

EFJ General Meeting (GM)
Izmir, Turkey
13-14 June 2022

Resolutions adopted by the GM 2022

1. On Press Freedom in Switzerland

Tabled by syndicom (Switzerland)

The general meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, on 13-14 June 2022,

noting that recent months have seen increasing pressure on freedom of the Press in Switzerland. Restrictions have become so severe, that even the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and Opinion has expressed to the Swiss government her serious concern.

In February, for example, more than 40 of the world's leading media companies jointly published the results of a "Suisse Secrets" investigation into the Credit Suisse bank (the country's second largest). The investigation – based on thousands of leaked data – described the Swiss banking industry as "collaborators of tax evaders", while hiding behind the country's "immoral" banking secrecy laws.

However, no media group in Switzerland itself participated in the global investigation because of the risk – under Swiss legislation – of criminal prosecution. There have in the past been cases of Swiss journalists and media houses being threatened with legal action by wealthy individuals and companies so as to delay or even prevent news coverage of them.

One such case last year concerned the Swiss online news magazine "Gotham City" which specializes in coverage of white-collar crime. The magazine wanted to report the tax fraud conviction of a Switzerland-based Indonesian businessman active in the questionable palm oil trade. However, the businessman applied for "precautionary measures" to prevent publication until after a nationwide Swiss vote on a controversial free trade agreement between the two countries – which was subsequently but only narrowly approved by the Swiss electorate. If the hurdles for "precautionary measures" against the media are further lowered, then muzzling of the media in Switzerland will not only continue. It will also escalate.

This month, on 24 June, the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and Opinion will report to the UN Human Rights Council on the global situation of Press freedom. In her report she plans to address the situation surrounding banking secrecy in

Switzerland.

The EFJ General Meeting, representing more than 300,000 journalists in no fewer than 45 countries, instructs the Steering Committee to condemn in the strongest terms Swiss legislation which restricts the rights of the media. In doing so, the EFJ expresses its full support for Swiss journalists and the unions which represent them in their fight for freedom of the Press.

2. On the urgent need to defend the independence of local media in the European Union

Tabled by the Society of Journalists (Poland)

The general meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, on 13-14 June 2022,

noting that at the annual meeting of the EFJ in Zagreb on 8-9 October 2021, several organisations from the Balkans underscored the importance of local media in providing “oversight and coverage to inform the public and hold policy makers to account”,

noting that little progress appears to have been made since last year when the same resolution called on the EFJ to work on finding „models for returning part of the public revenues collected through new...tax rules to media institutions through public subsidies” while maintaining the principle of journalism „independent of state, political and economic power”,

noting that also few proposals have since appeared for the establishment of a legislative framework which would „ensure a system of local media funding ...to make them independent of local authorities whose work they monitor and review,

noting that, meanwhile, in Poland, Orlen, the state controlled energy conglomerate has taken control of regional and local media which it purchased at the beginning of 2021 by replacing key editorial staff and is building a political support network for the ruling party in forthcoming local elections counter to the principles of independent journalism

noting that Orlen is also positioning itself to purchase or marginalise still independent local publications which are struggling, in adverse economic conditions, to continue to provide a voice free of influence by the national ruling party and local government officials.

The EFJ annual meeting urges the EFJ Steering Committee to encourage the European Commission and the European Parliament to work to establish mechanisms to provide financial support to struggling local media to enable them to maintain their independence and to enable them to report on fraudulent use by national and local political and business elites of public and European funds and to defend democratic processes and the rule of law.

In a word, to establish an EU Local Media Policy which would ensure that people living in small towns and villages could fully benefit from the same level of independent , quality media which serve their fellow citizens in the rest of the country.

3. On Gender equality and diversity

Tabled by SNJ (France)

The general meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, on 13-14 June 2022,

noting that the EFJ is clearly committed to promoting equality between men and women journalists, as well as promoting a gender perspective in news and including diversity in newsrooms and coverage,

noting that on 14-15 March 2022, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) held the final conference to conclude the two-year project "Trust and Quality in Journalism" in Malaga, Spain, under the title "How can gender equality and diversity promote trust in the media? in which EFJ members reaffirmed their commitment to promote diversity and gender equality in the media and in our organisations,

Bearing in mind that, although the EFJ has developed or participated in several projects on gender and diversity in media in recent years, the EFJ does not have a specific space to identify the different issues related to gender and diversity in media at European level and to discuss and work on specific projects that could be promoted by the EFJ or different member organisations on a regular basis,

The EFJ general meeting asks the Steering Committee to:

- Establish an expert group on gender and diversity in the media composed of representatives of the different member unions who wish to participate, starting with representatives of the organisations putting forward this motion. The group, which will focus on specific issues related to gender and diversity in the media, will set its annual objectives and the frequency of meetings at its first meeting;
- Provide the necessary technical support, as with the rest of the current and past expert groups, so that it can develop its activity;
- Promote the group so that more organisations/people from the EFJ can participate;
- Promote collaboration with the IFJ Gender Council.

