

Joint statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioners Jourová and Gabriel one year after the assassination of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia

Today marks one year since the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia. Today, we honour the hard work and relentlessness of Daphne, of Jan Kuciak and many other journalists who sacrifice everything they have – sometimes even their lives – to seek the truth. It is also an occasion, for Europe, to pause for a moment and think about what we hold dear: our right to speak freely.

The Commission stands firm on the protection of free speech and free media. Democracy cannot survive if journalists are no longer able to report freely, if they are subject to censorship, if they are prevented from reporting criticism of the powers that be and especially if they are intimidated, harassed, threatened and sometimes even killed just for doing their job. There is a job democracy relies and depends upon.

In this vein we must also consider whistleblowers, often sources of investigative journalism, who need protection as well. They rely on us to provide for their safety, we cannot let them down.

We don't want these murders to have a chilling effect on free media. Citizens should be able to form their own opinions based on unhampered investigation and independent reporting.

That is why the persons responsible for these assassinations must be brought to justice. We want the full truth. We need to send a clear signal to all journalists: it is safe to work in Europe. If journalists are silenced, so is democracy. This will not happen in Europe. Not on our watch.