

**EFJ General Meeting (GM)
Tallinn, Estonia
9-10 May 2019**

Resolutions and declarations adopted by the General Meeting

A) On safety of journalists

1. On freelance journalists in Belarus

Tabled by BAJ, Belarus, SNJ, SNJ-CGT, CFDT-Journalistes (France)

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on May 10-11, 2019

Noting that the actual failure to recognize the existence of freelance journalists, who do not cooperate constantly with any specific media, by the Belarusian official authorities, creates a serious problem for the media workers.

The situation is particularly grave for the freelancers, who cooperate with foreign media, since they are not mentioned in the Belarusian legislation. According to the Belarusian law "[On Mass Media](#)", "a mass medium's journalist" has to be connected with a recognised established media through labor or other contractual relations. Therefore, freelance journalists are not entitled to receiving the required accreditation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Consequently, the freelance journalists are regularly oppressed for their journalistic activity without the accreditation. Since April 2014, the freelance journalists, who cooperate with foreign media, have been sentenced 247 times for violation of Article 22.9 of the Administrative Code of the Republic of Belarus to the fines. The total sum of fines has exceeded EUR 85,000. Most of fines have been imposed in the recent years. In particular, freelance journalists were charged over EUR 43,000 for their applied right to work in 2018 and over EUR 5,000 during the first quarter of 2019.

This kind of prosecution for the dissemination of information in foreign media is a gross violation of standards of freedom of expression and violation of journalists' labour rights.

Therefore, the General Meeting **instructs** the Steering Committee of the EFJ:

- to express solidarity with freelance journalists in Belarus and support the struggle of the Belarusian Association of Journalists for the equality of rights of all journalists in the exercise of their professional activities;

- to call on the Belarusian authorities to respect the freelance journalists' freedom of speech and labour rights and immediately cease pressure on the self-employed reporters, cooperating with foreign media, and in particular to abandon the practice of using article 22.9 of the Code to impose unjust fines and violate the rights of freelance journalists and imposes unjustified bans on media freedom

- to call on the institutions of the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and the European Union to pay close attention to the increasing continuous gross violations of freedom of speech in Belarus related to the activities of freelance journalists and to take steps to remedy the situation.

2. On police violence against journalists

Tabled by CFDT-Journalistes, SNJ, SNJ-CGT, France, FAPE, FeSP, SC-CC.OO, Spain

The EFJ General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists in Tallinn, Estonia on 9-10 May 2019,

Noting that in France, the demonstrations of the Yellow Vests and their coverage by journalists and media workers, although officially accredited, give rise to hostility, intimidation and violence against them. In their mission to inform, journalists face the hostility of some of the participants in this social conflict but also, the hostile attitude of the police in violation of their professional mission.

Noting that dozens of colleagues have been victims of police violence: prevented from working, insulted, assaulted, material seized and destroyed, press cards stolen; journalists were deliberately targeted by the police and wounded, some seriously, during these social demonstrations of a scale and duration never seen before; that several journalists were arrested and detained in police custody; that some injured journalists were kept on file during their hospitalization and that medical information and their identity were sent to the police services in violation of hospital ethics, which requires the patient's consent to this type of filing,

Noting that more than 80 cases have been listed and documented, dozens of complaints have been filed.

Considering that the safety of journalists covering these demonstrations is an absolute necessity, as recalled by the EFJ after having twice alerted the Council of Europe of the situation, via the Council of Europe Platform for the protection of journalism and safety of journalists.

Recalling that intimidation is on the rise in Europe and that, already, during the coverage of the Catalan referendum in October 2017, journalists from several countries who worked in Barcelona to report had been removed from the militaries by the Guardia Civil, that in June 2018 an RTBF team reporting near the closed centre for asylum seekers in Steenokkerzeel, Belgium, was the subject of an administrative arrest, that in Ventimiglia, near the border with Italy, journalists are regularly confronted with forms of intimidation by police forces,

The French unions and the EFJ, in the face of these repeated physical and professional attacks, support journalists who have filed complaints against demonstrators and security forces who have acted in total contradiction with the guarantees given by the Minister of the Interior to trade unions since the beginning of the social movement.

