Parliamentary Assembly
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Recommendation 2268 (2024)[1]

Guaranteeing media freedom and the safety of journalists: an obligation of member States

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its Resolution 2532 (2024) "Guaranteeing media freedom and the safety of journalists: an obligation of member States", recalls that under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) member States must not only refrain from interfering with the right to freedom of expression, but they also have a positive obligation to establish a sound legal framework for media pluralism and for journalists and other media actors to work safely.

2. The establishment of the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists, in 2015, has been a fundamental step as it enables the monitoring of serious threats to the safety of journalists and media freedom. Unfortunately, the level of alerts posted has risen constantly over the years, both in terms of the number of alerts and the countries concerned.

3. Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors is a unique instrument providing guidelines to member States in the areas of prevention, protection, prosecution, promotion of information, education and awareness raising.

4. However, journalists and other media professionals remain subjected to threats, intimidation and violence, face imprisonment and even risk their lives. In addition, the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights are not properly executed, resulting in a lack of action to remedy violations in specific cases and to solve systemic problems.

5. The Assembly welcomes the Declaration of the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, which took place in Reykjavik on 16 and 17 May 2023. This declaration reaffirms "the Council of Europe's prominent role in international standard-setting on freedom of expression and related issues such as media freedom" and member States' commitment to "continue [their] collective efforts for the safety of journalists and other media actors".

6. On 5 October 2023, the Council of Europe launched its Campaign for the Safety of Journalists, with the slogan "Journalists Matter", to raise awareness of the importance of free and safe journalism for democracy, effectively address pressing issues in this domain and ultimately increase the safety of journalists and other media actors. The Assembly strongly supports this campaign and recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

6.1. encourage the establishment of efficient national co-ordination structures and national focal points, and the adoption of national strategies and concrete action plans by all Council of Europe member States;

6.2. follow carefully, promote and support the implementation of the campaign in all member States and the development of appropriate legal and other measures aimed at establishing a safe environment for journalists and other media actors;

1. *Assembly debate* on 25 January 2024 (6th sitting) (see Doc. 15891, report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Mr Mogens Jensen). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 25 January 2024 (6th sitting).

6.3. encourage dialogue with the partners of the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists, to ensure responsiveness and the adoption of adequate measures to resolve the alerts therein, in particular when threats arise from new legislation.