4. On the right to information challenged by the extreme right: taking legal action

Tabled by SNJ (France)

Considering that extremist theories have gained ground, through the industrial use of social networks, with their trail of racist obsessions and coldly assumed fake news,

Considering that, in many countries, malicious acts and online attacks are directly directed against journalists: threats of all kinds, including death threats,

Recalling that the most recent example in France was given by the French presidential candidate Éric Zemmour, who was convicted several times in court, including a final decision in 2011 for "provocation to racial discrimination". At his campaign meeting in Villepinte on 6 December 2021, he expressed hatred of the media and had them booed by his supporters, saying: 'journalists want my social death'. Journalists were booed and pushed out. Some media are regularly barred from attending Marine Le Pen meetings, The European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Izmir on 13 and 14 June 2022, recalls that journalists who are victims of all kinds of attacks should systematically file complaints and reports to the Council of Europe platform.

5. On restrictions on reporting from designated areas

Tabled by SNJ (France)

Considering that in a growing number of countries, for alleged "security" reasons, the responsible authorities restrict the access rights of journalists to many places or events,

Considering that in France, for example, the highest administrative court, the Conseil d'Etat, has not explicitly condemned the perimeters set up by the forces of law and order when journalists are excluded. This is the case for the "removals" of migrants in Calais, where migrants complain that their property and papers are seized. Journalists have no access to information and can neither witness nor verify,

Recalling that the right to information includes the right to inform and be informed,

The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Izmir on 13-14 June 2022, reminds states and governments that press freedom is an integral part of democracies and that European and international texts commit them to respect it.

6. On the responsibility of Russian journalists for inciting the war

Tabled by NUJ (UK)

"This General Meeting condemns Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine."

Destructive propaganda, misinformation and incitement to hatred against Ukrainians have been part of Putin's strategy, along with the deployment of tanks, missiles, planes and military units near the border with Ukraine.

"This GM further notes that the Russian media has, for the most part, played a supportive role to Putin's invasion, justifying military actions, under-reporting atrocities, and dishonestly portraying events in Ukraine as a 'special military operation'.

This GM further notes that Russian journalists have been placed under intense pressure to produce material supportive of the war, on pain of imprisonment. Control of the media and the suppression of journalism has long been a hallmark of Putin's government.

This GM notes the brave decisions on the part of a small number of Russian journalists to produce news that more honestly reflects the situation, despite the grave risks to themselves. This GM further notes that many Russian journalists have chosen exile over complicity.

This GM recognises that, as a result of this media manipulation, Russia's war crimes in Bucha, Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities, and the truth about the MH-17, have been kept from people in Russia. Russian media is also silent about Russian missiles and artillery killing civilians.

This GM further recognises that Russia has been promoting its messages in Europe through controlled media such as Russian Today (RT), Sputnik and Red Fish Media.

This GM calls on the EFJ steering committee to:

- Make clear in statements and campaigning work that it recognises and opposes

Russian media manipulation.

- Seek ways to provide practical help for those Russian journalists who seek to accurately report the war within their country or are forced to move into exile. - Support and contribute to campaigns to aid Ukrainian journalists and media and to help with the rebuilding of that country's media infrastructure.
- Upon the eventual return of free expression to Russia, the EFJ should seek ways to assist the rebuilding of an honest, plural media in that country and support those journalists committed to achieving this. It should do this through the support of effective, independent, and democratic journalists' trade unions.
- Work to promote public understanding of the media to help its consumers distinguish between those platforms that aspire to report ethically and those that are simply the instruments of their funding regimes."

7. On the responsibility of Russian journalists for inciting the war

Tabled by NUJU (Ukraine)

Destructive propaganda, misinformation and incitement to hatred against Ukrainians have prepared for a large-scale Russian invasion - along with the accumulation of tanks, missiles, planes and military units near the border with Ukraine.

