
Council of Europe: Mijatovic, “human rights defence and civic activism” hindered in several countries

“The growing gap between the risks and the obstacles faced by human rights defenders in Europe and the standards States have agreed to must be a call to action”, said Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, on the occasion of today’s publication of a report on a round-table with human rights defenders from across Europe, held in Dublin in October 2022. According to the report, “the prioritisation of national security and public safety concerns over human rights, in a context of overlapping crises such as growing inequalities compounded by the environmental crisis, the pandemic, and the rise in populist governments and anti-rights agendas, has hindered human rights defence and civic activism”. In the report, the commissioner stressed that “state authorities should denounce violence and any form of intimidation directed against human rights defenders, and refrain from administrative and judicial harassment”, with the intention “to impede their legitimate activities or silence them”. States “should guarantee their exercise of freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of association and ensure accountability for any human rights violation against human rights defenders, including by non-state actors”.

Valentina Bombelli