



At the occasion of the [No Hate Speech Week 2025](#), and in the framework of the [Campaign for the Safety of Journalists](#) of the Council of Europe, the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society ([CDMSI](#)) is organising a seminar on Media and Hate Speech. Held in the framework/as part of the CDMSI Plenary meeting, together with the participants to the No Hate Speech Week - gathering a wide range of stakeholders who engage in preventing and combating hate speech, such as representatives of national authorities, public figures and political bodies, CSOs active at European and national levels, equality bodies and Ombudsoffices, academia, internet industry, international organisations, and EU bodies - the seminar will be held in **Room 1 of the Palais de l'Europe, in the premises of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg.**

CONCEPT NOTE

Old habit, new fronts: tackling hate speech against journalists and other media actors

Journalists and other media actors often face a range of threats and attacks in the course of their work. Amongst these, hate speech against journalists remains a longstanding and widespread issue, significantly impairing their ability to carry out their profession with dignity and in security.

As highlighted in the *Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2016\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors*, they are often “specifically targeted on account of their gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic identity, membership of a minority group, religion, or other particular characteristics.” These attacks expose them to discrimination and dangers at various levels, further intensified when they take place online, where hate speech is amplified and rapidly disseminated. The often-hostile environment in the digital space endangers journalists’ safety, undermines their credibility, and chills freedom of expression. Against this background, and in order to create and secure a favourable environment for freedom of expression, the 2016 Recommendation recommends that States fulfil a range of positive obligations.

To support member States in meeting these obligations, and to raise awareness of the increasing threats to journalists, the Council of Europe launched the Europe-wide *Journalists Matter* [Council of Europe Campaign for the Safety of Journalists](#) in October 2023. Its aim is to promote press freedom and protect journalists from violence, threats, and harassment while performing their duties. Since its launch the Campaign has achieved significant

milestones, including the appointment of 41 Campaign Focal Points across member States and the setting of 27 domestic coordination structures in the area of journalists' safety, 19 out of which created or in process of being created since the Campaign was launched.

The Council of Europe have also recommended its member States, from a wider perspective, measures to combat hate speech within a human rights framework, which are outlined in [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech](#). This document provides guidance to implement a comprehensive range of legal and non-legal measures in the field. Grounded in international human rights standards and relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights it places particular emphasis on the online environment, where today's hate speech is easily found. Recognising the scale and gravity of the issue, the 2022 Recommendation underscores that States alone cannot address the phenomenon comprehensively. Instead, it calls for multistakeholder co-operation to identify and implement relevant measures, promote a culture of inclusion, and support those targeted by hate speech in asserting their rights.

The **2025 seminar on Media and Hate Speech** follows a first edition held in 2024 which focused on the role of media in preventing combating and addressing hate speech. Closely linked yet shifting perspective, this year's event aims at addressing hate speech against the media examining the other side of the phenomenon. It also reflects the **priority themes of the *Journalists Matter Campaign***, particularly those addressing online harassment, gender-based violence, and targeted disinformation campaigns, and contributes to advancing coordinated responses at both the national and European levels.

The event will provide the opportunity to explore critical issues through an open discussion with experts and practitioners in the field. What is the current landscape, in which ways are journalists being targeted by hate speech today, what are we seeing in terms of rising trends? Which are the implications on the professional and personal life of journalists targeted, and how does this affect the public discourse at large? The seminar will also explore questions of accountability and potential solutions. It will look at where responsibility lies, examines the responses that have already been successfully implemented, and highlight promising practices and lessons learned that can inform future action. The outcomes will also contribute to the ongoing implementation of the *Journalists Matter Campaign* and support national focal points and coordination structures in their efforts to counter hate speech and protect journalists.

AGENDA

14.00 – 14.10: Opening and welcoming remarks

Opening: **MAJA ZARIC**, Chair of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI)

14.10 – 15.00: Interventions by key speakers

Panelists: **JEAN-PAUL MARTHOZ**, Journalist, author, teacher, Editorial Coordinator of the Council of Europe Annual Report of the platform for the Safety of Journalists

SEJAL PARMAR, Dr., Senior Lecturer, School of Law and Politics, Cardiff University

ESPEN BRYNSRUD, Head of Department of Journalism and Organization, Norwegian Union of Journalists and National Focal Point for Norway within the Council of Europe Campaign for the Safety of Journalists

MARIJA BABIC, Legal advisor and researcher, Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia and SafeJournalists Network

CAMILLE REGACHE, French independent journalist, member of the Association of LGBT Journalists (AJL)

15.00 – 15.30: Q&A

Moderator: **GIULIA LUCCHESI**, Co-Secretary CDMSI, Freedom of Expression and CDMSI Division, Council of Europe

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2016\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 April 2016 at the 1253rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*)

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)16](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 May 2022 at the 132nd Session of the Committee of Ministers*)

[Compilation of promising practices on combating hate speech at national level](#) and the [Self-assessment tool to prevent and combat hate speech](#) (2024)