For a long time, the Russian propaganda machine has been manipulating the public consciousness, including in the information space of European countries. Some Russian media have fabricated fake news, hid important information, put psychological pressure on the audience, and tabooed criticism of the Russian leadership.

The active participation of Russian propagandists in state propaganda and incitement of hatred made the Russian invasion of Ukraine possible.

The main pro-government media lie that Russia is conducting a "special military operation" instead of a full-scale war in Ukraine. They are hiding the truth about the Russian military's war crimes in Bucha, Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities, just as they are hiding the truth about the MH-17. They are silent about the fact that Russian missiles and artillery are killing civilians. LEAVE IN – TV programs with Dmitriy Kiselyov, Volodymyr Solovyov, and Olga Skabeeva are full of hatred for Ukrainians and call for the destruction of Ukraine.

The EFJ GM also welcomes the EU decision to apply personal sanctions on Russian media involved in creating and disseminating propaganda.

At the same time, we note that the circle of persons responsible for inciting the war is much wider. Among them are even journalists, leaders, employees of the federal and local media, who consciously worked and are working to strengthen the dictatorial regime, while violating all professional standards.

This is not a "Putin war" as Russian opinion leaders say. This is a war that is supported within the country by a significant part of the society. And without the participation of many

(not all) Russian propagandists in the systemic destructive propaganda for many years, such support and such a war would have been impossible.

The EFJ General Meeting condemns the involvement of many Russian propagandists in a

large-scale war in Central Europe.

To stop the aggressor and prevent such wars in the future, lessons must be learned and efforts must be made to combat Russian propaganda by European institutions and national unions that are members of the European Federation of Journalists.

The General Meeting instructs the EFJ Steering Committee:

1. Appeal to the European Commission:

- to include in the sanctions list not only persons, but also posts of Chief of Russian state media, as well as their direct financial associates;

- to include in the sanctions, list the heads of federal and local media who took part in the PR campaign of the so-called “special operation”.

2. To call on the EU institutions to find a quick and effective mechanism to compensate the damages caused to the Ukrainian media from the seized assets of those who have unjustly benefitted from the Russian regime.

3. Appeal to the EFJ members:

- disprove misinformation and Russian propaganda aimed at European audiences.

8. On the crisis situation of Ukrainian independent media

Tabled by NUJU (Ukraine).

Delegates and observers of the EFJ General Meeting express their solidarity with Ukrainian journalists who are working in dangerous conditions to cover large-scale Russian invasion and suffering from the economic and humanitarian crisis caused by this war.

Russian aggression against Ukraine has paid attention in different countries to the work of professional media. The role of journalists who record the course and consequences of the war, verify the facts and communicate with eyewitnesses and victims is extremely high.

At the same time, during the war, the Ukrainian media was threatened with closure. 1. All models of economic independence of the media are destroyed. Revenues from advertising, from the sale of newspapers and subscriptions, from partner cooperation on TV and radio, etc. stopped.

2. The media in combat zones may not continue their activities due to the capture or destruction of editorial offices and equipment, due to the destruction of logistics and partnerships.

3. Many journalists were forced to leave their homes, offices and professional equipment and move to other regions of Ukraine or abroad.

4. Due to lack of income, many journalists began to work on a volunteer basis. However, journalists, especially in the local media, do not have large “financial reserves”.

Therefore, Ukrainian independent media and Ukrainian journalists need urgent support.

Independent professional media are the key to the country's democratic development, while state-controlled destructive propaganda strengthens the dictatorship as we see in Russian society.

The General Meeting instructs the EFJ Steering Committee to:

1. Appeal to the Ukrainian Parliament to hold emergency parliamentary hearings on the crisis in the Ukrainian media.
2. Call on the Ukrainian government to adopt a program to support Ukrainian independent media and to establish a Media Support Fund no later than September 1, 2022.
3. Request the European Parliament and the European Commission to develop and implement special programs of economic support for Ukrainian journalists and media.
4. Communicate with international donors about a proposal to make one of the priorities the support of independent Ukrainian media as a critical area in the context of Russian invasion of Ukraine.
5. Encourage the development of direct cooperation between the national unions of European countries and the editorial offices of Ukrainian local media which work in combat regions.

