

## **SC candidate 2022: Candidate as President**

**Maja Sever**

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### **Candidate Statement**

Judging by the global events that are taking place in the last two years, we are facing an uncertain and dangerous period. On the one hand, the climate is changing and threatening our survival and our planet, while at the same time wars are raging and European countries are arming themselves.

The position of journalists in these circumstances is more important than ever, but also highly vulnerable and insecure. The role of journalism in today's world is limited by economic and political factors, and one of the biggest problems is the insecurity we face. That insecurity, namely the work and personal one, reflects the wider social reality but also demonstrates the overall situation in the media sector. Relentlessly emphasising that journalism is a public good and a vital link to any democracy, I sincerely believe we can and must fight to preserve professional journalism and improve the journalistic position in society. This is the main motive of my candidacy.

### **Workers' rights**

As a trade unionist, I believe we must start by ensuring a secure existence of journalists, and protection of workers' rights in the harsh conditions of the labor market; namely through collective bargaining, education, and support for our members. There are fewer and fewer of our colleagues with secure contracts, while at the same time more and more freelancers and atypical working relationships with precarious working conditions. Our task is to protect them all equally.

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## **Gender equality**

I will continue to fight for gender equality, equal pay for equal work, and reducing the gender pay gap. In addition, I want an equal representation of women in all media segments - as journalists, editors, interlocutors, authors, and especially in all editorial and managerial positions.

## **Security of journalists**

I consider it a high priority to continue our collaboration with organizations working on the safety of journalists, in particular, to stop the attacks and murders of investigative journalists. Attacks on journalists are on the rise; this was especially evident during the pandemic. One of the models for solving this problem that I propose is direct cooperation with branches and competent institutions to better protect journalists - without delay and with clear legislative outcomes. It is also important to continue the concrete cooperation with the IFJ and our work on establishing safe centers and channels for providing financial, material, and professional assistance to colleagues in Ukraine, but also Belarus, Russia, and wherever necessary.

It is very important to continue with concrete assistance to colleagues under attack from SLAPP lawsuits and to remain active at the EU level in the process of adopting the EU directive on SLAPP lawsuits. The EU Recommendation on the safety of journalists adopted last year and very good (thanks to great lobbying efforts of our staff:-) need to be implemented at the national level and we need all of you to remind our governments of this "duty"!!

## **Cooperation**

A stronger connection of branches and cooperation in all fields is important in the daily struggle for journalistic rights. The opportunity to consult or seek help from colleagues who have experience, knowledge, or good practice has helped me with my personal and professional development. I believe it is necessary to use the possibility of fast connection, strengthen the relations between the north and the south and improve our communication channels. We are stronger together! Working in groups like LAREG is important and should be strengthened but also more closely linked to the Steering Committee.

## **Project cooperation**

I have heard from colleagues that they sometimes call me "Maja Project" because I am constantly looking for new partners, new projects, and strengthening the network for project cooperation. I believe that this is our future. For this reason, I had additional

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training as an EU project manager and I believe EFJ can further help members in this field.

## **European policies**

The work of the EFJ so far has left a visible mark in all public debates on media policies at the European level, and I plan to continue on the same path and encourage good coordination with other organisations and strengthen our influence. Journalists across Europe have the knowledge, skills, and courage and they do not hesitate in speaking out. We need to encourage and nurture that.

## **European Media Freedom Act**

The upcoming Media Freedom Act, maybe the most important legal toolbox for the EU in matters of media freedom, independence of public service media, transparency of ownership, has to be developed in cooperation with our affiliates at the national level! I believe we have to continue to be vocal on this, and many other, legislative documents and ensure that EFJ keeps its seat at the decision-making table. Our role is to protect journalists whose work builds a strong European democracy.

## **EU Digital Services Act**

I believe that the EU Digital Services Act marks a good foundation for a safer, fairer, and more accountable online environment. The EFJ and journalists should continue to engage intensively in building a sustainable digital media ecosystem, and our role in the fight against disinformation is particularly significant while guaranteeing freedom of expression and media freedom.

## **Journalism as a public interest**

I believe that journalism is an undeniable public interest and it is necessary to ensure stable conditions for financing independent journalism and preserving the public service media (television, radio, and digital media); namely through the legislative and political system. This is not a fight only for the journalistic profession; this is a fight for accurate and reliable information available to every citizen and a fight for democracy. And here trust on all levels is paramount.

And finally, I'm a journalist. I still work in the field. So, I know what challenges a journalist faces in today's media world. Precarious work, insecure jobs, contracts, new tools, the need to master new skills, robotic journalism, artificial intelligence, social media, new business models...

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Every journalist needs our support. My vision is to gather journalists through all our branches, talk to them, understand what they are struggling with, offer help and education, share experiences, strengthen the network of cooperation, and actively support journalists and journalism. To be with them every day, available and ready to help.

EFJ has shown clear and courageous perspectives in the past, facing many risks and problems but persistently defending journalism and all that characterises us.

In times when reliable journalism is facing many trials, my goal is to work with people, bring them together and create an environment that is safe, solidary, fair, and courageous.

Because journalism has no alternative – the struggle continues.

## CV

### Skills

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Journalist – politics and society

Trade Union – journalist organization & collective bargaining

EU projects – consultant

Moderator of many conferences and humanitarian events

### Work experience

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HRT

(08/1995-)

Journalist – As a political reporter, reports live on the most important political events. Participated in major public television projects, such as monitoring parliamentary and presidential elections.

Editor (Hrvatska uživo) afternoon news magazine.

Senior Journalist

Member of the Croatian radio television Program Council from 2015-19.

SNH President of Trade Union of Croatian Journalist

(05/2019-) Vice-Chair of the Labour Rights Expert Group (LAREG) of the EFJ of an expert group for labor rights of the European Federation of Journalists.

Journalist of the Year by the professional journalist's association. Winner of the Pride of Croatia award for humanitarian work

Fierce women award for significant contribution to gender equality and social justice in Croatia.

## **Education**

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High School 1999. Faculty of political sciences, Journalism Master, University of Zagreb

2020. School for European projects Zagreb,  
- program for the Head of preparation and implementation of EU projects

## **Bio**

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I was an intern at Croatian television when war broke out and I spent four years as a war reporter. Later, I graduated and became a political reporter, over time I became editor of Hrvatska uživo (daily magazine) and got more focused on social problems. I have been fighting for 20+ years for professional and independent public service in Croatia.

I became president of Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ) in 2019 and became very active in EFJ activities, focused on journalist's workers rights, but also improvement of local media in Southeast Europe and the fight for journalistic profession; a fight for accurate and reliable information available to every citizen, a fight for democracy.