The General Meeting, in response to acts affecting the exercise of the profession in France and other European countries, **instructs** the Steering Committee to intensify, by all appropriate means, the awareness campaign against violence against journalists. The Member States must reaffirm their commitment to the texts governing freedom of the press and make a concrete commitment to ensure that they are respected.

3. On the protection of journalists

Tabled by DJV, Germany

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on May 10-11, 2019

Considering the lack of goodwill of most States regarding their positive obligation to guarantee the protection of journalists, the General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists in Tallinn, May 2019, **instructs** the Steering Committee of the EFJ to push the Council of Europe member states to implement, through national action plans involving journalists' unions and associations, the Council of Europe Recommendation "on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors", adopted April 13th, 2016.

Until now only the Netherlands and Sweden started to implement this important Recommendation. It is time for action in the member states of the CoE.

4. On the arrest of journalists

Tabled by NUJ Ireland

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on May 10-11, 2019,

Condemns the arrest of two Belfast-based journalists and NUJ members responsible for a documentary film that highlights collusion between the British army, RUC police and Loyalist paramilitaries in an unsolved murder investigation in Northern Ireland.

The film, *No Stone Unturned*, sheds light on six unsolved murders and a violent attack on civilians in 1994 and contains information based on a leaked Police Ombudsman report. GM believes that the ability of journalists to act in the public interest is contingent on their ability to honour commitments made to confidential sources and whistle blowers and calls for the immediate lifting of the threat of legal action against the journalists Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey following their arrest on 31st August 2018.

The two journalists have not been charged but are on police bail until September 2019. Severe bail restrictions imposed on their right to travel undermine their ability to function as journalists.

The GM notes that under international law and the European Convention of Human Rights, the highest priority must be afforded to the journalistic right to protect information and material received and published in the public interest.

The GM **instructs** the Steering Committee to seek a meeting with the OSCE representative on Freedom of the Media with a view to securing an OSCE investigation into this violation of media freedom in Northern Ireland.

5. On the murder of Martin O'Hagan

Tabled by NUJ Ireland

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on May 10-11, 2019 notes that there has been no conviction for the murder of Sunday World journalist and NUJ activist Martin O'Hagan.

Martin O'Hagan was murdered on 28th September 2001 in Lurgan, Co Armagh and his killing remains one of the unsolved cases in Northern Ireland.

This GM notes the widespread belief that the identity of his murderers, members of the so-called Red Hand Defenders, is known to the Police Service of Northern Ireland and that they are protected through their status as police informers.

The murder of Martin O'Hagan and the subsequent failure to bring his killers to justice remains a stain on the troubled history of Northern Ireland.

The GM fully supports the campaign by the National Union of Journalists for an independent, international investigation into the murder of Martin O'Hagan and the failure of the police authorities to adequately investigate the case.

The GM **instructs** the Steering Committee:

- to make a formal report to the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalism;

- to seek a meeting with the OSCE representative on Freedom of the Media with a view to securing an OSCE support for an international investigation.
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6. On Turkey

Tabled by NUJ, United Kingdom

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on May 10-11, 2019 notes with dismay the jailing last January 2019 of Ayşe Düzkan, a board member of EFJ affiliate DISK Basin and a participant at the EFJ annual meeting in Bucharest in 2017. Sentenced to 18 months in prison last year for “propagandising for a terrorist organisation”, Ayşe was grabbed while visiting the prosecutor’s office and sent to Bakırköy prison in Istanbul.

GM notes that three years after the failed coup, the trials of journalists in Turkey continue to make headlines. The Council of Europe’s 2019 Annual Report estimated that as of December 31st, 2018 of the 130 journalists detained in CoE member countries some 110 were jailed in Turkey out of the over 200 journalists arrested since the coup.

As the sweeping crackdown on media has blunted civil society and turned the country into the world’s biggest jailer of journalists, scores of media outlets have been banned or forced to find new, more compliant owners, and with fewer and fewer of independent media outlets left, more journalists face jail, fines or the sack for doing their job. While President Erdogan grabs the headlines for attacking Saudi Arabia over the murder of Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul, his own journalists continue to be under threats of censorship, dismissal or arrest.

