



Ambassador Thomas Schneider
Chair, Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI)
Avenue de l'Europe 67075
Strasbourg
France

August 1, 2018

Your Excellency,

Attached is the application by the Committee to Protect Journalists for observer status at the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI).

We trust that this application meets with your approval and look forward to the opportunity to work with the CMDSI in the future.

Sincerely,

Courtney Radsch, Advocacy Director

August 1, 2018

Council of Europe, Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI):

Application from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

The Committee to Protect Journalists wishes to apply for observer status at the CDMSI. For this purpose, we are pleased to provide the following information:

1. Title of organisation and contact details

The Official Name of the Organization: Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Full Address (New York headquarters):

Committee to Protect Journalists

330 7th Avenue, 11th Floor

New York, NY 10001

Country: United States of America

Email: info@cpj.org

Tel: +1 (212) 465 1004

Legal status: Independent, non-profit organisation (US registered)

Name, position and contact details of proposed representatives or points of contact:

1. Courtney Radsch, Advocacy Director (Washington-based)

Washington office address:

WeWork

Attn: Committee to Protect Journalists

718 7th St NW

Washington, DC 20001

Email: cradsch@cpj.org

2. Tom Gibson, EU Representative and Advocacy Manager (Brussels-based)

Brussels office address:
Committee to Protect Journalists
Residence Palace
International Press Centre
Room 3253, Block C
Rue de la Loi 155
1040 Brussels

Telephone (landline): +32 22 35 24 53

Telephone (mobile): +32 49 21 05 724

Email: tgibson@cpj.org

2. Mission statement and organizational overview

CPJ promotes press freedom worldwide and defends the rights of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal. CPJ ensures the free flow of news and commentary by taking action wherever journalists are attacked, imprisoned, killed, kidnapped, threatened, censored, or harassed.

CPJ is made up of about 40 experts around the world, with headquarters in New York City. When press freedom violations occur, CPJ mobilizes a network of correspondents who report and take action on behalf of those targeted.

CPJ is independent of all governments and multilateral organisations. CPJ is funded solely by contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations. CPJ does not accept government funding.

3. Primary areas of CPJ activity

CPJ is made up of experts from around the world who mobilize to report and take action on behalf of those targeted when press freedom violations occur. CPJ reports on violations in repressive countries, conflict zones, and established democracies alike.

Research

CPJ's work is based on its research, which provides a global snapshot of obstructions to a free press worldwide. CPJ's research staff document hundreds of attacks on the press each year. Each case identified as a violation of press freedom is corroborated with more than one source for factual accuracy, confirmation that the victims were journalists or news organizations, and verification that intimidation was the probable motive.

CPJ defines journalists as people who cover news or comment on public affairs through any media - including in print, in photographs, on radio, on television, and online. We take up cases involving staff journalists, freelancers, stringers, bloggers, and citizen journalists. The combination of daily reporting and statistical data (please see data and research: <https://cpj.org/killed/2017/>) forms the basis of our case-driven, long-term advocacy. To reach audiences around the world, CPJ produces daily news alerts, protest letters, blogs, reports and multimedia resources. Each year, CPJ publishes Attacks on the Press, which compiles our most relevant expert research and assessment of developments and trends, providing the most comprehensive annual survey of press freedom around the world: <https://www.cpj.org/attacks/>.

Advocacy

CPJ routinely denounces press freedom violations, meets with heads of state and high-ranking officials, spearheads or advises on diplomatic efforts, and works with other organizations to ensure that justice prevails for imprisoned and killed journalists. We also work within international bodies to influence policy and ensure that press freedom is protected and strengthened as a fundamental right for a free, just society. Key campaigns include Free the Press, for individuals who want to take action on behalf of journalists imprisoned on anti-state charges (<https://www.cpj.org/campaigns/free-the-press/>), and the Impunity campaign, on behalf of journalists murdered because of their work (<https://www.cpj.org/campaigns/impunity/>).

Journalist safety

We provide support to frontline journalists, and work to ensure that all journalists, including freelancers and media support workers, are aware of safety and security issues before entering a conflict zone. We work to prevent deaths, detentions, kidnappings, and other dangers through information sharing and practical guidance. We provide on-the-ground advocacy and rapid response support to journalists who are injured, imprisoned, or forced to flee because of their work: <https://www.cpj.org/emergency-response/>

Events and awards

Each year, our International Press Freedom Awards allow us to mark the work of courageous journalists from around the world: <https://cpj.org/awards/>. CPJ also regularly hosts public events to draw attention to specific issues, or individuals who work on press freedom: <https://cpj.org/events/>.

4. Reasons why CPJ is applying for CDMSI observer status

- CPJ's research, advocacy and journalist safety work broadly reflect and represent the main pillars of the CDMSI including freedom, independence, pluralism and diversity of media, safety of journalists, support for professional journalism, protection and promotion of human rights, in particular freedom of expression in the information society.
- CPJ's Europe and Central Asia team generates regional research which would be relevant to the work of CDMSI and serve as a source of expertise on thematic questions relating to press freedom in the Council of Europe region, as well as deteriorating country situations.
- CPJ's international staff have a variety of skills and knowledge areas that would be utilized for policy discussions and standard setting in relation to the media and the internet, including expertise on digital, online questions. For example, CPJ could seek to assist with the review of the implementation of the Council of Europe Internet Governance Strategy 2016-2019.
- CPJ was established in 1981 and has since taken regular action when journalists' rights are abused by undertaking high-level advocacy with governments and multilateral organisations. We are an organisation that prides itself on strong international advocacy in Brussels, Washington, Geneva and New York. Joining CDMSI would effectively allow us to build and develop our advocacy and outreach.
- CPJ's advocacy expertise would allow staff to provide information and advice that would help CDMSI develop recommendations and devise implementation strategies for relevant States and third party engagement.
- CPJ has also been conducting advocacy at the Council of Europe through the Journalist Safety Platform, including with the Committee of Ministers, and is keen to develop our organizational outreach to Member States, including the promotion of CDMSI's standard setting. We would seek to develop this engagement with Council of Europe Mechanisms by supporting the work of CDMSI.
- The Committee to Protect Journalists would seek to utilize its international network and draw attention to the policy and standard-setting work of CDMSI to increase generalized awareness of its work, both through personal engagement with relevant stakeholders, public meetings or conferences, private communications, advocacy and work with other international and national press freedom organisations, media outlets and journalists.
- As one of the most visible press freedom organizations on social media, CPJ will be able to use its far-reaching social media networks to help inform and shape external debates in relation to freedom of expression issues taken up by CDMSI.
- CPJ retains strong and effective relationships with a range of on-the-ground journalists, press freedom advocates and media organisations or agencies. Such relations would help us bring journalists' voices and opinions to the heart of policy discussions within CDMSI.
- CPJ would be able to provide speakers to CDMSI or relevant Council of Europe debates, courses, events and conferences.

5. Annex:

This application is accompanied by:

1. CPJ Annual Report 2017
2. CPJ Insider Newsletter; April, May and June 2018 editions