9. On promoting the work of independent journalists who have found themselves in a critical situation

Tabled by the independent Russian Journalists' and Media Workers' Union (JMWU) (Russia)

Since the beginning of the Russian military intervention in Ukraine, a number of repressive laws were adopted in Russia and military censorship was actually introduced. Dozens of independent media, including such important ones as Echo Moskv, Novaya Gazeta and Dozhd, as well as almost all independent regional media were forced to stop their work, their websites were blocked. All critical voices were silenced. The number of criminal proceedings against journalists has more than doubled since February 24 (from 7 to 19), and the number of colleagues behind bars has increased from 13 to 18.

The repressions affected not only journalists, but also the whole society in terms of freedom of speech in general. There are thousands of administrative trials for pacifist statements. Amid the threat of more than severe punishment, which in some cases can go up to 15 years in prison, hundreds of journalists hastily left the country. Many of them, as well as our colleagues from Belarus after the events of 2020, are trying to restart their media projects in exile.

It is also very telling that many of the employees of the state media, who continued to compromise before February 24, began to resign after this date. Often we are talking about ordinary employees. It is difficult to say whether this phenomenon can be called massive, but it is quite possible to talk about a pronounced trend. We know at least dozens of such cases.

Partial and complete blocking of independent Russian media, pressure on them with fines, by declaring them “foreign agents” or a direct ban have become commonplace in recent years. But after February 24, the situation has turned into a real disaster. The NGO Roskomsvoboda estimated that more than 3,000 different websites, including dozens of media outlets, were subjected to military censorship in Russia. Some of them, having assessed the risks, decided to stop their work.

At the same time, in early March two Russian satellite providers (NTV+ and Tricolor TV) broadcasting via Eutelsat for Russian speaking audience – including a diaspora of several million people within Europe – suddenly removed such international news channels as BBC World, CNN, Deutsche Welle, Euronews and France 24 and a number of others from their packages. Simultaneously, these channels disappeared from the packages of cable operators. Providers stated that this happened "at the request of copyright holders". Although restrained comments and explanations of individual channels followed somewhat later, there is still no full and plausible confirmation of the validity of this formulation. The situation is rather grim. It is also worth noting that shortly after that, the Russian members of the European Broadcasting Union announced their withdrawal from the EBU, although they still continue to use de facto its video content.

However, according to the European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe), in 2018, 17.1 million viewers within Russia used pay-TV services via satellite, and probably tens of millions now watch free state TV channels.

Considering all the above:

The EFJ General Meeting expresses its deep concern about the situation in which the overwhelming majority of Belarusians and Russians have been cut off from independent and reliable sources of information and left alone to face the unbridled propaganda of the state. In this regard the General Meeting instructs the EFJ Steering Committee to appeal to the European Commission by proposing:

- To provide all possible support to Belarusian and Russian journalists and independent media projects in exile;
- To promote the diversification of forms and means of dissemination of quality independent journalistic content;
- To create at the Commission a task force involving representatives of the professional community from different countries of the European continent to promote and coordinate these types of assistance.

10. On Public Service Broadcasting

Tabled by NUJ (Ireland)

This GM of the European Federation of Journalists reaffirms the vital role of public service broadcasting (PSB) as a cornerstone of democracy.

The value of public service broadcasting was illustrated across Europe during the Covid 19 pandemic.

GM applauds the work of all journalists engaged in public interest journalism during the pandemic, when informed, authoritative reporting helped combat dangerous propaganda from conspiracy theorists seeking to undermine public health campaigns.

GM notes with concern the undermining of public service broadcasting across Europe, through political interference, lack of funding and direct attacks on broadcasting organisations.

GM calls on the Steering Committee, in conjunction with the Broadcasting Expert Group to accelerate its activities in defense of public service broadcasting and to consider a designated “Hands Off Public Service Broadcasting” campaign aimed at highlighting the systematic threats to PSB.

11. On the urgent need to defend the cause of independent public service media in Europe

Tabled by the Society of Journalists (Poland)

The annual meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), in Izmir, Turkey on 13-14 June 2022,

noting that according to the European University Institute’s (EUI) Media Pluralism Monitor for 2021 the independence of public service media (PSM) was at high risk in 15 European countries. These were Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Northern Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, and France.

noting that this risk to PSM independence limits the opportunity of citizens to make informed choices and thus undermines the democratic process both at the local, national level and during elections to the European Parliament,

noting that in recent elections in Hungary and Serbia on April 3 2022 monitoring teams from the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) reported that in Hungary „public television M1 failed to provide balanced coverage of the campaign and during the monitoring period displayed a clear bias in favor of the government” while in Serbia „the uncritical and sometimes extensive news coverage of public officials, President Vucic in particular, was not, fully in line with the regulatory framework that prohibits public media from granting such officials a privileged status”

welcoming the results of recent elections in the Czech Republic and Slovenia which promise to strengthen PSM independence of broadcasters in these countries,

considering the on going work by the European Institutions on the proposed European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) and the urgent need for all member states to establish the conditions for a level playing field during elections,

