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

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Mogens JENSEN and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Media freedom and the safety of journalists are the oxygen without which no democratic society can survive. Their importance can be seen every day, even in times of social calm and peace, but it increases in times of crisis, such as that linked to the Covid-19 pandemic.

During armed conflicts, journalists' documentation work, often done at the risk of their lives, is therefore vital for investigations into war crimes; this has been seen recently in Bucha and Kramatorsk in Ukraine, and was also the case in Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995. Reliable information can only be provided by free media and independent journalists. When the authorities break down that bulwark, all that remains is disinformation, propaganda and manipulation of people's minds of the kind currently seen in the Russian Federation.

The Council of Europe must continue and step up its efforts to guarantee media freedom and the safety of journalists, while tackling the systemic issues. The member States must commit themselves to jointly establishing an environment conducive to the free and safe exercise of the right to freedom of information; they must respond immediately, energetically and effectively to threats against media and journalists, including in the context of armed conflicts; and they must co-operate more effectively with the Council of Europe's Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists.

Unfortunately, most of the alerts issued by the Platform are not followed up by specific action to resolve the issues reported. The Parliamentary Assembly must remind member States of their obligations in this respect and call on them to commit themselves to guaranteeing media freedom and the safety of journalists wherever they perform their noble task.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC/DA: European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group