

Représentation Permanente de la République de Croatie auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Strasbourg, 30 October 2017

Dear Mr. Gruden,

Following your message of 13 October 2017 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 by the partner organisations, I have the honour to convey to you the response of the Croatian authorities in respect of the submitted 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.

Sincerely yours,



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**

With reference to the alert of 13 October 2017 concerning the physical attack on journalist Drago Miljuš on 11 October 2017 by the Croatian police covering the intervention at the Obojena svijetlost beach in Split (Croatia), the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Croatia informs that on 10 October 2017, around 5:30 a.m. police officers of the Split-Dalmatia Police Directorate acted on a report that Mr. Tomislav Krip of Split, Ivana Meštrovića bb, intended to commit suicide by activating a hand grenade. Considering that the lives and security of people were at risk, it was necessary to secure a wider circle around the place of possible threat, and 33 police officers, regular and intervention forces, were sent out there.

Around 19:40 hours, almost simultaneously with heavy explosions of hand grenades, while measures were being implemented to secure a wider incident scene, a journalist of the internet portal Indeks.hr, Mr. Dragan Miljuš, wanted to get closer and enter the protected space, as he was covering the event live streaming it with his smartphone directly to the aforementioned portal. He was warned by a police officer not to enter the protected area. The reporter ignored the police officer's warning and entered into argument with one intervention police officer who did not allow him to approach the scene for his own safety.

On the occasion, the aforementioned police officer did not adequately communicate with the journalist or warned or told him off as prescribed by law, but he rather snatched away the smartphone from the reporter and threw it away, and the smartphone ended up in the sea. Seeing that his colleague was arguing with a reporter, another intervention police officer at the location approached the reporter and hit him in the head with his hand, causing him physical injury.

The police officers securing the scene and acting as described were not members of the special police forces.

Based on the results of the investigation, it was established that the police officers committed serious violation of their official duties, misuse of office and misconduct in the service and harmed the reputation of the police. The Chief of the Split-Dalmatia Police Directorate filed a motion for disciplinary proceedings against the police officers. Criminal investigation also proved there were grounds for suspicion that one of the police officers committed the criminal offence of damaging other person's property, while another one committed the criminal offence of inflicting physical injury, for which the police officers were reported to the State Attorney's Office in charge.