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## **Press Freedom Day: Pejcinovic Buric (Council of Europe), “COVID-19 must not be used to silence journalists”**

“Media must be free to report on all aspects of the crisis. Journalists have a key role and a special responsibility for providing timely, accurate and reliable information to the public. They must be able to scrutinise the decisions of authorities in response to the pandemic”. This appeal comes from Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe. 3 May is World Press Freedom Day. Yesterday, the Platform for the Protection of Journalism and the Safety of Journalists published the 2020 Report - on which SIR news agency reported - which lists 142 serious attacks on journalists in the 47 Council of Europe member states in 2019. “Unfortunately, the worrying trend of violence and intimidation against journalists observed in recent years continues”, Burić said. Not only are too many journalists “in prison and there are too many cases of impunity for the killing of journalists”, but many journalists find themselves in a “difficult economic situation” today. Journalists, however, play the role of “watchdogs” and are an important part of the “necessary checks and balances in democratic societies”. Particularly at this time of crisis, which “must not be used to silence or hinder journalists”, their reporting “can also help prevent panic from spreading and highlight positive examples of solidarity in our societies”.

Valentina Bombelli