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

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2268 (2024)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2268 \(2024\)](#) "Guaranteeing media freedom and the safety of journalists: an obligation of member States" and has forwarded it to the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) for information and possible comments.
2. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the strong support of the Assembly to its five-year Campaign for the Safety of Journalists – Journalists Matter, launched on 5 October 2023. To maximise the impact of the campaign, member States are encouraged to transpose it to the national context, by organising national chapters of the campaign which can be supported by the Council of Europe according to national needs. Member States are also encouraged to adopt national strategies, measures, policies or action plans where suitable, aimed at promoting the safety of journalists and other media actors. These policies should outline specific measures and initiatives to be implemented to create a safe environment for journalists to carry out their work.
3. With a view to taking decisive action in this regard, the Committee of Ministers is pleased to recall that it adopted Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2024\)2](#) to member States on countering the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) on 5 April 2024.
4. The Committee informs the Assembly that two meetings of the national focal points have taken place so far, in October 2023 and June 2024. At the first meeting, member States were encouraged to establish efficient national co-ordination structures dedicated to addressing threats to the safety of journalists, that could remain as a platform for dialogue and action for relevant stakeholders also after the end of the campaign. These structures should facilitate collaboration among relevant stakeholders and ensure a co-ordinated response to challenges facing journalists. The second meeting enabled a first discussion with national focal points about actions taken at the domestic level, existing challenges as well as promising practices. The challenge of rebuilding trust and dialogue between journalists and public institutions was among the topics discussed. The meeting also facilitated an exchange between national focal points and representatives of partner organisations to the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists, which is expected to become a regular dialogue.
5. Throughout the campaign, a series of events based on Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2016\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors around the pillars of prevention, protection, prosecution and promotion are planned and will focus on measures that could be part of related policies. The Committee of Ministers takes this opportunity to encourage all member States to establish national co-ordination structures and adopt national strategies and concrete action plans, as well as develop appropriate legal and other measures aimed at establishing a safe environment for journalists and other media actors, as recommended by the Assembly.

1. Adopted at the 1512th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (19 November 2024).



6. The Committee follows the progress of the campaign with great interest via its regular contacts with the CDMSI at rapporteur group level. Moreover, its Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H) was informed about the latest developments and support to the campaign at its meeting in November 2024.

7. As concerns dialogue with the partners of the Platform, in addition to the exchange mentioned in paragraph 3 above, the Committee informs the Assembly that the CDMSI maintains a continuous dialogue with the Platform and its partners are systematically invited to events. Co-operation with the Platform is considered particularly useful in identifying best practices or functioning mechanisms for journalists' safety. And finally, the Committee of Ministers itself continues to hold regular informal exchanges of views with the Platform partners on media freedom and safety of journalists. The last exchange was held on 12 September 2024 and focused on enabling access to reliable information and countering disinformation, and European responses to new and emerging threats to media freedom.