

# Commission Recommends Measures to Improve Journalists' Safety



## News

Thomas Wahl

On 16 September 2021, the Commission [presented a recommendation](#) that sets out guidance for Member States to take effective, appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists. The [Recommendation \(C\(2021\) 6650 final\)](#) is designed to complement other EU actions that support media freedom and pluralism. Several actions were already announced in the European Democracy Action Plan in December 2020 (→ [euCRIM 4/2020, 258-259](#)).

In order to ensure and safeguard an enabling environment for journalists and other media professionals, the Recommendation covers a series of issues pertaining to different key aspects of it. This includes horizontal recommendations regarding effective and impartial prosecution of criminal acts, dialogue and cooperation with law enforcement authorities, rapid response mechanisms, support services, training, access to information and venues, as well as economic and social protection. Moreover, the Recommendation includes specific recommendations related to protests and demonstrations, online safety and digital empowerment, as well as the situation of female journalists, those belonging to minority groups or reporting on equality. Regarding the debate on EU action against strategic lawsuits against journalists and other persons with watchdog function (→ [euCRIM 2/2021, 102](#)), the Commission announced an upcoming legislative initiative for media freedom, in which SLAPPs should be banned.

The Commission will further support the Member States in the implementation of the Recommendation (e.g. by EU funding) and it will monitor the progress achieved. Member States must report in 18 months on the measures and actions taken to put the Recommendation into practice. Analyses of the safety of journalist will continue to be part of the annual Commission's rule-of-law report (→ separate news item).

UPDATE: On 4 October 2021, the European Commission started a [public consultation](#) on the protection of journalists and rights defenders against abusive litigation (SLAPPs). With this consultation, the Commission would like to know from the public which legislative and non-legislative measures against SLAPP claims are considered useful. For example, the Commission is considering raising awareness among legal professionals about SLAPPs and introducing civil procedural safeguards against this type of abusive litigation (e.g. early dismissal of claims or accelerated proceedings). Feedback is possible until 10 January 2022.

The issue of SLAPP was also discussed at the [JHA Council meeting on 7 October 2021](#). Justice Ministers shared national experience and good practices in fighting SLAPP and talked about the cross-border dimension of this phenomenon.

### AUTHOR

**Thomas Wahl**

Senior Researcher  
Max Planck Institute for the  
Study of Crime, Security and  
Law

---

ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://euCRIM.eu>

---



## About eucrim

eucrim is the leading journal which regularly informs about current developments in European criminal and “criministrative” law.

All news items are freely accessible at: <https://eucrim.eu/news/>

Stay informed by emailing to [eucrim-subscribe@csl.mpg.de](mailto:eucrim-subscribe@csl.mpg.de) to receive alerts for new releases of issues.

The project is co-financed by the [Union Anti-Fraud Programme \(UAFP\)](#), managed by the [European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#).



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**