

International and domestic mechanisms and resources for the protection of journalists shared with Albanian reporters

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Rights and responsibilities of journalists in exercising their daily duties were discussed during the last workshop organised by the Albanian Media Council with the support of the EU and Council of Europe joint action on "[Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Albania](#)". Twenty-three participants attended the meeting, which had a special focus on the existing international and domestic mechanisms and resources for the protection of journalists, including legal recourses. Several journalists shared their personal experiences of intimidation, financial threats and smear campaigns and the devastating effect these can have on their work and life. Women journalists and experts in the field shared and brought facts demonstrating how smear campaigns especially online, target women journalists more.

During the last years, there have been several lawsuits against journalists and they often find themselves not supported by the media they work for. In this situation experts emphasized what can be done to protect journalists from legal actions intended to intimidate them from reporting on issues of public interest. Participants were also informed of several resources for financial legal assistance that journalists who are facing legal actions can apply for. Legal experts drove the point that the best protection for journalists is that their reporting is ethical and consistent with the journalistic Code of Ethics. This has been demonstrated by recent precedents in domestic courts that have taken into consideration decisions by Board of Ethics of the Alliance for Ethical Media, a self-regulation mechanism, which was established in February 2020 by several media outlets aiming at promoting and ensuring ethical standards in journalism.

This workshop was welcomed by participants who pointed out the need for more similar activities so that journalists and reporters in the field are more confident in their reporting and thus, not resort to self-censorship.

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