



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF GREECE
TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Permanent Representative

Strasbourg, April 20th, 2016
F. 6686/31/AS 445

Dear Secretary General, *Dear Secretary General*

Further to your informative remarks during the Committee of Ministers' session on 10th September 2015 and onwards with regard to the establishment of the CoE Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists, as well as your specific suggestions to the CoE member states as to "submit timely and comprehensive responses, where an alert concern our country, so that they can also be published", I would like to forward herewith the pertinent responses on behalf of the competent Greek Authorities upon three specific complaints against Greece, which have been posted to the aforementioned Platform.

In view, also, of your valuable observation during the said CoE session that possible replies of the countries on the complaints against them, shall be also published, considering that "this is the best way to make sure all points of view are represented", I would also like to kindly ask you as for the said three replies of my country to be timely published in the Platform.

While remaining convinced that the attached document moves to the right direction in terms of content and concurrently builds upon your previous, relevant, suggestions and observations in this crucial for the function of democracy field of human rights, like the safety of journalism, I would like once more to avail myself of this opportunity in reassuring

my Government's constant and sincere will for a deep and fruitful cooperation with all the organs and mechanisms of this Organization.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stelios Perrakis', written over a vertical line that extends from the signature down to the title.

Professor Stelios Perrakis

Ambassador

To: H.E. Mr. Thorbjorn Jagland

Secretary General

Council of Europe

2) Journalists working for foreign news agency taken to a police station in Idomeni – 9 December 2015 (“Journalists Detained and Barred from Entering Idomeni to Report on Treatment of Refugees”)

In the morning of 9-12-2015, a coordinated police operation took place in Idomeni (Kilkis Prefecture/Central Macedonia Region) for the transfer of foreign nationals who had been **blocking the railway line** for many days in a row. The operation was planned, organised and carried out in a systematic manner by the police, with 350 police officers participating in it.

At the end of the operation, an approximate number of 2,300 foreign nationals were transferred to Athens and the railway line resumed its normal operation.

As part of the planning and due to the particular nature of the operation, it was decided not to allow representatives of the media in the area in order to **ensure their protection from potential challenges and tensions or threatening and aggressive behavior**. Furthermore, the Head of the Press Office of the General Police Directorate of the Central Macedonia Region was available to the media representatives at a **specially designated area**.

Two (2) journalists working for a foreign news agency and two (2) Greek journalists did not follow police instructions to leave the area and, as a result, they were taken to the police station of Evzonoi, from which they departed shortly after, while the operation was still in progress.

There were, therefore, **no grounds for the disciplinary investigation** of the incident.

