

Madrid/Brussels, 13 March 2018

Dear Member of the European Parliament

In advance of tomorrow's parliamentary debate on the killing of Slovak investigative journalist Jan Kuciak, please find below a statement signed by 61 civil society organisations from across Europe and elsewhere expressing their concern about the fact that his investigation may have been exposed after he submitted request for information, and calling on the European Union to take action to help protect journalists and all those who exercise their fundamental right of access to information.

More details can be found in this story by the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project: <https://www.occrp.org/en/amurderedjournalistslastinvestigation/freedom-of-information-law-reporters-best-friend-or-killer>

Statement by journalism, media freedom, right to information, human rights and other organisations

In light of the shocking news that Jan Kuciak was likely killed as a result of his work as an investigative journalist and whose freedom of information requests may have been passed to the subject of his inquiry, we the undersigned, are calling on the EU for immediate action to safeguard journalists exercising the right of access to information.

With the second killing of a journalist in Europe in less than six months it is evident that urgent action must be taken to ensure the protection of civil society exercising fundamental rights.

The right of access to information is an essential tool for fighting corruption, for investigating violations of human rights, and for protecting the rule of law.

We condemn any actions by public authorities that puts in danger those who exercise this right.

We have identified numerous instances from across Europe of public authorities passing on the names of journalists and other information requesters to third parties. The absence of specific laws and policies that proscribe and sanction such breaches is a matter of grave concern. The identity of requesters should only ever be revealed where there is a clearly justified overriding public interest in doing so.

We the undersigned organisations therefore call for on the European Union take urgent action to ensure strong protections for the safety and integrity of journalists and all those who exercise the right of access to information.

Specifically, we call for actions that will guarantee:

» An environment in which the right of access to information can be exercised without fear;

» A strengthening of the legal framework across European countries, including specific measures that ensure that the identity of the requesters is safeguarded.

Statement signed by:

Access Info Europe

Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)

Transparency International EU

Centre for Law and Democracy, Canada

European Federation of Journalists/Fédération européenne des journalistes, Belgium

Association of European Journalists (AEJ)

mySociety, United Kingdom

N-ost, Germany

Tax Justice Network

Access to Information Programme, Bulgaria

Associated Whistleblowing Press / Fíltrala, Spain

Association for protection of human rights and citizens' freedom "HOMO", Croatia

APADOR-CH, Romania

Autonomia Foundation, Poland

Befallers of Montenegro, Montenegro

Center for Civic Education, Montenegro

Center for Democracy and Rule of Law (CEDEM), Ukraine

Center for Development of NGOs, Montenegro

Center for Investigative Journalism, Montenegro

Citizen Network Watchdog Poland, Poland

Civic Alliance, Montenegro

Civil Network OPORA, Ukraine

Coalizione Italiana Diritti e Libertà Civili (CILD), Italy

Croatian Journalists' Association, Croatia

Danes je nov dan, Slovenia

Diritto Di Sapere (DDS), Italy

ePanstwo Foundation, Poland

Forum Informationsfreiheit, Austria

Foundation Open Society, Macedonia

Freedom of Information Center, Armenia

Fundación Ciudadana Civio, Spain

GONG, Croatia

Green Home, Montenegro

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland

Human Rights House Zagreb, Croatia

Human Rights Platform, Ukraine

Human Rights Action, Montenegro

Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, Hungary

Iraqi Journalists Rights Defense Association (IJRDA), Iraq

Integrity Watch Afghanistan, Afghanistan

International School for Transparency, South Africa,
Institute Alternative, Montenegro
Institute of Mass Information, Ukraine
Journalists' Club "Asparez", Armenia
K-Monitor, Hungary
MANS, Montenegro
Mertek Media Monitor, Hungary
Montenegrin-Slovak Friendship Association, Montenegro
National Federation of Polish NGOs, Poland
Open Data Lab Ukraine
Open Knowledge, Germany
Our Action, Montenegro
Panoptikon, Poland
Plataforma en Defensa de la Libertad de Información (PDLI), Spain
Regional Press Development Institute, Ukraine
Regionalne Centrum Wspierania Inicjatyw Pozarządowych, Poland
Reporters Foundation, Poland
The Slovene Association of Journalists, Slovenia
Union of Professional Journalists, Montenegro
Women's Rights Center, Montenegro
Zbigniew Holda Association, Poland