

*Permanent Representation of the Republic of Croatia to the Council of Europe*

*Strasbourg, 18 April 2016*

Dear ~~Mr. Gruden~~, *Dragi Matjaž*,

*Following your message of 16 March 2016 and the information on the alert with regard to Croatia that has been submitted to the Platform of the Protection of Journalism and the Safety of Journalists in relation to certain developments in the media field in Croatia, I have the honour to convey to you the position of the Croatian authorities in respect of the situation referred to in the abovementioned alert.*

*I would be very much obliged if you could provide for uploading of the response by the Croatian authorities to the Platform and its distribution to the partner organisations.*

*Looking forward to the continuation of our fruitful cooperation, I remain,*

*Yours sincerely,*



*Miroslav Papa  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative*

**Mr. Matjaž Gruden**  
**Director**  
**Directorate of Policy Planning**  
**Secretariat General**  
**Council of Europe**

**Information provided by the Croatian authorities regarding the alert submitted to the CoE's Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists**

At the outset allow me to emphasize that the Croatian Government attaches great importance to free, independent and pluralistic media. Independent media institutions are prerequisite of the existence of any democratic society and play an indispensable role in the protection of human rights. Therefore, the Government is committed to continuous efforts in order to enhance and preserve space of these freedoms in Croatia in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights and other international obligations. Recognizing that all of us have to deal with numerous challenges that exist in the area of freedom of expression and the media, we value the importance of the CoE's in making our continent more democratic.

Regarding the mention of Croatia under the recorded alerts on the Platform's website in the category "Other acts having chilling effects on media freedom", date of entry: 16 March 2016, we would like to submit the following information.

Following the Government's negative assessment of the Report on the work of the Electronic Media Council and the Electronic Media Agency for 2014, and in accordance with the highest democratic standards, Croatian Parliament passed a decision to replace Electronic Media Council members due to serious omissions in the execution of their legal obligations. The Report was incomplete, and neither the Council nor the Agency met their legal obligations or obligations from the work programme. It does not state that a review had been carried out in the national broadcaster HRT over the use of the monthly subscription fee and other public revenues in accordance with regulations regarding the state support for public broadcasting and the HRT Act.

In addition to other irregularities, in substance, they have not performed their envisaged obligations in best public interest by securing separate accounting records of revenues and expenses related to the public and commercial activities of the national broadcaster HRT.

Regarding the dismissal of the Director General of Croatian Radio – Television (HRT) we would like to stress that according to the Art. 17 of the HRT Act, HRT acts as an independent body which also implies the autonomy in decisions regarding the change of its management structure. In carrying out its activities, HRT is independent of any political influences and pressures coming from the promoters of commercial interests.

In closing, I wish to underline once again the Government's determination to constantly expand the scope of freedom of expression and the media in Croatia in line with general principles and its international commitments.