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Tragic death of investigative journalist shows urgent need to end opacity and protect sources and whistleblowers

The tragic car bomb explosion that killed the Maltese investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia on Monday 16 October is a shocking reminder that we cannot be complacent in Europe about the urgent need to ensure media freedom and the protection of journalists and their sources.

Daphne Caruana Galizia was the first person to report on Maltese minister Konrad Mizzi's and Prime Minister Joseph Muscat's chief of staff Keith Schembri's connections to the Panama Papers. **Molly Scott Cato**, Greens /EFA MEP and shadow rapporteur for PANA committee reports emphasised today that: *"The work done by Ms. Caruana Galizia and her colleagues on the Panama Papers has been crucial for uncovering the murky reality of corruption in Malta. It was thanks to these journalists that the European Parliament was able to secure an EU-wide inquiry into tax avoidance and financial secrecy."*

As Greens, we think that the European Parliament owes it to journalists to ensure that they are able to report freely and safely, and that their sources - including whistleblowers - are protected. MEPs must be ambitious when it comes to issues such as tax evasion, whistleblower protection and media freedom.

The **European Parliament's *Committee* of Inquiry into Money Laundering, Tax Avoidance and Tax Evasion (*PANA*)** delegation met with Ms Caruana Galizia in February this year during its inquiry mission to Malta. Tomorrow, the committee will be voting on amendments to the final report, in which the need to protect journalists is specifically mentioned. The committee members will also hold one minute of silence in honour of Ms. Caruana Galizia, also as a way of saying thank you.

On the issue of **whistleblower protection**, the European Parliament's legal affairs committee recently adopted an ambitious report on the protection of whistleblowers, though the final version of the report is still due to be voted on by the full plenary on 24th October. At committee level the political majority was in favour of strong protection, however, the EPP group abstained on several key issues. We urge our colleagues in the other political groups to take this violent attack seriously by ensuring that the final report on whistleblowers is not watered down by those who would like to make it more difficult for whistleblowers who report to the press, or whistleblowers who wish to remain anonymous, to be properly protected.

The upcoming fund for investigative journalists: Because we believe it is fundamental that journalists be able to do their work without editorial, commercial, or personal pressures or attacks, we managed to get the European Commission to launch a new pilot project which would provide funding for cross-border investigative journalism. As of next year, a total of €500,000 should therefore become accessible in the

form of grants for cross-border projects. We will be sure to keep an eye on the Commission to make sure this promise is fulfilled!

What can you do to help?

1. To show your solidarity with journalists and to demand press freedom, we created a special profile picture for use on social media which you can also include in your facebook profile picture.



Keith Taylor protect journalists

2. Journalists in Malta are planning a silent March on Saturday evening at 6pm in Valletta. If you live in Malta, join them.
3. If not, you can still spread the word and show your support by using the hashtag #ProtectJournalists NOW!
4. And you can support the excellent cross-border investigations done by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists by donating to them here https://www.icij.org/

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