russian media and included the meanwhile murdered politician Boris Nemtsov, the list of 89 individuals to be “executed” which was published on the Internet in 2006 by the nationalist group “Russian Will”, and the earlier list of 63 “Enemies of Russia” published by the nationalist group “National Sovereign Party of Russia” which included the murdered journalist Anna Politkovskaya.

Representatives of the OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe have repeatedly voiced their concerns over such political witch-hunts that are leading to the intimidation of journalists as well as physical threats and deadly attacks against them.

The cases of Mykola Semena and Anna Andrievska, who are charged by Russian prosecutors under the criminal offence of “separatism” because they have referred to the illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea by Russia, have been included in the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists. At the 10th meeting of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) (28 June to 1 July 2016), the Russian delegate stated that Russia did not support the creation of the Platform and therefore does not respond to the alerts.

As a member State of the Council of Europe, the Russian Federation has committed itself to “accept the principles of the rule of law and of the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and collaborate sincerely and effectively in the realisation of the aim of the Council” (Article 3 of the Statute).

Mr Ariev,

To ask the Committee of Ministers:

- Would the Committee of Ministers ask the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe to explain his country’s effective and sincere collaboration with regard to the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists, and inform the Assembly about the Russian position?
- What does the Committee of Ministers intend to do in general, in order to achieve an effective and sincere political dialogue with the countries concerned by the alerts on the Platform?

