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Working Group for Chapter 24: Justice, Freedom, Security

Cooperation Police–Media–Civil Society: Freedom of Speech and Public Security in the Process of European Integration

10 June 2026, 11:00 – 12:30

The Chapter 24 – Justice, Freedom and Security Working Group, organised by the European Movement in Albania (EMA) in cooperation with the **Albanian State Police** under the framework of the National Convention on European Integration on **10 June 2026**, focused on cooperation between the State Police and the media. This area represents an important intersection between human rights standards and the requirements of public security, the maintenance of public order, and the protection of journalists in the exercise of their profession. European practice has adopted various approaches to improving relations between the police and the media, particularly during demonstrations and other public events. Drawing on these practices, the following recommendations are proposed for consideration:

1. An important element is ensuring a clear distinction between the role of the police and that of journalists during protests and public assemblies. Journalists should be treated in accordance with specific standards that recognize their role in informing the public and guarantee their safety while reporting in the field. In this context, they should not be considered part of the crowd or among the actors participating in the protest, but should be able to carry out their duties independently and safely.
2. In practice, a number of issues arise that require greater institutional clarity. For example, in cases where incidents affecting journalists occur during protests, such as damage to professional equipment, interference with live broadcasts, or damage to media vehicles while reporting, it is important to establish whether such cases have been addressed through administrative or criminal procedures and whether the relevant proceedings have been concluded. Where processes remain incomplete, there is a need for clear complaint and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that every case is followed through and does not remain without an institutional response.

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3. Other issues requiring attention include the management of live broadcasting vehicles during protests and public assemblies, as well as their positioning in safe areas in order to avoid exposing journalists and technical crews to unnecessary risks or placing them in areas of heightened tension. Equally important is ensuring that security measures do not become obstacles to the free exercise of journalistic activities and independent reporting in the field. In this regard, strengthening journalist protection mechanisms and institutional response procedures is essential.

4. In this context, preventive measures should be taken before demonstrations and public events take place. This requires mutual information-sharing, continuous communication, and coordination between the State Police, journalists, and media organizations in order to ensure free and safe reporting on the ground.

5. Beyond ensuring the protection of journalists during protests and public assemblies, including the establishment of protective perimeters to prevent their exposure to risks and attacks from various groups, there is also a need to strengthen institutional capacities for addressing threats originating from online platforms. In this regard, it is important to assess whether existing State Police guidelines or protocols adequately address journalists' safety both in the field and in the digital environment. The lack of sufficient attention to journalists' digital security represents a gap that requires further institutional intervention.

6. Police officers engaged in public order operations should receive practical training on identifying journalists, respecting their role during demonstrations, communicating appropriately with media representatives, and applying European standards in real operational situations. Training should also include practical exercises and simulations, involving journalists whenever possible.

7. At the same time, journalists themselves need continuous training on their rights and responsibilities while reporting from demonstrations and public events, procedures for interaction with law enforcement structures, risk assessment, and physical and digital security measures. The development of joint training sessions involving both police and media representatives would contribute to improving cooperation in the field. In this regard, Germany has invested in specialized training programs focused on the safety of journalists reporting from high-risk events.

8. The establishment and functioning of public communication mechanisms within the State Police, through the appointment of a Coordinator for the Right to

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Information and spokespersons within Regional Police Directorates, is welcomed. However, the recommendations above highlight the need for permanent liaison mechanisms between the police and the media. Such a mechanism, involving the State Police, the prosecution service, journalists' associations, and media organizations, would create regular spaces for dialogue and cooperation before specific incidents occur. Similar structures already operate successfully in several European countries and have contributed to strengthening institutional trust and improving operational effectiveness. In this regard, Sweden has developed its own dialogue model, emphasizing communication before, during, and after demonstrations. The Netherlands has established PersVeilig, a comprehensive partnership bringing together journalists, the police, and the prosecution service to support reporting, case follow-up, and assistance for journalists facing threats. Meanwhile, France, Croatia, and Ireland have also designated liaison officers, reporting mechanisms, and structured communication channels between authorities and the media.

9. The 2027 local elections represent an important opportunity to test in practice the effectiveness of journalist protection mechanisms under real operational conditions. For this reason, preparations should begin at an early stage, with particular attention given to areas outside Tirana, where local and regional journalists often have fewer opportunities to interact with central institutions. The pre-election period could be used to organize information sessions throughout the country, promote State Police contact points, distribute practical materials on journalists' rights and existing protection mechanisms, and conduct joint simulation exercises involving the police, prosecution service, and media representatives. At the same time, it is important to develop clear evaluation indicators that will enable the monitoring and measurement of the effectiveness of these mechanisms throughout the entire electoral period.