The EFJ meeting asks the EFJ Steering Committee to:

- urge politicians in Europe, European national regulators and media freedom organisations to work on strengthening the independence of PSM while ensuring funding adequate for PSM to fulfill their mission;

- work with European Commission officials and parliamentarians to ensure that the EFMA adequately safeguards PSM independence;
- work with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) which is uniquely placed to struggle for PSM independence as well as with the Council of Europe which has a long record of standard setting on PSM issues;
- pay due regard to the issue of the independence of media regulators and to support media self regulation.

On Safety

12. On “PersVeilig” - “Safe Press” - the security of media workers *Tabled by NVJ (The Netherlands)*

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, on 13 and 14 June 2022,

Observing that attacks on journalists have increased immensely in the past few years, the Netherlands has set up a Task force between the National Police, the Public Prosecutor, the Alliance of Editors in Chief and the NVJ in order to defend media workers. The project relates to physical and psychological attacks, intimidation and threats in the real as well as the online world. The structure allows media workers to defend themselves by means of training, security and defense material, such as vests and surveillance cameras, and offers psychological and material help.

It also involves more commitment, priority and feedback from the side of the police and public prosecutor when aggression against journalists is being reported. The project is known as PersVeilig (Safe Press) and has recently been approved by Dutch Parliament for the next 3 years with a yearly budget of 350.000 Euro from the government and a contribution of 100.000 euro from the media sector (broadcasters and publishers alike).

The most important feature of the regulation may be that these four parties work structurally together, and in doing so, oversee and monitor the serious issue of journalists' safety and media freedom on a regular basis. Both sides of the aisle: law enforcers and journalists in the field keep themselves informed on current and upcoming issues and do their utmost to find solutions.

- Considering that the European Commission has declared Freedom of the Press a priority,
- Considering the increasing polarization in European societies by virtue of the social media, leading to greater violence towards journalists,
- Considering the positive echo the project Persveilig has met with several EJF members.

The EFJ General Meeting asks the Steering Committee:

- To promote the structure of PersVeilig of the Netherlands at the European Commission;

- To develop initiatives like the Netherlands' PersVeilig by setting up trainings for best practices for EFJ members and continue the safety training initiated by the EFJ;
- To call on EFJ affiliates to promote the PersVeilig model at their national governments urging them to make budget available for a structural cooperation between law enforcement and media workers in order to secure press freedom, the backbone of our democracy, as this is in line with [the EU recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists](#) (available in all EU languages) adopted on 16 September 2021.

13. On Lobbying for the UN convention

Tabled by dju in ver.di (Germany)

Despite many protocols, guidelines and proposals, journalists still face a daily threat – and impunity continues to make the situation worse. In 2017, the IFJ launched an initiative for a UN Convention on protection of journalists. It is considered to be an effective measure if not to put an end to impunity then at least to force government officials and law enforcement officers to do their job.

The initiative won the support of representatives of WAN-IFRA, the world association of newspaper owners, the European Broadcasting Union and UNI, the 20-million strong global trade union federation, which represents media workers across the world.

The text of the convention has been translated in French, Spanish and Arab. The IFJ and EFJ-affiliates are asked to build coalitions and advocate for adopting the convention.

<https://www.ifj.org/actions/ifj-campaigns/end-impunity-for-a-un-convention-to-protect-journalists.html>

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists in Izmir, June 2022, instructs the new Steering Committee to promote the project not only amongst affiliates, but also other organisations concerned with press and media freedom.

14. On safety and protection of journalists

Tabled by dju in ver.di (Germany)

The council of Europe's platform about the safety of journalists reports an increasing number of serious threats to the safety of journalists and media freedom in Europe. 26 cases of impunity for murder are listed.

In 2021, 282 registered alerts were an increase of more than 40 percent compared to 2020. As of June 2022: 86 journalists are currently in prison in Europe. 28 in Belarus, 24 in Russia, 23 in Turkey, 5 in Azerbaijan, 4 in Ukraine, 1 in Poland, and 1 in the United Kingdom. 23 journalists have been killed in Europe between January 2019 and June 2022.