Among the most high-profile cases last year:

- In February, eighteen staff from Cumhuriyet, including its former chief editor Can Dündar are on trial charged with "helping an armed terrorist organization without being a member" and if convicted, will face up to 15 years in prison.
- In April started the trial of 12 journalists among the “Editors-in-Chief on Watch” who showed support and solidarity for newspaper *Özgür Gündem*, which faced hundreds of investigations, dozens of trials, and judiciary fines that added up to hundreds of thousands of Turkish Liras.

The GM equally notes that most detained journalists are charged with terror related offences, whose broad definition has been reportedly denounced by the international community, including the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights who warned against “the dangers, arbitrariness and abuses of anti-terrorism laws to stifle freedom of expression in Turkey.

The GM welcomes the judgement by the European Court of Human Rights that Turkish journalists’ detention was unlawful under the right to liberty protected by Article 5 (1) of the European Convention. The ECHR endorsed the January 2018 ruling of Turkey’s

Constitutional Court in the case of journalists Mehmet Altan and Şahin Alpay that there was not sufficient evidence to keep them in detention and ordered their release.

This GM also demands the liberation of two journalists in Turkey sentenced to life imprisonment. Ahmet Altan (69) and Nazli Ilıcak (74) have been condemned without evidence for involvement in the failed coup of 2016.

While GM welcomes the statements made by various European institutions on the Turkish crackdown on journalists, they have proved ineffective in improving the press situation and forcing the authorities to drop the charges and release the journalists in jail.

As Turkey and the EU work together in a wide range of issues, GM believes that it should act now and calls on it to meet its commitment to defend fundamental rights by setting red lines and conditions before continuing its cooperation with Turkey, such as in the recent Turkey-EU high level economic dialogue.

GM reminds affiliates of the effectiveness of solidarity action focussed on individual journalists in jail as a way of bringing the actions of Turkey's government to wider attention.

This GM particularly notes that by 'adopting' jailed journalists and making them the focus of campaign work among members, it is possible to build solidarity across borders in a way that repressive governments have always found uncomfortable.

This GM **instructs** the Steering Committee to promote this approach to affiliates and to collate and share work by affiliates so resources can be pooled.

7. On Ukrainian journalists and bloggers in detention

Tabled by NUJU, Ukraine

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on May 10-11, 2019

taking into account the facts of detention and convictions of Ukrainian journalists Roman Sushchenko, Stanislav Aseyev, Oleh Halaziuk, Mykola Semena, as well as Crimean Tatar civic journalists in Crimea Server Mustafayev, Nariman Memedeminov and others;

expressing deep concern at the practice of detaining Ukrainian journalists and sentencing them to real prison terms on the territory of Russia, Crimea and the occupied part of Donbas;

considering the detention of journalists and bloggers as a direct violation of freedom of speech and people's right to objective information;

The GM **instructs** the EFJ Steering Committee and its affiliates:

- to express solidarity with Ukrainian journalists in detention;

- to remind International organizations , OSCE, UNESCO, CoE and others about urgent need to release all detained journalists;
- to push Russian authorities as well as Donetsk decision makers to release journalists and bloggers;
- to use all possible options for release of Crimean journalists Mykola Semena Crimean Tatar civic journalists Server Mustafayev, Nariman Memedeminov;
- to release Roman Sushchenko, a correspondent of the Ukrainian news agency Ukrinform, who was illegally sentenced in Russia to 12 years in prison;
- to release Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist Stanislav Aseyev and RFE/RL freelance contributor Oleh Halaziuk.

8. To stop impunity for attacks on Ukrainian journalists

Tabled by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists: The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on May 9-10, 2019,

Noting with great concern the high level of physical aggression against journalists in Ukraine; Outraged by the persecution and brutal attacks on investigative journalists, in particular, an assassination attempt was made on Vadim Komarov on May 4, 2019;

urges the Ukrainian authorities to make appropriate efforts to combat systemic impunity for attacks on journalists;

stresses the need for regular public reports of the government on the progress of investigations of crimes against journalists and supports the initiative of NUJU to hold special parliamentary hearings on the physical safety of journalists and freedom of speech.

9. On Dawit Isaak

Tabled by Swedish Union of Journalists, Danish Union of Journalists, Union of Journalists in Finland, Norwegian Union of Journalists and Union of Icelandic Journalists.

