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**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ ATSTOVYBĖ** ENGLISH only  
**PRIE TARPTAUTINIŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ VIENOJE**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA  
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA**

**Statement on the launching of an informal Group of Friends  
on Safety of Journalists within the OSCE**

*Delivered by the Lithuanian Permanent Representative Aurimas Taurantas  
on behalf of the informal Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists within the OSCE*

*Permanent Council meeting, 26 April 2018*

I would like to inform you, that last Monday, on 23 April, at the initiative of the French, Lithuanian and Swedish Delegations an informal Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists within the OSCE was established to support the Organization's work on the safety of journalists.

As part of OSCE's comprehensive acquis on freedom of expression and media freedom, participating States in Budapest in 1994 condemned all attacks on and harassment of journalists. International obligations and commitments related to the safety of journalists have continued to be critical, including those made in the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. However, multifaceted threats faced by journalists and other media actors are on the rise across the OSCE area. Some journalists lose their lives because of their work, others face judicial harassment and threats, offline as well as online, impunity for threats and violence against journalists prevail, and women journalists experience specific challenges.

The aim of the informal Safety of Journalists Group of Friends within the OSCE is to keep the topic of safety of journalists – in its broad understanding – high on the OSCE agenda by strengthening implementation of commitments and raising awareness on inter alia the state's responsibility to ensure a safe and enabling environment for journalists and other media actors to perform their work independently and without undue interference.

The group gathers 15 delegations, representing countries particularly active and engaged in the field of safety of journalists, including Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

During recent years, similar Groups of Friends on Safety of Journalists were established in the United Nations format in New York, Geneva and Paris. Now, the informal Group in Vienna will join this international setting.

We would be happy to share more information on this Group with participating States who approach us.

Lithuania Celebrates **100**