

MEDIA FREEDOM WEBINAR

“SAFETY AND INDEPENDENCE OF JOURNALISM”

TUESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2020, 14:30-17:00 CEST

ORGANIZED BY

AUSTRIA | CANADA | UNITED KINGDOM | IPI | Office of the OSCE RFoM

*The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria,
the Embassy of Canada in Austria,
the British Embassy in Austria,
the International Press Institute (IPI), and the
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)-Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media
invite you to join this webinar*

A G E N D A

14:30-14:45

High-level Opening

Ambassador Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal

Secretary General

Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria

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United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

14:45-15:45

Panel 1: Safety of Journalists and Media Workers

Moderator: H.E. Leigh Turner, British Ambassador in Austria

Panelists

Dominik K. Cagara – OC Media

Estera Flieger - Gazeta Wyborcza

Andrey Rikhter, OSCE/Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media

Marija Vučić – KRIK

15:45-15:55
Virtual Coffee/Video Break

15:55-16:55
Panel 2: Independence of Journalism
Moderator: H.E. Heidi Hulan,
Ambassador of Canada to Austria and to the International Organizations in Vienna

Panelists
Márton Gergely – HVG weekly
Scott Griffen - IPI
Mira Milosevic – Global Forum for Media Development
Natalia Morari – TV8 Moldova

16:55-17:00
Conclusion
H.E. Heidi Hulan
Ambassador of Canada to Austria and International Organizations in Vienna

CONCEPT NOTE

- In recent weeks and months, a number of reports, studies and statements by the EU Commission have looked critically at the situation of media pluralism and freedom in Europe. Of particular note, the report “Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era” by the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom, found there has been a stagnation or deterioration in media pluralism in all 30 countries it looked at (27 EU Member States + UK, Albania and Turkey). Another, on Gender Equality and the Media, by the Council of Europe, found that although progress had been made, much still needs to be done especially in areas such as violence against women journalists, the coverage of gender equality issues, and gender inequalities in the profession itself.
- These findings reflect interventions and observations by the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) across the OSCE region as well as results of research carried out by the International Press

Institute (IPI), which looked at media freedom violations in the EU under COVID-19. Both identified serious violations of media freedom, risks to the safety of journalists and disproportionate limits on access to information, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.

- This webinar will address both physical and digital threats and attacks on journalists and media workers and the deteriorating working conditions of journalists while identifying opportunities to help reverse these trends. In some cases, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges and the parallel 'infodemic', or rapid spread of disinformation, underscores the key role of free media systems in democratic societies, and the risks to media pluralism that are associated with a state of emergency and restrictions to freedom of expression. The webinar is aimed at promoting media development and freedom of expression in line with international human rights standards and OSCE principles and commitments.
- The event will consist of a high-level opening session and two panels, one on safety of journalists and media workers and one on independence of journalism, with a regional focus on Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. The latter topic, in particular, would seek to look at the effects of COVID-19 on journalistic independence.
- The webinar will contribute to work of the Media Freedom Coalition, a partnership of currently 37 countries working together proactively to advocate for media freedom, online as well as offline, and for the safety of journalists and media workers. The Media Freedom Coalition aims to hold to account those who harm journalists or severely restrict them from doing their job, as well as support the work and initiatives of the Global Campaign for Media Freedom.
- A report on the outcomes of the webinar will be fed into the second Global Conference on Media Freedom. This virtual meeting will be co-hosted by Canada and Botswana on November 16, 2020. The first Global Conference on Media Freedom took place in London in 2019, jointly hosted by the United Kingdom and Canada.