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Attacks against journalists and media freedom in Europe

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2097 (2017)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2097 \(2017\)](#) on “Attacks against journalists and media freedom in Europe”. It has transmitted the recommendation to the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) for information and possible comments.

2. The Committee of Ministers recalls that freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, is a fundamental precondition to democracy. According to the Council of Europe standards and the relevant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, the safety of journalists and media independence, pluralism and diversity are among those indispensable elements which make this freedom not theoretical, but practical and effective. The Committee of Ministers recalls that according to the Secretary General’s 2016 report on the “State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law”, almost half of the member States do not satisfactorily guarantee the protection of journalists from violence and threats. It also recalls the need for member States to respect their positive obligations, as identified in the relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and set out in Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2016\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of journalism and other media actors.

3. The Committee of Ministers notes that in addition to funding from the ordinary budget, the Platform set up to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists received voluntary contributions from a number of member States which ensured that it was set up and running and allowed for regular meetings between partners of the Platform. The Committee invites member States to continue supporting the Platform through voluntary contributions.

4. The Committee of Ministers supports the Assembly’s call for a committed co-operation by member States in the functioning of the Platform, including by replying to alerts and by engaging, when applicable, in follow-up initiated by the Secretary General in relation to the situations reported to the Platform.

5. In respect of paragraph 2.3 of the Assembly’s recommendation, the Committee of Ministers recalls that the added value of the Platform, as opposed to other internet platforms mapping media violations, is that it is set up and operates within the framework of an intergovernmental organisation and against the background of obligations for its member States under the European Convention on Human Rights. The Committee of Ministers notes that the Council of Europe Action Plan for Belarus 2016-2017 provides for other forms of co-operation with Belarus in the media sphere.

6. Taking note of paragraph 3 of the Assembly’s recommendation, the Committee of Ministers is well aware of the serious threats to media freedom in certain situations. It will give serious consideration to the Assembly’s proposal for a thematic debate on this subject and is grateful for the Assembly’s proposal to co-operate on this. The Committee will keep the Assembly informed about its decisions in this respect.

1. Adopted at the 1292nd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (6 September 2017).