In september 2021 the European Commission presented a recommendation to strengthen the safety of journalists and other media professionals. It calls for effective protective measures and robust investigation and prosecution of criminal threats against journalists and

other media professionals, drawing particular attention to threats against women journalists and journalists representing or reporting on equality.

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists in Izmir, June 2022, welcomes the recommendation and instructs the Steering Committee to start a campaign lobbying for implementation in every member state of the CoE.

This should also lead to new efforts of finally implementing the Council of Europe's recommendation "on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors" (adopted April 2016). Journalists' unions and associations being affiliates of the EFJ should establish working groups, demand national action plans and involve other partners.

15. On helping members combat SLAPPs

Tabled by NUJ (UK)

This GM notes that aggressive legal actions against journalists (known as Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation SLAPPs) continue to frustrate journalistic investigation and free expression.

This GM notes that some of the most egregious examples of this practice can be found in the reactions of Russian oligarchs in relation to books by British journalists Catherine Belton and Tom Burgis.

It further notes the recent success by Swedish journalists Camilla Jonnsson , Per Agerman and Annelie Östlund in having dismissed an attempt to sanction them in the English courts by Swedish businessman Svante Kumlin.

„Betting on the power of money to kill stories and deter further reporting, these lawsuits are an effective tool of censorship in Europe“, the Council of Europe states in its annual report in 2022. EFJ has worked with a wide coalition of journalists, press freedom and environmental organisations (including Greenpeace, PEN international, Reporters without Borders and ECPMF) to stop this practice and in April, the European Commission proposed an Anti-SLAPP directive.

This GM reaffirms the EFJs pre-existing policy on external and international campaigning in respect of Slapps. As well as continuing to lobby for the implementation of an effective EU directive and recommendations that remove these pernicious laws that allow such harassment, the EFJ must work to facilitate affiliates helping each other to enable their members to combat these challenges.

This GM calls on the Steering Committee to establish an informal contact group among affiliates to share information and best practice in respect of Slapps and to build links with campaigning groups and NGOs that are active in this field.

Such a contact group should consider the following possible steps to build awareness of and opposition to Slapps: a survey of Slapp laws in Europe, an information product for affiliates

and journalists on the risks posed by Slapps, and an event bringing together Slapp experts to exchange best practice.

16. On Julian Assange

Tabled by NUJ (UK)

This GM notes that the US Government is seeking to prosecute Julian Assange on 18 charges that arise from the leaking and publication of the Iraqi and Afghan war logs. Assange has now spent more than three years in prison in the UK as the courts consider an extradition application. If extradited and convicted, Assange faces the prospect of spending the rest of his life in prison.

GM asserts that the crimes for which Assange is sought – seeking a whistleblower who has witnessed wrongdoing, encouraging them to share evidence of this, and observing dissection in their actions – are intrinsic to most investigative journalism. If this prosecution is successful, it will create a jeopardy for journalists the world over.

This general meeting calls on the Steering Committee to:

- circulate materials to affiliates to allow them to draw to the attention of their own members the issues that Assange's case creates for journalist;
- communicate to the US and UK governments the concerns of the EFJ in respect of this attempted prosecution;
- draw the EFJ's concerns to any pan-European bodies that might be encouraged to lend their support to the campaign to prevent this prosecution;
- include the risks arising from Assange's attempted prosecution in campaign work relating to legislative and judicial threats to journalism.

17. On social protection for independent and freelance journalists in all European countries

Tabled by Federación de Sindicatos de Periodistas-FeSP (Spain)

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) in Izmir, (Turkey) 13-14 June 2022,

notes the increasing job insecurity in journalism in many countries and how this mainly affects independent and freelance journalists, especially women. All this has been aggravated in recent years by the economic crisis and the effects of the pandemic caused by COVID19.

The EFJ General Meeting gathered in Izmir (Turkey) on 13-14 June 2022, asks the Steering Committee to:

- Demand from European governments and EU institutions the implementation of specific policies and measures to reduce job insecurity in journalism;
- Urge the European Union to demand to member states social coverage for independent and freelance journalists so that, when they suffer the effects of the crisis and lose their jobs, they can receive proper economic compensation, as well as access to unemployment benefits and other measures that are already applied in a

few countries of the European Union that allow to protect by law information professionals who work under this formula, that is so common in journalism.

