

**SC candidate 2019: Sergiy Tomilenko**  
***Candidate as member of the Steering Committee***



Sergiy Tomilenko, Ukraine  
National Union of Journalists of Ukraine  
(NUJU)

**CV**

Born in Cherkasy, Ukraine, in 1976, I've studied Mathematics, then Journalism. Having worked as a journalist and an editor-in-chief, since 1998, in regional newspapers and news agencies. Since 2006, I was first elected as the head of the regional branch of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine (later I was re-elected twice). Since 2012 I am the first deputy of the President of the NUJU. After the Revolution in Ukraine in 2014 – acting as the President NUJU.

**2017 –** Elected **President of NUJU** – the largest journalist's association of Ukraine.

**2014 – 2018** Coordinator of Dialogue of Journalists' Organizations of Ukraine and Russia, which was implemented under the auspices of the OSCE Representatives on Media Freedom Dunja Mijatovic and Harlem Desire (supported by IFJ and EFJ).

**2014 - present** Curator of international projects in Ukraine on physical safety of journalists, the fight against impunity in cooperation with OSCE, IFJ, EFJ, UNESCO, UN.

**2013 - present** Member of the *Journalistic Ethics Commission*, National Self-Regulating Body

**CANDIDATE STATEMENT**

EFJ is a modern, unique international journalist institution. The Federation is a powerful voice for our united European journalistic community, a lobbyist for journalistic rights and freedoms. At the same time, the EFJ network allows for the exchange of experience between national Unions and integrates successful colleagues' decisions. Current digital times are a great challenge for our profession, for traditional media and journalistic unions. Similarly, the growth in Europe of politicians (and not just the far-right) that show hostility towards journalists is also a threat.

The election to the Steering Committee of a member from Eastern Europe will allow EFJ to show the urgently needed solidarity with colleagues from new democracies or countries that emerged from the post-Soviet era.

**Freedom of Expression**

Modern politicians are ready to encroach on the classic professional rights of journalists. The reason is the need to respond to threats to national security. At the same time, the deterioration of freedom of speech entails restrictions on democracy, the disappearance of critical voices, promotes authoritarianism.

EFJ and journalistic unions should actively engage in dialogue with governments about the current threats of controlled disinformation, but at the same time, we need to toughly defend freedom of speech. It is worthwhile for politicians to debate the protection of freedom of speech and the rights of journalists, the importance of combating impunity. And at the same time politicians should take public commitments to protect freedom of speech (such a campaign is being conducted by the NUJU, in particular during the presidential election candidates signed a special Document - a Declaration on the Defense of Freedom of Speech, which provides for the refusal to divide journalists, from hostility against the media, etc.). Often new politicians are sterile, and it will depend on the enthusiasm of the journalistic community whether the level of political culture of government officials will include points on the protection of freedom of speech. And will they understand the importance of freedom of speech for a stable democratic government ...

### **Safety. Fight impunity**

Physical aggression against journalists, murders, impunity are front lines for EFJ. In Ukraine, for example, we record an unacceptably high level of physical attacks on journalists - our monitoring The Index of physical safety every year contains over 80 such cases. This aggression takes place against the backdrop of systemic impunity. We should combine efforts to obtain precedents for a significant punishment for attacks on journalists. And information about such precedents should be widely covered in order to stop new attacks. It is important to share information about effective examples of punishing the attackers in different countries - to show that there is no time limit for punishment for the murder of a journalist, for brutal aggression! The EFJ actively uses existing mechanisms to enhance the safety of journalists - the Platform of Council of Europe, OSCE Representative on Media Freedom, UN. At the same time, it is worth discussing how to increase their efficiency ...

### **Build bridges between affiliates**

The uniqueness of the EFJ is the unification of worthy national unions that are leaders in protecting the rights of journalists in their countries. It is important to establish an exchange of experience between the associations of the leading democratic European countries and the unions of Eastern Europe. At the same time, I am sure that such an exchange may be not only in the direction of studying the approaches of organizations of "old Europe" only.

The processes taking place in Ukraine, the Baltics, Belarus and neighboring countries are interesting, in particular, in the fight against external information threats. At the same time, it is important to understand the realities that exist in Europe - this is solidarity with the journalists-victims of the war in the East of Ukraine. For example, solidarity helped to release journalists from jail, and gives hope to release all of them. To release all journalists detained during conflict in Eastern Ukraine, it was result of Dialogue of Ukrainian and Russian professional organizations, supported by Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, helped to do that.

### **New challenges. Digitalization and Young Journalists**

Each national union cannot remain as it is, as we are all accustomed to our traditional structures and organizations ... New technologies, social networks on the one hand threaten the stable existence of traditional media. On the other hand, the incredible number of journalists is increasing. It is worth looking for options and protecting the rights of journalists from existing media and recruiting journalists from new media. At the same time, young journalists must recognize the value of corporate solidarity ...

Supporting me as a candidate for a Steering Committee is, above all, solidarity with thousands of Ukrainian journalists who are sincere in their struggle for freedom of speech, for their rights and democracy in Ukraine.