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on May 9-10 2019 notes that:

The Swedish citizen and journalist, Dawit Isaak, has been imprisoned without trial in Eritrea since September 23, 2001.

Dawit Isaak has not been allowed to meet with his family during the time in prison.

The imprisonment is a clear violation of the human rights of Dawit Isaak. The actions carried out by the government in Eritrea is an attack on freedom of expression.

GM condemns the Eritrean government for the imprisonment of Dawit Isaak and for not ensuring him his fundamental human rights.

GM calls on the Eritrean government to free Dawit Isaak and to allow him to return to Sweden to reunite with his family.

GM calls on the representatives of the Swedish government and the European Union to do their utmost in order to get Dawit Isaak free.

10. On Gui Minhai

Tabled by Swedish Union of Journalists, Danish Union of Journalists, Union of Journalists in Finland, Norwegian Union of Journalists and Union of Icelandic Journalists.

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on May 9-10 2019 notes that:

The Swedish citizen and book publisher, Gui Minhai, has been imprisoned without trial in China since October 17, 2015.

Gui Minhai has not been allowed to meet with his family during the time in prison.

The imprisonment is a clear violation of the human rights of Gui Minhai. The actions carried out by the government in China is an attack on freedom of expression.

Condemns the Chinese government for the imprisonment of Gui Minhai and for not ensuring him his fundamental human rights.

Calls on the Chinese governments to free Gui Minhai and to allow him to return to Sweden and to reunite with his family.

Instructs the Steering Committee to call on the representatives of the Swedish government and the European Union to do their utmost in order to get Gui Minhai free.

11. On the threats against Turkish journalists from Euronews, in France

Tabled by SNJ-CGT, SNJ, CFDT-Journalistes, France

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on May 9-10 2019,

Concerned about the pressure by the Turkish authorities on Turkish journalists working in France for the European channel Euronews.

Noting that some journalists working for the Turkish language service of this European television channel had their passports confiscated for two months for no apparent reason during a stay in Turkey.

Noting that others had difficulties to deal with the Turkish consulate authorities in France, without any valid reasons,

Noting that our colleagues are also threatened on social networks by media outlets close to the AKP regime,

Stressing that the families of these journalists in Turkey are also under police pressure, leading journalists to renounce travelling to their country or risk arrest,

Denounces these methods aiming at putting pressure on this newsroom and preventing any critical information against the regime, even though in Turkey media pluralism and press freedom have been virtually eradicated,

Expresses its solidarity with the Euronews colleagues.

The GM calls on Euronews' management to take measures to ensure the protection of its journalists working for the Turkish team,

Urges the EFJ Steering Committee to intervene as soon as possible to the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

B) On Media Freedom and Labour Rights

12. On the situation of Estonian media and journalism

Tabled by EAL, Estonia

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on May 9-10 2019

Expresses great concern about the rising pressure on press freedom and independent, critical journalists and journalism in Estonia.

Context: “Estonia, you are on the verge of promising future” was the worded belief in 1918, 101 years ago, when the Estonian Republic was established. Estonian journalists were the first in new state to create a professional association to defend their freedoms, work conditions and rights. This year the Estonian Association of Journalists is celebrating its Centennial in a time when journalism in Estonia and throughout Europe is facing great difficulties. As in Europe, so in Estonia two ideologies are competing – the openness and freedom of speech and press against the attempts to limit these freedoms. In smaller states

the controversy is more evident and more problematic as there is less middle ground balancing out extremes.

After regaining independence in 1991 Estonia has had good track record in press freedom – in 2018 Reporters Without Borders index Estonia places 12th. But the [EFJ-ECPMF joint mission in January 2018](#) perceived that while Estonia is high up on media freedom indexes, this in itself does not guarantee independence of journalists and quality of journalism. The mission concluded that in a small state with rapidly changing economic system to guarantee the journalistic independence and professional integrity a different approach is necessary.

Now, in Estonia there are politicians in power positions, who openly talk about closing Estonian Public Broadcaster ERR or suggested taking its content more under political control. Some politicians have made pronouncements about taking under control and punishing critical journalists and journalism. Some have even refused to communicate with Estonian oldest daily journalists, demanding to be above criticism.

