

Official Response of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic to an alert dated 7 July 2023 on the Council of Europe Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and the Safety of Journalists

Supporting media freedom and freedom of expression is a fundamental pillar of our democracy and a long-term priority of Czech foreign policy, as evidenced by the 14th place out of 180 countries (World Press Freedom Index, 2023) in the global press freedom ranking. Czechia is a founding member of the Media Freedom Coalition, too.

In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022, Czechia further stepped up its support for independent activists and journalists from Russia and Belarus, hosting many of them on its territory. We therefore deeply regret the misunderstanding that took place on 6 July 2023 regarding the journalist Farida Kurbangaleeva before the press conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. His visit was accompanied by completely extraordinary and strict security measures. Due to the high sensitivity of the visit, it was not possible to start the normal accreditation process and the transfer of information took place under time pressure. Following this regrettable event, the Office of the President of the Czech Republic has modified and clarified the accreditation procedure to avoid similar misunderstandings in the future.