

## SC candidate 2022



### Candidate as Steering Committee Member

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

### CANDIDATE STATEMENT

First of all, I thank the European Federation of Journalists for supporting Ukrainian journalists who are in a difficult situation due to the active war. I thank all my colleagues from the Steering Committee and the EFJ for the opportunity to work with real professionals.

For the fourth month, Ukraine has been heroically beating Russia's military aggression. As a representative of Ukraine, I am ready to strengthen the fight against Russian propaganda in the media. This applies to both fake Russian media and cases of "Russian narratives" appearing in reputable European media. We have relevant experience in NUJU, but our capabilities are not enough. I am confident that the European audience will only benefit when the EFJ systematically exposes the dirty methods of Russian propaganda that systematically mislead readers.

Strengthening links between European media and European journalists' organizations. We are strong: when united. Today, as never before, journalists and media organizations must unite around common values - strengthening freedom of speech, strict compliance to journalistic standards, and solidarity with colleagues. Strong horizontal connections and joint European programs will help make our federation stronger.

- Given the current challenges of our time, one of the first priorities of my work will be to **support journalists and mediaworkers** who affected by the war in Ukraine.

Journalism in Ukraine now faces unprecedented challenges. Targeted attacks by the occupiers, restriction of access to information, restriction of communication channels. In addition, the complete collapse of the advertising market and lack of finance.

Russia's war in Ukraine has already claimed the lives of 32 journalists and media workers. These are Ukrainians and foreigners who came to Ukraine to tell the world the truth about the war, the crimes of the Russians and the exploits of ordinary people. The world must not forget the journalists who gave their lives in the line of duty. We need to help their families, create a program to honor their memory. That colleagues and new generations of journalists knew about their sacrifice. Murderers cannot go unpunished - they must receive the appropriate legal punishment. NUJU is cooperating with the Ukrainian law enforcement agencies to properly document and investigate the murder of journalists during the war in Ukraine. I am ready to expand this cooperation at the European level. If justice fails to reach the killers, at least impose sanctions on them.

At the same time, the world community is uniting to help fight and rebuild Ukraine. The media industry should not be left out. Over the years, we have all been convinced that journalistic solidarity is a very important mechanism.

At the same time, do not forget about the long-term areas of work:

➤ **Safety. Fight impunity**

Our Union is actively working to end impunity for crimes against journalists and increase physical safety. Thanks to the help of EFJ and international partners, we have managed to achieve some improvements in this area. The attention of law enforcement agencies is drawn to the importance of this issue. The Deputy Interior Minister was appointed personally responsible for overseeing crimes against journalists. The efficiency and speed of recording and investigating crimes has improved many times over. Now, it will be necessary to continue working with the judiciary.

➤ **Freedom of Expression**

It is very important to maintain freedom of expression. Even in difficult conditions. Now, in Ukraine, there are indeed certain restrictions that have been caused by the needs of wartime. However, some lawmakers are further trying to pass bills that threaten media freedom under the guise of military needs.

➤ **Strengthening cooperation between Eastern European journalists**

It is necessary to strengthen communication and cooperation between the unions of journalists of Eastern Europe (Lithuania, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Belarus (BAJO, Moldova, Romania) within our Federation. Including the development and implementation of joint projects.

➤ **Economic sustainability / resources for the stable functioning of professional journalism**

The media industry across Europe is not experiencing the best of times. Reducing advertising budgets, raising the price of media production, reducing the demand of the population for paid subscriptions - all this leaves an imprint on our industry. An important task is to preserve the industry and ensure its development. By joint efforts within the Federation, we will be able to develop qualified ways to address this issue. In this regard, the experience of the Ukrainian media sphere, which has been successfully fighting crises for many years, will be very useful.

➤ **Fight against "information tubers"**

The digitalization of the media has created new challenges. Recipients of information live in personal "information tubers" and tend not to trust new information that throws them off balance. Confirmation bias gives rise to a distorted view of the real world. Media literacy alone cannot overcome this problem. We need to develop a program and combine the best European experience so that digitalization opens the world to people, not closes them in their own.

**Strengthening links between European media and European journalists' organizations. We are strong: when united.**

**Журналісти важливі! Or in English – Journalists are important!**

Born in Cherkasy, Ukraine, in 1976. Having worked as a journalist and an editor-in-chief, since 1998, in regional newspapers and news agencies. In May 2012, was appointed as the First Secretary of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine. Since 2013 - Member of the Public Council at the State Committee for Television and Radio of Ukraine and Permanent Representative of the NUJU on the Journalist Ethics Commission. Since March 2014, have performed the duties of the President of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine. On April 20, 2017 was elected as the President of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine. In November 2019 joined the Council on Freedom of Speech and Protection of Journalists under the President of Ukraine. Since 2019, I am a member of the EFJ Steering Committee.