

Opening of the Exhibition

“Victory for Victoria”

1 October 2025, Strasbourg (France)

Speech by Theodoros Rousopoulos
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

Today we open the exhibition “*Victory for Victoria*”, in memory of Victoria Roshchyna – a young Ukrainian journalist, born in 1996, killed in 2024. She was only 27 years old.

I do not know how many of you have experienced war conditions. As a journalist for many years, I have unfortunately been on many war fronts — in the Balkans, in the Gulf. I risked losing my life to bullets whizzing past me and bombs falling close by. I can still recall the anxiety of not knowing whether I would live through the next minute.

It is from this experience that I feel, in part, what Ukrainians live through every day: the constant spectre of sudden death, the fear of losing a relative, a friend, a neighbour, a loved one.

And yet, in the midst of this, journalists like Victoria choose to face that danger, not to flee it. Her story is heartbreaking. This autumn session is focused on the challenges faced by journalists.

Every year, journalists are killed, imprisoned, or disappear in conflict zones. Their sacrifice reminds us that freedom of expression is not an abstraction. It is carried by fragile, courageous human beings who believe that truth must be told, no matter the cost.

With “*Victory for Victoria*”, we want to transform grief into remembrance, and remembrance into commitment.

Commitment to honour all journalists who fell in the line of duty.

Commitment to defend those who still risk everything so that we may know the truth.

Victoria's victory will be our victory – if we carry her voice, and the voices of all who fell in the line of duty, forward with us.

Thank you.