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Directorate-General for Communication

Directorate for Media

Media Services Unit

European Parliament Online Press Seminar

World Press Freedom Day What are the main threats for journalists in Europe?

Monday 3 May 2021, 10:00 - 11:30 CET

[#worldpressfreedomday](#) [#press freedom](#)

10:00 Welcome and practicalities

Raffaella DE MARTE

Eva EGIDO

European Parliament Media Services Unit

10:05 Opening

Jesús CARMONA, European Parliament Director for Media

10:10 Reporters without borders: Presentation of 2021 Ranking

Christophe DELOIRE, Secretary General Reporters without Borders

Q&A

The threats for journalists in Europe: a dialogue with journalists

10:25 Veronika MUNK, Co- editor-in-chief telex.hu, former deputy editor-in-chief index.hu (TBC)

Interviewed by Heidi HAUTALA (The Greens/EFA, FI)

*European Parliament Vice-President responsible for Human Rights and Democracy, and
Member of the Bureau Working Group on Information and Communication Policy*

10:40 Nikolay STAYKOV, Bulgarian Journalist

Interviewed by Sophie IN'T VELD (Renew, NL)

Member of the European Parliament, LIBE Committee

10:55 Federica ANGELI, Italian Journalist

Interviewed by David CASA (EPP, MT)

Member of the Bureau Working Group on Information and Communication Policy

11:10 Q&A

11:25 Final remarks

BACKGROUND

In recent years, the safety of journalists has continued to deteriorate – physical and online threats and attacks on journalists are on the rise in several Member States. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed existing difficulties within the media industry and has given governments across the world a cover to exacerbate the recent worrying trends in press freedom, journalist safety, and media plurality.

“Strengthen media freedom and pluralism” is the second pillar of the European Democracy Action Plan (presented by the Commission on 3 December 2020). The European Parliament is organising this seminar as a continuation of a series focused on Democracy. The [first seminar](#) focused on the third pillar of the plan, **“Counter Disinformation”**. The first pillar of the Democracy Action Plan is **“Promote free and fair elections”**. Several initiatives are and will be proposed within this Action Plan before next European Elections in 2024.

Reporters Without Borders’ (RSF) [annual report](#) and index on press freedom has highlighted diverging trends within the European Union, and has led to calls for action to ensure the media are protected. While EU Member States such as Finland, Sweden and Denmark are world-leaders in ensuring a free press, others like Bulgaria, Hungary and Malta are lagging behind in the index with some of the lowest rankings. Worryingly, Poland dropped to its lowest ranking ever on the index.

According to RSF’s ranking, violence against journalists is becoming more prevalent across the EU. We cannot forget the murders of Jan Kuciak and Daphne Caruana Galizia in Slovakia and in Malta, respectively. In Germany and Italy, reporters have been attacked by members and supporters of extremist and conspiracy-theory groups, while journalists have been the victims of police violence and arbitrary arrests in Greece and France.

The European Union and its European Democracy Plan addresses the decline in media freedom. EU Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton recently called for additional legislative tools to be made available to the EU to combat the “worrying development” of press freedom and media pluralism in Member States such as Poland, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. Among the proposals is a **European Media Freedom Act** to ensure that media freedom remains a “pillar of our democracies”.

The European Parliament is pushing for anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) with work on an own initiative report starting in the LIBE and JURI committees in the coming weeks.

Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize for Journalism

The European Parliament has recently [approved \(October 2020\)](#), the Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize for Journalism. An external organisation has been chosen (following a call of tenders) to implement the project. The prize will be judged by a panel of independent journalists and provide **€20,000 funding** in prize money. The date of the award ceremony will be around the 16th of October. The prize will distinguish outstanding journalism revolving around the principles and values of the European Union. This Prize is named after the murdered Maltese journalist to honour her memory and support journalists and the vital work they do.

The way the Prize will be managed will mean that MEPs will not be involved to ensure its political impartiality. Therefore it will be handled entirely by an independent private organisation tasked with selecting a highly competent and independent jury to select the winning piece from nominated works of in-depth investigative journalism dealing with topics touching upon the EU values and rights enshrined in the EU charter of Human Rights.

USEFUL LINKS

European Parliament

- EPRS document and links on [Initiative against abusive litigation targeting journalists and rights defenders | Legislative train schedule | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)
- EPRS At a glance document: [Strengthening media freedom in the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)
- Last resolution in Plenary: **Rapport Adamowicz** - [Texts adopted - Strengthening Media Freedom: the Protection of Journalists in Europe, Hate Speech, Disinformation and the Role of Platforms - Wednesday, 25 November 2020 \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [Protecting press freedom during the Covid-19 pandemic | News | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [Media freedom: EP warns of attempts to silence critics and undermine pluralism | News | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)
- Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize for Journalism [media package](#)

European Commission

- European Commission [European Democracy Action Plan](#)
- [European rule of law mechanism](#)

Reporters without Borders

- [World Press Freedom - RSF Ranking 2021](#)

Council of Europe

- [Annual report 2021 on Media Freedom](#) (published 28/04/2021)
- Council of Europe's [Platform to Promote the protection of journalism and the safety of journalists](#)