18. On the voluntary increase of contribution to the EFJ in Brussels

Tabled by NVJ (The Netherlands)

The general meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, on 13 and 14 June 2022,

Observing that EFJ- affiliates contribute a relatively modest fee directly to the EFJ while the fee to the IFJ is significantly higher

Observing that this mechanism has become dysfunctional in recent years, leading to an irresponsible workload for the EFJ with an increasing number of tasks for various working groups, on top of lobbying work at the Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe

Considering that the work of the EFJ, for example regarding authors' rights, calls for an authors' rights advisor that previously was delivered by the IFJ

Considering that the EFJ is in the process of reviewing its statutes, with an according possible review of the system for financial contributions from EFJ-affiliates

The NVJ wishes to set an example by increasing its contribution by 50%.

The EFJ GM asks the Steering Committee to make the example of the NVJ known among its affiliates and set up a mechanism to increase their yearly contribution voluntarily where possible.

19. On press freedom in Turkey

Tabled by DISK Basin-Is, TGS, GCD, TGC (Turkey)

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, on 13-14 June 2022,

Alarmed at the recent wave of arrests and repressions when at least 20 editors and journalists were detained last Wednesday June 8th by the Turkish security forces. Among those taken into custody were journalists working for the Mesopotamia Agency (MA). There are well founded fears that further arrests will follow. All of this has a chilling effect on those who seek to work for what remains of press freedom in Turkey,

Further noting the recent joint statement published by the EFJ and IFJ with the support of other press freedom and media organisations in opposition to the bill on “disinformation and fake news” submitted to the Turkish parliament on May 27 by the governing alliance. The statement joined the international outcry to end the law designed to expand online censorship and criminalise the free flow of information.

This meeting reaffirms its support for the scores of jailed and prosecuted journalists in Turkey and calls for the immediate release of those held in the latest raids by the security services;

Calls on all affiliated unions to raise concerns about the continued attacks on press freedom in Turkey by pressing their governments to raise the continuing decline in critical media and Agrees to demonstrate our solidarity by organizing solidarity campaigns in support of journalists in Turkey, appeals to governments and politicians, visits to monitor trials.

Statements

1. On the respect and recognition of freelance and atypical workers in journalism

Tabled by SNJ-CGT (France), DJV (Germany), TUCJ (Croatia), CCOO (Spain), EAJ (Estonia)

Freelance and paid-by-piecework journalists are an essential part of the journalistic profession. In the vast majority of countries, the information disseminated by the media would not be as rich, diversified, complete, if there were not a multitude of journalists working for different media, in different regions and cities or specialized in certain fields of expertise. Freelance journalists are not in competition with editorial staff, they complement them.

Unfortunately, in the great majority of countries, many editors have too little respect and recognition for freelance journalists, taking advantage of a precarious workforce to reduce the costs of producing information.

However, the precariousness of journalists is the disinformation of all citizens. The lack of consideration for the working conditions of freelance and paid-on-the-piece journalists is detrimental to the quality of information.

It is not acceptable, as it is the case in France in the vast majority of media and branches, that the remuneration of “pigistes” (atypical workers, paid-per-piece with work contract) has not been revalued for decades, in the framework of mandatory annual negotiations. The Minister of Labor, Elisabeth Borne, has just confirmed that journalists paid-on-the-piece, who benefit in France from a presumption of a work contract since 1974, should be included in the collective negotiations each year.

It is not acceptable that the fixed costs of freelance and paid-on-the-piece journalists are not taken into account by media outlets and publishers.

It is not acceptable, as is the case in Estonia, that most freelancers work with license contracts that give them authors rights, but put them in a bad situation for social security and pay-condition considering all costs for freelance that for employed journalists the media

outlet or channel carries.

Also, in Estonia, journalists are not recognized as creative persons, hence including freelance journalists to the support scheme for creative persons (similar to artists, writers, film makers, actors etc).

It's not acceptable, that in Germany freelance journalists are often paid so less, that they live in precarious conditions, f.e. photojournalists, but also other journalists. It's also not acceptable that the health of freelance journalists is not / or not enough, also a subject to the media houses. Freelancers should also have access to seminars and training in health and resilience, like the employees of the media houses.

We cannot allow, as in Spain, that a guideline on minimum tariffs for these services be considered an attack on competition by the Spanish regulatory body (CNMC), that companies take advantage of the lack of regulation to make the profession as a whole more precarious, or that this be an excuse to send journalists without any protection to conflict zones as we have seen in Ukraine.

