

To:

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Mr. Noel Curran
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Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić
Secretary General of the Council of Europe
via Mr. Daniel Holtgen, Director of Communications and Spokesperson for the Secretary General,
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Ms. Inge Welbergen
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Mr. Qu Xing, Deputy Director-General Assistant, Director-General for Communication and Information ad interim, UNESCO
via Ms. Christine Delsol, Executive Assistant, c.delsol@unesco.org
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Statement on Belarus by the Media Council of Lithuania

Dear Ms. Ernotte Cunci, Mr. Dvořák, Mr. Curran, Ms. Pejčinović Burić, Ms. Welbergen, Mr. Qu, dear members of the EBU Executive Board and colleagues,

We, the Media Council to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, which consists of media professionals and representatives of journalists' associations and training institutions, see it as vitally important to share with you our deepest concern over the unceasing crackdown on independent media and journalists in Belarus, which reached its peak with the detention of an opposition activist and blogger Raman Pratasevich by the Belarusian authorities during the unprecedented forced landing of a civilian plane heading to Lithuania.

The attack clearly demonstrates the importance of the role of the opposition, or in terms of the media, the importance of another opinion that real democracies must not only respect but also protect as a prerequisite for media pluralism.

We strongly support and welcome the steps already taken by the international media and media freedom defending organisations in demanding the authorities of Belarus to immediately stop attacks on local and foreign journalists and release the detained journalists.

We are calling on organisations to contribute to the international efforts to support threatened individuals and prevent the regime's ability to perpetrate terror against the people and media in Belarus and outside its territory by all possible practical means. For our part, we and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania are ready to help Belarusian journalists facing persecution of the regime.

We are also calling on suspending the membership of Belteleradio company, which has a proven track record of involvement in the violations of human and civil rights in Belarus and providing information support for repressions against journalists and other people, including the recent coverage of the detention of Raman Pratasevich, from the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), and prevent misusing the membership of the EBU for the political ends of the regime.

The proposed actions have to be applied until there are proven evidences demonstrating that the Belarusian authorities comply with their international human rights obligations to refrain from interfering with freedom of the press, to foster an open and safe working environment for journalists.

Sincerely,

Members of the Media Council

Ernest Alesin, the Association of Lithuanian Minority Languages Media

Rimantas Bagdzevičius, the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission

Džina Donauskaitė, the Lithuanian Journalism Centre

Šarūnas Frolenko, the Lithuanian Radio and Television Association

Monika Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė, the Lithuanian National Radio and Television

Kristina Juraitė, Vytautas Magnus university, Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy,
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Neringa Jurčiukonytė, National Institute for Social Integration, Media4Change program

Audrius Kepežinskas, the Lithuanian Regional Radio Stations' Association

Arnas Marcinkus, the Association of Internet Media

Jolanta Mažylė, the Commission of Ethics in the Provision of Information to the Public

Rasytė Navickienė, the National Association of Regional and City Newspapers' Publishers

Audronė Nugaraitė, the Lithuanian Journalists' Union

Donatas Puslys, Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis, Media program

Gražina Ramanauskaitė, the Inspector of Journalist Ethics

Česlovas Rulevičius, the Association of Regional Television

Gintaras Songaila, Media Support Foundation

Ineta Stravinskaitė-Janavičienė, the Association "National press"

Andrius Šuminas, Vilnius university, Faculty of Communication, Department of Digital Cultures
and Communication

Donatas Valančiauskas, the Society of Lithuanian Journalists

Vaiva Žukienė, the Lithuanian Cable Television Association