

His Excellency Charles Michel
President of the European Council

Her Excellency Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

His Excellency David Maria Sassoli
President of the European Parliament

June 30 2021

Your Excellencies,

On the eve of the assumption of the Republic of Slovenia of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union we are pleased to share with you a report produced by the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR), a consortium of media freedom and freedom of expression organisations, following our recent mission to Slovenia.

The report: [Press Freedom Deteriorating in Slovenia under Latest Janša Government](#) details how the current government is overseeing an increasingly systematic effort to undermine critical media by reshaping the media landscape in favour of a pro-government narrative.

The front line of this campaign is an aggressive attempt to seize greater control of the country's public service broadcaster (RTV SLO) and Slovenian Press Agency (STA).

The declaration earlier this week of an offer to resolve the dispute with STA and release the funds that the agency has been starved of since January comes with heavy conditions that will grant significant new powers to the Government Communication Office (UKOM) to monitor the financial administration of the agency, a responsibility that was previously held by STA's supervisory board.

Prime Minister Janša, backed by politicians from his Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), is also responsible for stoking the toxicity of public debate and the smearing of leading critical journalists as part of a programme of intimidation and delegitimization of critical journalism attempting to hold the government to account.

Since assuming office in March 2020, the SDS has used its position to redirect public funds towards its partisan media which is further propped up by heavy investments from media

linked to Fidesz in Hungary, where the practice of state-led capture of the media has been refined over the past decade.

On behalf of the Media Freedom Rapid Response we ask you to raise these issues with the Slovenian Government, to take measures that can effectively counter the assault on media pluralism that we are witnessing in Slovenia, Hungary and Poland and to ensure that the Presidency is not abused to further erode media freedom.

Signed

International Press Institute

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT)

Free Press Unlimited

European Federation of Journalists

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The [Media Freedom Rapid Response](#) (MFRR) tracks, monitors and responds to violations of press and media freedom in EU Member States and Candidate Countries. This project provides legal and practical support, public advocacy and information to protect journalists and media workers. The MFRR is organised by a consortium led by the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) with ARTICLE 19, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), Free Press Unlimited (FPU), the Institute for Applied Informatics at the University of Leipzig (InfAI), International Press Institute (IPI) and CCI/Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT). The project is co-funded by the European Commission.

 MEDIA FREEDOM
RAPID RESPONSE