Over the hundred years of the journalists' association's existence, Estonian journalists have seen such developments before. There was a so-called silent era before WWII, German and Soviet occupation time. Estonian journalists do not want this repeated neither in Estonia nor anywhere else.

Estonian society is currently deeply polarized, hence this is the time to support free and investigative journalism, and to call authorities, both local and national to protect journalists' "watch-dog role" in society.

For the EFJ, independent journalism is a pillar of democracy. The free press is a prerequisite for democracy because it puts at the disposal of citizens the elements to decide. The defence of freedom of speech and free press is critical. There is also a need for balance – on one hand political forces demanding putting a muzzle on the journalists. The other extreme is excessive political correctness and hate-speech accusations on investigative analysis. Transforming the meaning of words is as dangerous to free press and freedom of speech as the attempt from populist politicians to silence journalists.

The GM **calls** on Estonian journalists and media to continue in their critical work, as an example of democratic normality. It encourages journalists to reject all kinds of pressures that could lead to an authoritarian, populist and intolerant media content and politicisation of the public service media ERR.

Reminds the Estonian Parliament and government to accept the principles of press freedom and bear in mind, that journalism and journalists should be treated and supported accordingly alike other creative persons and to improve journalists' work conditions, including creating grants and freelance support structure. With traditional media models and journalism under pressure globally, it is high time to invest more in better journalism. Information is a public good and must not be left only to the market.

The GM expresses **solidarity with EFJ affiliate EAL** and welcomes their efforts to change the situation.

13. On the Copyright directive: support for fair and proportionate remuneration for journalists all over Europe

Tabled by SNJ, SNJ-CGT, CFDT Journalistes (France) / EAL (Estonia) / NUNS and UNS (Serbia) / FSC-CCOO, FAPE, FeSP (Spain)

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on May 9-10 2019

The European Parliament adopted on March 26th, the Copyright Directive in the Digital Single Market by 348 votes in favour and 274 against and 36 abstentions. The text was upheld by the European Council on 15 April, with 19 countries voting in favour, 6 against and 3 abstaining¹.

The new directive includes key provisions for the publishing industry and authors, including journalists receiving a share of the revenue press publications generate online using their work, the principle of appropriate and proportionate remuneration for authors, key transparency obligations and the possibility for authors to be represented by their unions. Securing these provisions is the result of a strong campaign led by authors.

Throughout the negotiations our affiliates warned against provisions in the proposals that water down authors' rights, including lump sums, buy-out contracts and other abusive measures which the text fails to tackle. They warned, in particular, against the grave risks to journalists' receiving a fair share of the revenues deriving from the new neighbouring right for press publications (Article 15) as a result of the wording of Recital 59.

The fight for the respect of journalists' rights as authors, in all European countries where these rights are not formally established, starts now.

The GM urges all European States, that haven't done so, to adopt strong laws that provide for fair and proportionate remuneration for journalists and ensure the directive will not only benefit media businesses.

EFJ and IFJ who led a strong joint campaign to secure the best possible text will give all support needed to national campaigns, advise on draft laws and demonstrate if needed, in all the countries where this will be necessary the next two years.

EFJ and IFJ will share the best practices in Europe, and will help to create or strengthen collecting societies that channel all revenues deriving from the directive and redistribute to authors their share in all transparency.

¹ Countries who voted against the directive on the European Council's meeting: Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Finland and Sweden. Countries abstaining: Belgium, Estonia and Slovenia.

To **instruct** the Steering Committee to prevent where possible situations where:

- journalists are not recognized as authors, or not recognized as right holders in case of a collective creation, as in Spain.
 - journalists are deprived of their copyrights, as in France where journalists are fighting in courts to make some B2B editors to share incomes as preview by the law.
 - That the rights of journalists as authors are not fully protected in EU candidate countries such as Serbia.
 - Journalists are not recognized as authors and their rights honored and rewarded equal to other creative authors as in Estonia.
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14. On the independence of news agencies

Tabled by NUJ United Kingdom

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on May 10-11, 2019 welcomes the action taken by the Steering Committee as instructed by motion 21 passed by the Lisbon AM to submit an alert on the platform of the Council of Europe concerning the interference by the French government in imposing a new CEO at Agence France Presse.

GM however is disappointed that no progress has been made in helping organise a group of activists from the big press agencies (in particular Reuters, AFP, DPA, EFE etc.) as proposed in the motion.

