



Permanent Representation of Greece
to the Council of Europe

Strasbourg, 9 January 2023
Ref. No. 6686/AS 15

Dear Secretary General,

Please find attached the response from the Greek authorities to alert no. 308/2022, which was uploaded on the Platform for the Safety of Journalists and Protection of Journalism of the Council of Europe in November 2022.

Yours Sincerely,

Panayiotis Beglitis
Ambassador

Att.: 2 pages

To: **Ms Marija Pejcinovic Buric**
Secretary General
of the Council of Europe

Cc: **Mr. Matjaz Gruden**
Director
DG II, Directorate of Democratic Participation

Mr. Adrian Evtuhovici
Head of Division/Coordinator of the Platform

In town

**Reply by the Greek authorities to alert no. 308/2022 uploaded on the
Platform for the Safety of Journalists and Protection of Journalism of the
Council of Europe**

Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are guaranteed under article 14 of the Greek Constitution. The operation of the Press is central to our democratic state and is directly linked to the quality of Democracy. The Greek Constitution wisely and accurately describes the terms and conditions of its operation, in order to safeguard the Press and the Government, as well as the citizens against inaccurate, insulting and defamatory publications, while it also stipulates that the manner of protection is further determined by a relevant Law. Furthermore, editorial independence, autonomy and dignity of journalists are further ensured in public and private media by Codes of Conduct of the journalistic profession.

Greece has adopted all the recommendations and guidelines of the Council of Europe on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors (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 specialized Ministers of the Council of Europe member States, on the occasion of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and Information Society, jointly organized by the Council of Europe and the Republic of Cyprus and held online on 10-11 June 2021, etc.) and takes all necessary measures for this purpose, namely to carry out effective, independent and prompt investigations into any crimes against journalists. Within its area of competence, the Secretariat General for Communication and Media places special focus on the upholding of human rights in the media environment by empowering people that work and support it, namely, media professionals and journalists.

Regarding this matter, Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister and Government Spokesman Mr. Giannis Oikonomou during the briefing of political editors and foreign press correspondents on 24/11/2022 described the incident as “unfortunate”, and provided an overall answer which can be accessed on the website of the Secretariat General for Communication and Media.

Lastly, we would like to add that Greece is continuously implementing initiatives aligned with the *Commission Recommendation (EU) 2021/1534 on ensuring the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists and other media professionals in the European Union*, particularly with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, initiated by the Secretariat General for

Communication and Media of the Presidency of the Government and the participation of another five competent Ministries which took place on Monday, May 23, 2022.

This Memorandum of Understanding contains a common framework of cooperation which includes, inter alia, the preparation and submission of proposals for legislative and non-legislative initiatives to ensure the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists and other media professionals, the documentation and specialization of policies and initiatives in regards to online safety, digital literacy and empowerment of journalists, the planning of training programs for the development of skills and competencies in all professions related to the protection of journalists and other media professionals as well as raising public awareness of the dangers posed by attacks on journalists for the smooth functioning of Democracy.

Finally, this Memorandum of Understanding has led to the creation of a Task Force that meets regularly, comprised of representatives from civil society organizations, university institutions, journalists' associations to further pursue the objectives stated above.

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