The gap and the lack of balance between lonely freelancers versus customers/media companies, that are getting bigger and stronger when they merge to huge powerful national/international companies, is growing.

The world of media and technology has developed and changed, but the possibilities, payments and security for freelancers have been weakened. Media cooperates, getting bigger, paying once and using/sharing these journalists' production (text, photos, video, sounds, illustrations etc) with many media members on different platforms forever - without paying more for it ; rather less than before when independent journalists could work for several customers. Now has that market and possibilities disappeared.

The media constellation/companies are getting stronger but the lonely freelancer even more alone and weaker, by not allowing some of them to have collective bargaining, and excluding those who have this right on paper.

The European Federation of Journalists, meeting in its general assembly on June 13 and 14 in Izmir, asks all publishers, public and private, to put in place measures to respect the rights of freelance and payed-on-the-piece journalists, to take care of the psychosocial risks inherent to the isolation and the distance from the working groups, and calls for the remuneration to be a real recognition of the work done. The remuneration of freelance journalists should not be simply an adjustment variable allowing a media to exist.

The European Federation of Journalists also calls on governments to put in place legal frameworks that prevent the exclusion of freelance journalists from all social schemes, such as post-pandemic or inflationary support.

The European Federation of Journalists calls on the Members of the European Parliament to ensure that the recommendations allowing self-employed workers to benefit from collective bargaining rights are applied to freelance journalists as soon as possible.

2. On Iberian Public Broadcasters

Tabled by FAPE (Spain) and SJ (Portugal)

Portugal Case

The Portuguese Journalists Union is very concerned with the continued disinvestment in the public information service.

Taking into account that the public radio and television service and the Lusa Agency serve as a barometer for the other media, it is very worrying that the rate of broadcasting remains unchanged, which means that with galloping inflation, the allocation for RTP corresponds in practice to a decrease in investment.

The SJ reinforced its concern when it noted that the State Budget only provides funds for digitalization under the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR). The SJ fears that these funds will not be enough, as they do not correspond to an improvement in the working conditions of journalists.

We believe it is essential to support the media sector after two years of the pandemic that strongly affected the sustainability of media companies with the reduction of advertising budgets and the closure of numerous outlets for newspapers and magazines. This reality has resulted in the reduction of jobs in the sector, without the government having taken a single measure to prevent it.

The media was, moreover, the only sector that in Portugal did not obtain any support measures in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The SJ regrets that this year the budget of the Lusa news agency will not be updated and that the audiovisual contribution, which funds RTP (Rádio e Televisão de Portugal), has also been frozen for the sixth consecutive year, although updating the rate would only mean a few cents more for taxpayers.

Along with the disinvestment in the Public Service, the SJ also denounces the great difficulties that most local and regional newspapers are going through, aggravated by the pandemic.

A good number of titles have suspended printing and newsstand sales and migrated to digital, and others have even closed down. In total, close to a hundred titles, which were the link between the aging populations and the interior and the news of the country and the world, have had to close their doors.

This is not only a labor problem, which has pushed many journalists into unemployment, but also a problem of access to information, which isolates even more aging populations and those less covered by the coverage of national news organizations.

The SJ considers it urgent to take supportive measures, both at the government and

local authority levels, to ensure the survival of local newspapers and radio stations. It is therefore urgent to enforce the law on institutional advertising, making it reach the regional media.

Spain case

In Spain, the public sector of the media is still in an economic, social and professional "impasse" with a great negative impact on journalists, especially for the youngest who get a job or, at least, stabilize it.

After the pandemic, precariousness and teleworking have remained definitive. Interestingly, and after the official Report on the Profession, carried out by FAPE, corresponding to the 2021 year, unemployment among journalists has decreased by 16.1%. But this figure is misleading as many who have lost their jobs sign up as self-employed freelancers, and most have seen their daily work hours increase by up to 26%.

The public televisions, notably the state-owned TVE and the 18 regional ones, have not called collective examinations for permanent jobs in the last biennium. Retirement leave is also not covered and the quality of information suffers more and more.

In addition to job insecurity and the low quality of information that this causes, there is constant criticism of the information manipulation of public television stations, which continue to be managed by local, regional or state political power. There are no guarantees of objectivity and plurality of information.

Lastly, the public state news agency EFE, after the dismantling of labor in recent years, especially with the extensive network of correspondents throughout the Spanish-speaking world, does not provide elements for improvement and has ceased to be an informative medium of reference and basic for the rest of the Spanish media.