

OSCE Mission to Belgrade
Council of Europe Office in Belgrade
Office of the European Union in Belgrade
SEEMO Vienna
Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia
Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia
The Government of the Republic of Serbia – the Prime Minister
The President of the Republic of Serbia

Dear Sirs,

Serbia is a country where journalists are killed, but the assassins and their bosses are still at large, whereas some reporters are under 24/7 police protection. While the President, the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Speaker, all the ministers and the parliamentary majority keep repeating that Serbia is on the European track and that it aspires to joining the EU, the competent courts believe that there is nothing threatening about journalists receiving messages telling them they will „fare like Curuvija“.

April and May saw an increased number of threats and intimidation against reporters and journalists of local media, which are not adequately dealt with by the judiciary. Local authorities are also putting pressure on the media, placing journalists in an unsustainable position. The examples are many: Vranjske, Cacanske novine, Becejski mozaik, TV Forum, TV Jedinstvo, Pirotске novine, Radio Novi Becej...

We hereby remind that, when the Amendments to the Law on Public Information were passed, journalists were told and promised by the Justice Ministry, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Special Prosecutor's Office and the Trade Court that the courts would apply the practice and standards of European courts and European law.

Local print and electronic media and journalists of local media, as well as members of professional organizations, have expressed their public support to Serbia's EU related policies and efforts. However, they have warned against controversial court decisions, where holders of public office are provided with greater protection than ordinary citizens against threats made by local officials and statements that are harmful for the local media business reputation and are not conducive to European integration.

Professional organizations "Lokal pres", NUNS, NDNV and ANEM are calling upon the Ministry of Justice and other competent judiciary and administrative authorities to prove their intentions and keep their promise about the application of European practice and standards in legal proceedings against journalists and media and publicly exclaim what they will do to protect the constitutional rights and legal security of journalists and the media.