GM believes that at a time when news publishers everywhere – faced with falling advertising revenues and concerned with the profitability of their groups – are making savings by reducing their international coverage and closing correspondent positions, international agencies play a vital role in pluralism and in the provision of comprehensive high-quality news.

GM expresses grave concern about the future of international agencies and their economic models, which is coming increasingly under threat from the structural crisis in the press and from the quest by media industrialists for maximum profit. Most agencies have been experiencing wave after wave of restructurations resulting in hundreds of redundancies accompanied by the closure of whole departments.

GM supports the campaigns of its French affiliates not just to resist job losses but also the threats to the independence of the AFP and the plans by the governing body to change the agency's current status to open it to more commercial imperatives.

GM also supports the efforts of the NUJ in confronting plans by Reuters' parent company Thomson Reuters to cut its global workforce by 12 per cent, equal to 3,200 jobs, in a streamlining and cost reduction plan over the next two years. Jobs are likely to go in London and also in Reuters' dual language bureaus in Europe, including in Germany and Italy.

The GM **instructs** the Steering Committee to join the IFJ Executive Committee to appeal to UNESCO, governments and publishers to ensure that the role of agencies with independent editorial lines is safeguarded, to promote news with an international outlook.

GM believes that journalists and media workers should not be left facing this fight in isolation it also **instructs** the Steering Committee to cooperate with the IFJ in setting an international group where they can exchange information and most importantly organise joint campaigns in defence of jobs, pay and conditions and of the editorial independence of their newsrooms.

15. On Radio Radicale in Italy

Tabled by FNSI, Italy

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on May 9-10 2019,

expresses solidarity with its Italian affiliate FNSI in its struggle against cuts of financial supports to local and small newspapers and Radio Radicale, decided by Italian government. Freedom and pluralism of press is essential to democracy and to defend the right of all people to be informed. The cuts of financial supports will produce a loss of employment for journalists and other workers and reduction of information.

EFJ General Meeting supports FNSI activities including:

- a great public meeting will take place on 14th May in Rome
 - appeals to Italian government and parliament to reverse their decisions against journalists and freedom of press.
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16. On the protection of confidential sources in France

Tabled by SNJ-CGT, SNJ, CFDT-Journalistes, France

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Tallinn from 9 to 10 May, 2019,

Notes that France has just filed a complaint against three French journalists who have revealed the existence of a document classified as "confidential defence" concerning the sale of French weapons and their use in the context of the conflict in Yemen.

Notes that the complaint emanating from the Ministry of Defence concerns the website 'Disclose' and the Radio France investigation unit behind these revelations.

Notes that journalists Mathias Destal, Geoffroy Livolsi of Disclose and Benoît Collombat of Radio-France are summoned on 14 and 15 May by the DGSJ (General Directorate for Internal Security). For publishing this "confidential defence note", they are charged with "misdemeanour" and may be sentenced to imprisonment.

Notes that this complaint constitutes a direct attack on the protection of journalists' sources, despite the fact that it is guaranteed by the [Recommendation of the Protection of Sources by the the Council of Europe](#) and the French law of 4 January 2010, incorporated into the 1881 law on freedom of the press.

Notes that the implicit purpose of this procedure is to silence journalists and prevent public reaction to potential involvement of Paris in crimes against the people of Yemen.

calls:

- To vote on a motion condemning the French government, which through this complaint seeks to know the sources of journalists.

- To support the journalists implicated in the investigation process.

The GM calls for a joint IFJ/EFJ statement to demand the cessation of these proceedings.

At a time when World Press Freedom Day has just been commemorated, the GM solemnly calls on the French Head of State Emmanuel Macron and his government to respect press freedom and the protection of sources, without which there can be no democracy.

c) Other

17. On Sevgul Uludag's nomination for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize

Tabled by Basin Sen and UCJ, Cyprus

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists, meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on May 9 2019,

Explicitly welcomes the nomination of the investigative journalist Sevgul Uludag, member of Union of Cyprus Journalists and Basin Sen, both affiliated members of EFJ, for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. Sevgul Uludag, has been nominated for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize to the Norwegian Nobel Committee by Anna Agathangelou, Associate Professor of Political Science at York University in Canada. The nomination has been put forward in recognition of her very valuable work on missing persons, as well as of the use of her journalistic skills for the solution of problems of our communities in democratic ways and creating mutual understanding among our two communities on this sensitive issue. Her efforts and active struggle for peace and reconciliation in Cyprus for almost half a century has also been honoured with this nomination.

