

**Official response of the Government of Slovakia to the alert submitted to the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists on 6 February 2019 entitled „Slovakia Seeks to Introduce Right of Reply for Politicians “**

With regard to the alert submitted to the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists on 6 February 2019 entitled „Slovakia Seeks to Introduce Right of Reply for Politicians“, the Government of the Slovak Republic would like to draw attention to the fact that the initiative to introduce right of reply for politicians is not the initiative of the Government itself, but the initiative of respective Slovak parliamentarians.

Proposers of this legislative initiative see its legitimacy on the basis that the right to reply is the immanent part of press law in some European states. In this vein, it is worth mentioning that under the European Convention on Human Rights, the freedom of expression is not absolute and the state may interfere with that freedom in certain circumstances.

Until the day of submission of this response, the Press Law amendment has not been put on the agenda of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Slovak Parliament).

The Government of Slovakia would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate that it remains fully abide by its international human rights obligations, including those emerging from the European Convention on Human rights. The Government of Slovakia fully shares the principles concerning the freedom of expression and the freedom of media as defined in the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights which has described freedom of expression as one of the basic conditions for the progress of democratic societies and for the development of each individual and the role of the press as public watchdog. The Government of Slovakia is likewise fully aware of its obligation to act positively in taking the necessary steps to ensure effective protection of human rights of journalists and independence of media.

In this respect the Government of Slovakia would like to inform that in order to strengthen the protection of journalists the Ministry of Culture of Slovakia has set up the ad hoc working group for the protection of journalists with a view to preparing the bill on a special position of journalist from the point of view of protection of a source and of protection of a journalist himself/herself, including protection from groundless criminal proceedings for defamation or from false right privacy in relation to work performance of journalist.