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Mr Matjaž Gruden  
Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists  
Council of Europe  
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F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
France

*By e-transmission only*

Date 8 February 2023  
Re Reply by the Kingdom of the Netherlands concerning an alert on the  
Safety of Journalists Platform of the Council of Europe (no. 215/2022)

**Ministry of Justice and  
Security**

**Directorate for European  
and International Affairs**

Turfmarkt 147  
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**Reference**  
no. 215/2022

*Please quote date of letter  
and ref. when replying. Do not  
raise more than one subject  
per letter.*

Dear Mr Gruden,

The Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Council of Europe has notified us of the alert created on 12 July 2022 concerning the smearing of the investigative journalist Joep Dohmen on a customised website.

According to the alert, the politician Ger Driessen created a website to collect examples of negative experiences with the investigative journalist Joep Dohmen from persons who feel wronged by Mr Dohmen's publications. To this date, no complaints about Mr Dohmen were published on the website.

The Netherlands strongly condemns all threats, physical assaults and other degrading acts or treatments targeting media workers. Press freedom is an essential pillar of our democracy. Media workers play an indispensable role in open and democratic societies like ours. Incidents targeting media workers are regarded as unacceptable, and our Police and Public Prosecution Service take them very seriously. Freedom of expression, both online and offline, including the safety of journalists, is of utmost priority.

Mr Driessen's website remains online and seems unchanged. If Mr Dohmen feels threatened or intimidated by the actions of Mr Driessen, he can file a report with the police.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Huijser

Director of European and International Affairs