Born in Nicosia, Cyprus in 1958, Sevgul Uludag has been working as an active investigative journalist for the past 39 years and she has devoted her past 18 years of life in journalism focusing on the sensitive issue of missing persons, trying to locate their possible burial sites, investigating and writing their painful and tragic stories, mobilising her readers from both communities for them to show possible burial sites and helping them to contribute voluntarily and in a humanitarian way on this sensitive humanitarian problem. For the past 13 years Sevgul Uludag has formed voluntarily a “Hot Line” with her mobile phones for her readers from both communities. Through this “Hot Line” her readers can call her anonymously to give information. Some of this information are published in Turkish on her daily column “Cyprus: The Untold Stories” on Yeniduzen newspaper and in Greek on her weekly column “Underground Notes” on Politis newspapers, while several others are passed on to the Cyprus Missing Persons’ Committee, thus breaking many years of guilty silence and opening the way of humanitarian cooperation for our communities. Both herself and the two newspapers got serious threats many times.

She also has worked together with the relatives of missing persons from both communities, to set up a bi-communal association of relatives of missing persons and victims of war, called “Together We Can”.

For her work and tireless efforts Sevgul Uludag has received various international awards, like “International Courage in Journalism Award” in 2008, “European Parliament Citizen of Europe Prize”, “Press Freedom Award of RSF” and has been honoured by civil society from both communities for her work.

Considering the honour given to journalist Sevgul Uludag as an honour for all European journalists, the General Meeting **asks** the Steering Committee to fully support her nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Declarations / Statements

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on 9-10 May, 2019, with 51 affiliated organisations from 35 European countries adopted the following statements.

A. On journalists' situation in Romania

Tabled by MediaSind FAIR, Romania

The European Federation of Journalists supports the efforts of the affiliated member in Romania, the Federation of Culture and Media FAIR-MediaSind for:

- Unlocking social dialogue in the media, maintaining the current Culture and Mass Media sector, negotiating a collective labor agreement for all employees and freelancers of this sector.
- Emergency amendment of the Law on the organization and functioning of the Romanian Broadcasting Corporation and the Romanian Television Corporation in the sense of restoring the status of public institutions, and not state owned ones, as well as for the depoliticization of the top management of these institutions.
- Rejecting amendments to the Penal Code that restrict the freedom of speech.
- Granting tax breaks for the media industry identical to those in the European Union, as well as measures to protect freelancers.

- Urgent dismissal of the current President - Director General of the Romanian Television Corporation, investigating and sanctioning the abuses against the employees of this institution and unblocking the social dialogue.

B. On the importance of balanced and impartial reporting during election campaigns in Poland

Tabled by Society of Journalists and SDRP, Poland

Unfortunately our representatives have been unable to attend this EFJ meeting in Tallinn. However we hope our statement will help you to understand the situation in Poland ahead the European Parliament election and may have a wider significance for EFJ member unions in other EU states.

It is often repeated that an independent media aware of its duty to accurately inform citizens and hold officials to account is an essential condition of a vibrant democracy. This sentiment was enshrined in Poland's legislation establishing our public service media after 1989 and this legal commitment to fair reporting continues to be a legal requirement in our country. Our law also tasks the National Council for Radio and Television (KRRiT), the electronic media regulator, to monitor the media situation to ensure that Poles are served in a fair way their public service media.

Last autumn the local government elections in Poland saw a major bias in the news reporting of the campaign by the main public service television news towards Law and Justice (PiS), our governing party.

Mindful of this experience Poland's State Election Committee (Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza – PKW) which is responsible for the conduct of elections in Poland wrote on February 11 2019 to the KRRiT asking the Council to 'initiate actions which would ensure that the participants in the elections would be treated fairly in the media and especially in the public service media'. Such actions, the PKW went on to explain, could include monitoring of the election campaign in the media by the KRRiT.

