

Statement on the alert on the Council of Europe platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists on the interview of 11 September 2019 by the journalist David Gebhard with Björn Höcke on the ZDF programme, berlin direkt:

According to the broadcaster, no legal steps have been taken so far regarding the broadcast of the interview.

The broadcaster ZDF assessed the threat made in the interview by Mr Höcke and saw no reason for further steps, apart from evaluating it from a journalistic viewpoint. However, there were positive, but also negative, reactions after the interview on internet platforms, in e-mails and in letters, both towards the journalist concerned and towards ZDF. Those reactions ranged from praise and objective criticism to concrete grave threats. Charges were pressed against the latter by the competent law enforcement agencies, which in turn initiated preliminary investigations.

Land Rhineland-Palatinate and its media regulation authority operate a joint initiative called Tracking and Deleting, which aims not only delete to online hate speech and incitement, but also to prosecute and hold the authors to account. Law enforcement authorities, media regulation authorities and media companies are working together to this end. Law enforcement authorities offer training courses aimed at helping people to recognise potentially illegal content. Additionally, media companies are provided with information about direct, efficient ways to press charges.