



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Media Policy
Audiovisual and Media Services Policy

Brussels, 26 June 2018
 DG CONNECT/I.1/LO/

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for your message of 18 May 2018 registered as Ares(2018)2712409 and addressed to the President of the European Commission Mr Juncker. President Juncker has asked me to reply on his behalf.

In your message you express your concern about media freedom in Poland. You refer to the repressions experienced by one of the editors of the communist website “Władza Rad” (www.1917.net.pl) whose notebook, hard drive and cell phone was allegedly seized by the police.

We would like to assure you that media freedom and pluralism are fundamental rights enshrined in Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and constitute essential foundations of our democratic societies. Within the limits of its competences, the Commission is committed to ensure that freedom of expression is strictly respected. However, under the Treaties on which the European Union is based, the European Commission has no general powers to intervene with the Member States in the area of fundamental rights. It can only do so if an issue of European Union law is involved.

However we can, and we do act where we can, monitor, encourage and guide.

As part of its action to defend journalists and media freedom, the Commission is currently funding projects run the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom in collaboration with several partners. The projects provide practical and legal help to journalists under threat, maintain a mapping platform reporting threats to media freedom and organise training in digital self-defence for journalists.¹

For the first time, this year, a funding scheme for cross-border investigative journalists is being implemented by ECPMF and its partner IPI. The Investigative Journalism for Europe² (#IJ4EU) fund amounting to 450.000 Euro is intended to foster and strengthen collaboration among European Union-based journalists and newsrooms on revelations in the public interest and of cross-border significance.

Another important project in this field is the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) run by the European University Institute which aims at identifying and highlighting risks to media pluralism in the Member States in an independent manner. The indicators analysed include protection of freedom of expression, journalistic standards and protection of journalists.³

Moreover, on 23 April, this year, the Commission adopted a package of measures to strengthen whistleblower protection as a means to unveil unlawful activities and help enforce EU law. Whistleblowers are often valuable sources of information for journalists. Protecting whistleblowers from retaliation is therefore crucial for safeguarding the "watchdog" role of investigative journalism.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/media-freedom-projects>

² <http://www.investigativejournalismforeu.net/>

³ <http://cmpf.eui.eu/media-pluralism-monitor/mpm-2016-results/poland/>

I hope that this information is of interest to you and can assure you the Commission will continue to follow the developments in Poland, as well as in all other Member States, very closely.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Anna Herold

Head of Unit