



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 27 April 2022
(OR. en)

8353/22

LIMITE

AUDIO 34	DISINFO 30
JAI 511	EUAM UKRAINE 20
FREMP 77	JAIEX 36
CATS 19	POLGEN 54
ASIM 30	JUSTCIV 50
PROCIV 50	COHOM 33
AG 42	DIGIT 87
BY 1	EJN 16
RELEX 510	EUROJUST 43
COEST 330	COPEN 139
CULT 44	DATAPROTECT 111
SOC 225	CYBER 137
VISA 69	GENDER 32

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Draft Council conclusions on the protection and safety of journalists
– Presentation by the Presidency and first discussion

Delegations will find attached the above-mentioned text, as prepared by the Presidency with a view to the Audiovisual and Media Working Party meeting on 28 April 2022 (agenda item 6).

Delegations may send written comments to the Presidency

(aurelie.champagne@diplomatie.gouv.fr ; emmanuelle.formisyn@diplomatie.gouv.fr) and to the

GSC (andres.tobias@consilium.europa.eu ; eycs@consilium.europa.eu) by **Friday 6 May 2022 at**

12:00 pm (Brussels time).

8353/22 ATR/fco 1

TREE.1.B LIMITE **EN**

The protection and safety of journalists and other media professionals

Draft Council Conclusions

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

NOTES AS FOLLOWS:

1. Democracy is based on the exercise of the freedom of expression and information. This is at the core of the profession of journalist and must be accompanied by a structure that is able to provide protection and safety to journalists, as underlined by the European Democracy Action Plan and the Annual Rule of Law Reports.
2. Today, journalists and other media professionals are not free to work everywhere as they should be. Obstacles to the freedom to inform and attacks on journalists and other media professionals are increasing¹. The insecurity journalists and other media professionals face is even greater in armed conflicts. While they are a source of information essential to establishing facts and understanding a conflict, they are especially exposed and can become targets themselves as the situation in Ukraine has shown².
3. Journalists and other media professionals face multiple threats, online and offline, and are confronted with acts of stigmatisation, intimidation and violence in the form of physical, psychological and economic assaults and damage to their reputations. This violence also takes place online, mainly in the form of incitement to hatred and harassment. In this regard, the safety of women journalists is particularly concerning.

¹ In 2021 worldwide, 46 journalists were killed; 488 were imprisoned; in nearly three quarters of the world's countries (73%), journalism was seriously impeded (73 countries) and constrained (59 other countries) according to the 2021 World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Without Borders.

² As of 15 April 2022, seven journalists have been killed in Ukraine, according to the Council of Europe's Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists.

4. The economic situation of journalists and other media professionals is also often precarious. The financial and economic vulnerability of many media outlets, which can be seen in the closures of several of them, makes media professionals more vulnerable. Also, the imperative of profitability can at times worsen the conditions and quality of journalists' work. The digital revolution and competition from the social networks in the attracting advertising revenues³ and the consequences of the pandemic⁴, during which media outlets experienced revenue losses which went beyond the decrease in national revenue, have led to a worsening of the economic insecurity of journalists and other media professionals.

NOTES THAT:

5. The European Commission has announced its intention to publish a study on inter alia the indicators used to monitor the implementation of its Recommendation of 16 September 2021 on ensuring the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists and other media professionals in the European Union, and that this study could notably concerns greater online safety and particular support for women journalists and those belonging to minority groups.
6. The European Union has been invited⁵ to facilitate access to information on available funding for media outlets by merging the CultureEU funding guide and the interactive mapping tool for audiovisual and news media so that news media professionals and companies have a single multilingual digital portal listing the various possible funding opportunities available to them.

³ Council conclusions on safeguarding a free and pluralistic media system of December 2020

⁴ According to a study by the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom

⁵ Council Conclusions on building a European Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem of 4 April 2022 (2022/C 160/06)

7. The European Commission will continue its support in 2022 for the Rapid Response Mechanism for Violations of Press and Media Freedom as part of the Creative Europe Programme, which provides support to independent journalism and investigation in the form of Journalism Partnerships grants⁶.

INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

8. Institutionalize, in the existing European News Media Forum, the holding on a regular basis of discussions on the protection of journalists and other media professionals, enabling dialogue with stakeholders on developments in the protection and safety of journalists.
9. Evaluate the existing pilot projects and preparatory actions for supporting media freedom and pluralism, with a view to making them more extensive and long term.
10. Strengthen, building on the NEWS initiative and leaning on for example InvestEU, funding for independent journalism and investigation, which make a crucial contribution to public and democratic life.

INVITES MEMBER STATES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

11. Strengthen training of all stakeholders concerned by journalist protection.
12. Promote the online safety and digital empowerment of journalists and other media professionals, by fostering the creation of specialised working groups on online attacks and threats that bring together media leaders and regulators and law enforcement and cyber security officials.

⁶ Annual work programme 2022 for the implementation of the Creative Europe programme ref.Ares(2021)6656465

13. Encourage tighter collaboration between online platforms and civil society organizations that have expert knowledge and skills regarding threats, harassment and incitement to hatred against journalists and other media professionals, which would help in developing strategies to respond to coordinated attacks against journalists using online services.
14. Support the implementation of projects and initiatives regarding the protection of women journalists and journalists from minority groups and notably those that enable improvements to be made as regards transparency and information on attacks and discrimination against them, and those promoting equality and inclusion in the media industry and in newsrooms, as well as initiatives that raise awareness about preventing and fighting violence and harassment against journalists and other media professionals.
15. Through research, improve knowledge on the potential risks to media professionals and the best practices that may help.
16. Support initiatives and mechanisms aiming to improve the economic and financial sustainability of media outlets and the recruitment of journalists and other media professionals, and conduct studies on their working conditions, in keeping with the Council Recommendation of 8 November 2019.
17. Support initiatives and mechanisms that promote the exchange and reinforcement of professional best practices, particularly by raising awareness amongst journalism students on the risks they may encounter in their future career, and promote greater participation in significant European experiences during their studies so they can discover other environments and other investigation and publication practices.

18. Encourage initiatives for online news media labelling based on European standards and independently-established criteria, including in the employment of journalists and journalism professionals, so that platforms and advertisers can demonstrate responsibility by prioritising news media which respect such standards.
19. Commit to protecting journalists and other media professionals around the world in the relevant multilateral forums, in bilateral relations, at a national level and in international initiatives to protect journalists and the freedom to inform, paying particular attention to the protection of journalists and other media professionals working in or coming from conflict zones.
20. Support journalists and other media professionals working in or coming from Ukraine.
21. [Promote financial, legal and professional support and the reception of independent journalists and other exiled media professionals, particularly from Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation, who have found refuge in the European Union, by providing residencies, for example, and exploring how to extend these mechanisms for journalists fleeing armed conflicts.]
22. [Promote the exchange of good practices regarding how to best welcome these professionals and help with the resumption of their professional activity, via a networking of national experiences.]

EU treaties

- The Treaty on European Union, particularly Article 2: ‘The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail’.
- The Charter of Fundamental Rights, particularly Article 11: “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.”

Council conclusions

- Council conclusions on safeguarding a free and pluralistic media system (2020/C 422/08)
- Council conclusions on building a European Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem of 4 April 2022

Other relevant documents*

- Declaration of the European Ministers of Culture, Audiovisual and Media, who met in Angers on 7 and 8 March 2022

Commission documents and communications

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Democracy Action Plan, COM(2020) 790 final
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “Europe’s Media in the Digital Decade: an Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation” COM/2020/784 final
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2021 Rule of Law Report, COM/2021/700 final
- Commission Recommendation (EU) 2021/1534 of 16 September 2021 on ensuring the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists and other media professionals in the European Union

Council of Europe documents

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors
- Resolution on the safety of journalists (2021)

United Nations documents

- *Security Council resolution 2222 (2015) on protection of journalists and the issue of impunity*