
Council of Europe: threats to journalists' safety. Spyware, intimidation, restrictive regulations. Pejcinovic Buric: obstacles to freedom of the press

Illegal implementation of spyware against journalists, abusive lawsuits against journalists to hamper their investigative work and the uncertain situation of many exiled journalists, especially those from Russia and Belarus, are some of the main concerns voiced by the partner organisations of the Council of Europe's Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists in their 2024 Annual Report. Published with the title "Freedom of the Press in Europe: time to turn the tide", the report reviews the main issues that undermine freedom of the press, including threats and intimidation, detention, restrictive regulations, abusive lawsuits, media capture and attacks on public service media, and issues recommendations to address them. "In 2023, the platform partners published 285 alerts on serious threats or attacks to media freedom in Europe compared to 289 alerts in 2022", says a statement that goes with the report. "Although in 2023 the number of journalists killed and street violence against them decreased, the alerts on the platform show a growing diversity of threats, pressure and constraints under which journalists must do their work". In response to the publication of the report, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, stated: "the Safety of Journalists Platform report shows the increasing risks and obstacles that journalists and media face in Europe. We need determined action from states to protect journalists and counter threats to media freedom such as abusive lawsuits and illegal surveillance. To enhance journalists' safety, our member states should show a strong commitment to respecting media freedom standards and promote the Council of Europe's 'Journalists matter' campaign at national level".

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