

EFJ General Meeting (EGM) Verviers, 13-15 May, 2013

Statements

Statement for Cyprus

Proposed by the Steering Committee

The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) expresses its deep concern about the situation in Cyprus, which is the fifth European country, after Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain, suffering from austerity policies imposed by the International Monetary Bank, the European Central Bank and the European Commission because such cuts affect the Media sector in a catastrophic way.

In the case of Cyprus, the policies went further than in the other countries implementing a unique experiment and a “shock therapy”, destroying in one night the basis of the economy. No time was given for a gradually correction of the economy.

The use of deposits for the re-capitalization of the banks has hit the fundamental social right for a decent pension-provident system. Nearly 1 million euro from the Provident Fund of the Journalists, members of the Union of Cyprus Journalists, that was deposited with the two big local banks, is levied up to 27,5 per cent.

Even before the agreement for the bail-out is signed, workers at some news outlets did not receive their thirteenth salary in December. Meanwhile, all journalists suffered a reduction of their salaries and other benefits of up to 60/70 per cent.

Some media already had to close, while the threat is looming even the big media outlets to be closed down.

In the last months almost 100 journalists lost their job, while the worst scenario for unemployment still lies ahead. This number accounts for around 20-25 per cent of the whole membership in the UCJ.

The EFJ is deeply concerned as the “model” imposed on Cyprus might be repeated in other countries as the European Commission is preparing legislation including this kind of bail-in.

The EFJ strongly believes that the austerity policies and the experiments against people are failed: unemployment, poverty and new recession of the economy continue with a great negative impact on social rights of the workers, among them journalists and especially on the dreams of the young generation.

On the other hand, journalists and media have a great role and responsibility to play as the watchdog of the society and for the public good in this hostile for people environment. Democracy is at stake. Pluralism is at stake.

The right of the public opinion for pluralistic and objective information is at stake. Social rights and benefits that are gained after rivers of blood and revolutions through the centuries are at stake.

EFJ GM delegates send message of support for Dimitris Trimis

Delegates representing over 320 000 journalists in 29 countries at the General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) held in Verviers, Belgium, on 13th May condemn TV stations media employers' (EITHSEE) for their court action against JUADN President Dimitris Trimis.

Delegates believe that the trial tomorrow in Athens initiated by Mr Panos Kyriakopoulos, head of private "STAR Channel TV" and President of Private National Broadcasting TV Stations (EITHSEE), is vindictive and designed to intimidate media workers from taking action to defend their jobs and future.

Delegates further believe that this attack against the unions and the JUADN President for holding a strike on May 1st is part of legal action and law suits against media people pursued by media owners aimed at criminalising trade union activities and manipulate public opinion news information.

Delegates give their full support to Dimitris Trimis and pledge to alert all their unions throughout Europe to build the strongest campaign against any jail sentence or any other decision of the court to punish Dimitris or any other union colleagues in similar situations.

About the state of public broadcasting in Israel

Proposed by the National Federation of Israeli Journalists

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Verviers, Belgium on 13-15 May 2013,

expresses its concern about the state of the public broadcast service in Israel in view of the planned budget cuts and layoffs and infringement of workers rights.

calls for strengthening of public broadcast service in Israel.

Support to Charles Enderlin

Proposed by SNJ-CGT, France

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Verviers, Belgium on 13-15 May 2013,

supports Charles Enderlin, France Télévisions' reporter and permanent correspondent to the Middle East, who is being subjected to violent attacks by an Israeli website for the production of a report on the Gaza Strip, on 30 September 2000, showing the death of Palestinian boy Mohammed Al Dura in his father's arms.

It is 13 years since this lobby carried out trials, harassment and threats against Charles Enderlin, considered a professional journalist above all suspicion, accusing him of manipulation.

The site JSS News has launched a petition to "temporarily remove the press card of Charles Enderlin, as a precaution, until the exhaustion of legal recourse and acquitting if it is necessary. Consider the suspicion of serious professional misconduct against Charles Enderlin and Talal Hassan Abu Rahma and prohibit them from all journalistic activities in Israel or from Israel, until the last possible legal recourse. "

This petition is outrageous and deserves only contempt. Charles Enderlin is a professional journalist who, as JS News wishes, knows the region, its realities and problems. This is what bothers them: in every story he carries, the France 2 journalist brings an angle that reflects neither the Israeli cause, nor the Palestinian cause.

the EFJ

calls on the Israeli government to distance itself from the initiators of the petition; it would constitute a serious violation of human rights, freedom of expression and information. This would prevent our colleague from continuing to work.

appeals to both the direction of France Télévisions and the French government to condemn such practices and to put an end to the shameful attacks against a journalist doing his job honestly.

Missing journalists in Syria

Proposed by FNSI, Italy

The General Meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), meeting in Verviers, Belgium on 13-15 May 2013,

Expressed its deep concern over the fate of Domenico Quirino, missing in Syria for 45 days. The case of this Italian journalist is not isolated, since two American journalists are also missing and a Ukrainian one, and these concerns cover all media professionals operating in Syria. According to Amnesty International, 36 media workers have been killed in Syria since the beginning of the conflict.

Domenico Quirino is not a man of parties or clans; he is just a journalist who wants to do his work. This is why his colleagues want to have news from him.