The KRRiT replied on March 11, 2019 to say it would be unable to monitor the campaign for lack of funds, no available experts in Poland and a lack of time to choose monitors. The KRRiT failed to mention that in the past it had monitored elections campaigns and that financial documents in the public domain showed that it had ample funds to undertake such monitoring.

This correspondence shows that Polish voters cannot rely on state institutions such as the KRRiT to enforce rules on the conduct of media during elections. Indeed as long as Poland's public service media fail to provide unbiased reporting, the electoral process remains fundamentally flawed. In a word the politicians, who will be elected to the European Parliament this summer from Poland, will have been elected in a contest which will be free but will not be fair.

The public service media reach a far greater number of homes than do the commercial media which are more even handed in their coverage of the election.

Meanwhile the EU takes the position that the conduct of elections in member states is a national competence and that even the election of the European Parliament, which is a transnational body, is left entirely to the member states. Thus the EP has no oversight as to how its members are elected and, as the Polish example, shows procedures governing the role of the media in the campaign can be ignored and deputies can be returned whose election was not fair.

The media freedom index issued each year by Reporters without Frontiers (RSF) shows that there are a number of EU member states whose media freedom record is poor. In Hungary, for example a great majority of the media are controlled by Fidesz, the ruling party. This suggests that more MEPs than just those from Poland could on May 26 be elected from countries where bias plagues the public service and other media and undermines the quality of the members elected to the EP. Indeed, if media standards in some EU member states continue to decline then national elections which not only chose national governments who then send representatives to the European Council will also result in poor representatives taking key decisions on behalf of all of us.

We should start talking about EU wide monitoring of media behaviour in EU elections. We should consider how EU institutions can take a greater interest in the way our national institutions such as media regulators fulfill their legal obligations to ensure that the democratic system works well.

C. On Striving Free Media and Free Internet in Russia

Tabled by the EFJ Steering Committee

April 12 State Duma accepted new law on «safe Russian Internet, what would cost Russian citizens more than 30 billion rubles (150 000 000 USD). This law was third among recent legal initiatives that impose restrictions on Internet. On 18 March 2019, President Vladimir Putin signed into law two controversial bills after they were approved earlier in the month by the State Duma and Federation Council, the Russian Parliament's lower and upper chambers. The first law criminalizes the publication of online materials deemed to display 'blatant disrespect' of the state, official symbols, society, the Constitution and public bodies, with fines of up to 300,000 roubles (approximately 4,600 USD) and up to 15 days of administrative arrest. According to the second law, the dissemination of 'fake news' through the media or online can result in fines of up to 1.5 million roubles (approximately 23,300 USD). But more importantly, both laws allow authorities to block access to Internet website immediately via procedure of extra-judicial blocking, without a prior court order, which will result in shrinking the critical discussions online and silence critical voices. Roskomnadzor, the government agency tasked with overseeing online content and mass media, will be the one implementing blocking access to pages or even the entire website.

With the adoption of new laws criminalizing 'insult' to the state and the dissemination of 'fake news', as well as plans to increase government control of the Internet, the Russian authorities are imposing further, excessive restrictions on freedom of expression and undermining media freedom

Russia's own Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, as well as scores of other national human rights groups, had called on Parliament to reject the bills. Over 100 prominent journalists, writers, editors and publishers – signed a statement condemning the bills as establishing and demanding to stop a gross abuse of bureaucratic power, the cynical suppression of the constitutional rights of citizens of the Russian Federation and new forms of censorship.

Calls on Russian authorities to provide free work of journalists and free media in the country.

D. On Russian- Ukrainian professional organizations discussions

Tabled by the EFJ Steering Committee

Taking into account number of detained and prosecuted journalists and bloggers in Russia, Ukraine, including Crimea, Donbas, because of conflict and because of circumstances associated with the conflict;

Remembering importance of Dialogue of Ukrainian and Russian professional organizations "Two Countries, One Profession" (2014-2018) what helped to rescue 8 lives and helped to resolve many problems;

Believing in journalism as public good what could overcome hate, propaganda and use of journalists as soldiers;

The General Meeting notes the need to:

- initiate new stage of Russian- Ukrainian professional organizations dialogue;
- put into top agenda efforts to overcome and prevent militarization of information space and to build solidarity between professional organizations from all Europe.