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Malta's failure to implement measures to protect journalists / Malta's failure to implement the recommendations of the public inquiry into the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia / Eight years after the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia: where is Malta in the implementation of the Council of Europe's recommendations?

Reply to Written question[1]: Written question No. 800 (Doc. 16254), Written question No. 802 (Doc. 16261) and Written question No. 803 (Doc. 16269)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers thanks the Honourable Members for their questions. It recalls that a number of Council of Europe bodies, among them the Commissioner for Human Rights, GRECO and MONEYVAL, as well as other international organisations, including the EU and OSCE-ODIHR, have examined the media freedom, corruption and rule of law questions raised following the tragic assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia, as well as the implementation of the recommendations of the subsequent public inquiry.

2. The Committee of Ministers refers to its reply to Written Question No. 786, adopted at its 1482nd meeting on 29 November 2023, on the same issue. It notes that further information is now available in GRECO's Second Compliance Report on Malta, adopted on 1 December 2023 and published on 21 March 2024, as well as the Addendum to this report adopted by GRECO at its 100th plenary meeting on 6 June 2025 and published on 28 November 2025. The Committee notes that three of the four recommendations aimed at the shortcomings highlighted following the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia (recommendations xiii, xvi and xxii) have now been implemented satisfactorily or partly implemented, while one remains not implemented (recommendation xiv).

3. While noting the concerns raised by the Honourable Members, the Committee informs them of the following information provided by the Maltese authorities on the steps taken to implement the recommendations of the public inquiry and to ensure the safety of journalists.

4. Since 2018, Malta has implemented a series of reforms in line with European standards and Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 on the protection of journalism and the safety of journalists, including the following: the adoption of the Media and Defamation Act, which modernised Malta's media laws and repealed criminal libel; the transposition of the EU Anti-SLAPP Directive into national law; the establishment of the Committee of Experts on Media in 2022; and the introduction of three dedicated bills in parliament designed to further strengthen the legal and constitutional framework in this area. A national public consultation on these bills has been launched and following its conclusion on 31 October 2025, all feedback is being carefully considered before advancing the legislative process in parliament.

1. Adopted at the 1547th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (14 January 2026).

5. Malta has also taken steps to operationalise journalist protection in practice, including by the 2021 integration of media relations training into the curriculum of the Malta Police Force, developed in co-operation with the Institute of Maltese Journalists, and by establishing a dedicated liaison point with the Institute to ensure strengthened dialogue and democratic oversight.

6. Since January 2023, the Malta Police Force introduced a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for threats to life, which includes specific provisions for the protection of journalists and public figures. The SOP is supported by newly established specialised intelligence units to respond to threats in a timely and co-ordinated manner.

7. As concerns the perpetrators of the assassination, five individuals have been found guilty; two are serving life sentences and the other three are serving long-term prison sentences. A sixth person, the alleged mastermind, is currently awaiting trial by jury.

8. Lastly, Malta reassured the Committee of Ministers that the protection of journalists remains a key priority of Malta's foreign policy, highlighted in particular during its OSCE Chairpersonship last year as well as in its recent presidency of the Council of Europe.

9. The Committee of Ministers will keep these matters under review in the context of the reports of its specialised bodies.