



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
TO UNESCO**

Ref.: U-8.4-118

6 June 2019

Dear Mr. Chakchouk,

In response to your letter CI/FEM/FOE/fr/2019/38 dated 3rd April 2019, I have the pleasure to enclose herewith the submissions of the Bulgarian Government concerning the request for updated information on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.

I would like to draw your attention to the conclusion of the respective authorities regarding the killing of journalist Victoria Marinova on 6th October 2018 that the murder was committed for sexual purposes, without reference to the victim's occupation as a journalist.

The Bulgarian Party express its consent to post the submitted information on the dedicated website.

Please accept, Mr. La Rue, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Encl: as stated

With my warm regards,

Anguel TCHOLAKOV

Ambassador, Permanent Delegate

Mr Moez Chakchouk
Assistant Director-General
for Communication and Information
UNESCO

Model Table assisting responses by Member States

Section 1: Table

Current List of Journalists Killed (as condemned by the UNESCO Director-General) and Legal Investigations (as reported by UNESCO Member States)

Date: To be sent to UNESCO before 30 May 2019

Name of journalist	Gender	Date of alleged murder	Investigating Authority	Case Number	Current Status	Verdict	Additional remarks
Victoria Marinova	Female	06.10.2018	Regional Prosecutor's Office in Rousse		<p>➤ The murder of Victoria Marinova, committed in an extremely cruel and painful for the victim manner, on October 6, 2018, shocked the Bulgarian citizens and was strongly condemned by the official Bulgarian authorities and the whole community;</p> <p>➤ The same day, the Prime Minister made a statement expressing confidence that the perpetrator of the murder will be revealed, captured</p>	<p>Date of verdict: 22.04.2019</p> <p>Name of alleged perpetrator: Severin Krasimirov</p> <p>Sentenced to: 30 years imprisonment with an initial strict prison regime</p>	The evidence gathered in the case, the investigative actions and the confessions made by the criminal demonstrate indisputably that the murder was committed for sexual purposes, without reference to the victim's occupation as a journalist.

					<p>quickly and handed over to the judicial authorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Permanent Representations of the Republic of Bulgaria to the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the EU provided timely information on the case as well as on the actions taken by the authorities; ➤ Given the gravity of the crime, it was investigated as a matter of priority, with a thorough investigation, including consideration of all possible versions; ➤ On October 10, 2018, four days after the murder of Victoria Marinova, the alleged perpetrator was detained in Germany. The request for his 		<p>The timely actions taken by the Bulgarian authorities to investigate the case and detain the perpetrator testify to the serious attitude of the State towards its commitments to protect and guarantee human rights, the main one of which is the right of life.</p>
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					<p>extradition was granted by the German court and the person was surrendered to the Bulgarian authorities on the eleventh day after the offense (17 October 2018);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based on the investigative actions and the collected evidences, Victoria Marinova died as a result of strangulation and multiple strokes on the head. The victim has been subjected to sexual violence. The murder was committed in an extremely cruel and harrowing way for the victim; ➤ In the course of the investigation, it was found that the perpetrator did not know the victim, the murder is a result of 		
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					<p>a tragic accident, it was committed on sexual grounds and in a state of high alcohol consumption;</p> <p>➤ The pre-trial proceeding № 3486/2018, initiated by the Regional Prosecutor's Office in Rouse, ended on March 18, 2019, with the issuance of an indictment submitted for consideration by the Regional Court in Rouse. The first hearing was held on 22 April 2019. The court ruled on a sentence of 30 years imprisonment with an initial strict prison regime. The verdict may be appealed before a higher court.</p>		
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Section 2: Positive or Innovative Measures the Member State is taking to promote safety of journalists and combat impunity

Activity	Actors	Outcome(s)
<p>Government activity</p> <p>Civil society activity</p>	<p>Government officials, civil society and media actors</p>	<p>The Republic of Bulgaria, as a state party to the main UN human rights conventions, the CoE, OSCE and EU instruments, has committed itself to respect and apply the highest standards of protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of media and the security of journalists.</p> <p>All media in Bulgaria, whether public or commercial, are bound to be guided by the fundamental principles of a pluralistic media environment, guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression, the right to information, the confidentiality of the source of information, the protection of the privacy of citizens, the prevention of programs inciting intolerance between citizens, and guaranteeing the right of reply in the programs.</p> <p>On May 16, 2018 a Press Freedom Conference was held in Sofia – organized by the Union of Publishers in Bulgaria in association with EMMA/ENPA, European Federation of Journalists, in partnership with Reporters Without Borders, ECPMF, Union of Bulgarian Journalists, Association of European Journalists - Sofia.</p> <p>The conference “Media freedom and pluralism: How to reboot an essential EU pillar” focused on media policy in the EU, issues related to press freedom in individual EU countries and more generally on sustainability of the independent press. Representatives from the publishing sector, EU stakeholders and decision-makers gathered in Sofia during the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU to discuss press freedom in a call to prioritize media freedom and plurality in the EU in the forthcoming years. The Conference adopted Sofia Declaration for the Media Freedom in Europe.</p>

Section 3: Steps the Member State has taken to consider the specific risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their work

Bulgaria considers as a high priority the topic of the safety of journalists and specifically female journalists, and in this context supports further deliberations within the OSCE on how to address more effectively these challenges. As an EU Member State, we uphold the highest standards in this field.

State officials may declare the position of the Republic of Bulgaria regarding instances of threats and violence against journalists and other media actors, during their participation in the work of international human rights organs and organisations. The instances of serious violence against journalists are rare.

Additionally, the Republic of Bulgaria regularly sends information, reactions and statements to the instances of threats or violence against journalists, reported via the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists.

In recent years, we have a fruitful dialogue with the OSCE Representative on the freedom of media and benefit from his expertise in promoting the need for stronger protection and safety of journalists. Even if such cases are seldom in Bulgaria, the competent authorities react swiftly in each case of a violent crime. Bulgarian authorities will continue to approach with due seriousness any case of violation against journalists.

Bulgaria shares the objectives of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and fully supports the leading role of UNESCO in strengthening its implementation.

Section 4: Agreement to post the submitted information on UNESCO's dedicated webpage

We agree to have the information posted on UNESCO's dedicated webpage.