

**Recommendations of the international conference on the safety of
journalists
Warsaw, 23 -24 April 2013 on
How to improve the safety of journalists**

From 23 to 24 April 2013 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland in cooperation with the Embassy of Switzerland as well as the Embassy of Austria in Warsaw organized an international conference on the safety of journalists. Amongst the participants were state representatives, representatives of OSCE, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, journalists as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations. The discussions led to the following recommendations to improve the safety of journalists:

- 1.) Governments at the national, regional and local levels should fulfill their duty to **ensure the protection of human rights of everyone**, without distinction of any kind. They should **promote freedom of expression** as a cornerstone of democratic societies and recognize the key role of journalists therein.
- 2.) International institutions and governments should condemn attacks against journalists and violations of their rights. International institutions and governments should **call on all relevant actors to comply with existing standards** on the protection of journalists.
- 3.) Governments at the national, regional and local levels, international organizations, civil society and media organizations should **foster dialogue and co-operation** in order to ensure the protection of the freedom of expression and information and in particular the safety of journalists. In this context, the international cooperation of ombudsman institutions and national human rights institutions plays an important role and should be encouraged.

- 4.) Authorities should **provide conditions for a safe media environment** to enable journalists to perform their work independently and without any interference by, among others, strengthening the national legal frameworks in this regard and by implementing this framework. They should **publicly contest attempts to silence critical voices** and **raise awareness** on the crucial role of journalists and the media for societies based on the rule of law.
- 5.) Authorities should ensure the necessary **protection of journalists and their families**. All cases of violence against journalists should be investigated and the perpetrators of crimes against journalists must be brought to justice. Every effort has to be made to **end the impunity of perpetrators**. Therefore law enforcement bodies and the judiciary should be trained to be in the position to effectively and promptly investigate violations of the freedom of the media and to conduct the respective proceedings.
- 6.) The protection of journalists should **cover all news providers**, both professional and non-professional as well as journalistic sources and it should not only extend to times of conflict, but also to times of peace. Further consideration should be given to the issue of definition of a **journalist**.
- 7.) Further efforts should be made to **improve the existing monitoring mechanisms**, encourage their close cooperation and to develop a specific international monitoring mechanism for the safety of journalists. Better cooperation and coordination among various international, regional and local actors, including in an effective **early warning mechanisms**, should be ensured.
- 8.) Governments should ensure full **cooperation with existing human rights protection mechanisms**, in particular with Special Rapporteurs and Representatives, who play a crucial role in promoting freedom of expression as well as with UNESCO which has a leading role within the UN system in this regard. The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the UN Special Rapporteur on

extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions should be encouraged to continue addressing the issue of the safety of journalists in their work.

- 9.) **Governments need to work towards improved access to the internet, particularly in the developing world.** Developed countries should continue to support these efforts. Measures to expand internet access, openness and resilience to address censorship or mass surveillance by communication technology should be promoted.
- 10.) The national legal frameworks on the freedom of expression online and offline should be strengthened. **Internet regulatory solutions**, reflecting international standards, should be introduced in an open and transparent manner and cover human rights aspects. Internet security should not in any way hamper or adversely affect the realization of the freedom of expression.
- 11.) **Special training on all aspects of safety**, including on how to obtain assistance nationally and internationally, should be provided for journalists and supported by media organizations and enterprises. The international community should assist in this process where necessary.