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PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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Strasbourg, 27 March 2020

Mr. Matjaž Gruden
Director
Directorate of Democratic Participation
Directorate General of Democracy
Council of Europe
Strasbourg

Dear Director,

I write to you regarding the alert published on the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists on 19 March 2020, titled "Slovenian Journalist Blaž Zgaga Targeted by a Defamation and Hate Campaign Lead by the New Government".

Please find attached the answer of my authorities:

"Slovenia has always strongly advocated for the freedom and independence of journalists, being resolutely opposed to any type of communication that could be understood as a threat to their work. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia strongly rejects and condemns the case of alleged harassment of a Slovenian journalist. At the moment, we have no conclusive evidence as to how this event came about.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia will continue to ensure the necessary conditions for the free and independent work of journalists. It has to be underlined that objective media reporting is of utmost importance in the fight against fake news, which presents a major threat to the democratic development and plurality of society – which are protected constitutional values of the Republic of Slovenia and the fundamental values of the Council of Europe.

It has to be noted that a great deal of fake news has also been circulated and numerous criminal proceedings initiated regarding the activities of Prime Minister Janez Janša in his various positions of public office. But the fact is that none of the proceedings have led to a judgement of conviction that would pass a judicial review of competent authorities. It is also a fact that, in the past, PM Janša's human rights, including the right to freedom, were violated by different court judgements."

In order to provide objective information to the public, you are kindly requested to publish the answer on the Platform.

I remain at your disposal to provide additional information if needed.

Yours sincerely,



Andrej Slapničar
Ambassador
Permanent Representative