Official launch of the new Council of Europe Media Project in Ukraine

On 13 June 2023, the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Project "Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media in Ukraine" implemented within the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine "Resilience, Recovery and Rebuilding" (2023-2026) took place in Kyiv, Ukraine, and online.

The event was opened by **Mr Patrick Penninckx**, Head of the Information Society Department, Directorate General for Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe, **Mr Taras Shevchenko**, Deputy Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine for European Integration, **Ms Olena Lytvynenko**, Acting Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, and **Mr Erlend Falk**, Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine.

> *"The co-operation in the field of freedom of expression under the current Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine builds on the progress achieved under the previous Action Plans and reflects the pressing needs of the authorities and the media community in times of war, as well as assisting in overcoming persisting challenges related to freedom of expression and access to information at large,"* said **Mr Patrick Penninckx**, Head of the Information Society Department, Directorate General for Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe.

> *"Europe's support for Ukraine is important now. Protecting freedom of speech and the rights of journalists and all those who collect and disseminate information is and should be a priority,"* emphasized **Mr Taras Shevchenko**, Deputy Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine for European Integration.

> *"In terms of its structure, the Project "Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media in Ukraine" is a continuation of the work that has been previously carried out by the team. At the same time, it aims to take into account the realities in which Ukraine is living now and to help Ukraine fulfill all the requirements necessary for its accession to the EU,"* said **Ms Olena Lytvynenko**, Acting Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine.

The event was attended by more than 40 representatives of the institutions that are members of the Project Steering Committee and civil society observers: the Parliamentary Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy of the Parliament of Ukraine, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, the National Council of Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine, the State Committee on Television and Radio of Ukraine, the Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, the Commission on Journalistic Ethics, the Association of Rights Holders and Content Providers of Ukraine, the Independent Media Council, as well as the Civic Organisations "Institute of Mass Information" and "Center for Democracy and Rule of Law".

During the event, the participants identified a range of urgent challenges faced by the Ukrainian media community due to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine that require a rapid response, outlined priorities for co-operation with the Council of Europe in the field of media and freedom of access to information, and discussed the Work Plan of the Project for the next two years.

The purpose of the Council of Europe Project "Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media in Ukraine" is to enable a pluralistic media environment in Ukraine through the harmonisation of legal and policy frameworks in line with European standards.

The Project is funded and implemented within the framework of [the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine "Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction" (2023-2026)](#) for two years, from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2024.

The Project is built around three main components:

1.   Alignment of Ukraine's framework on media, freedom of expression and freedom of access to information with the European standards.

2.   Effective implementation of the legal framework governing the protection of journalists, public broadcasting and regulatory authority in line with European standards.

3.   Effective and efficient communication strategies governing a balanced media coverage and preventing information disorder.