

Malta: Government inaction on media reforms

International press freedom and journalist organizations are today calling on the Maltese authorities to make long-overdue media reforms an immediate priority, and to commit to meaningful and transparent collaboration with national and international civil society.

The assassination of investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in 2017 generated significant pressure to improve working conditions for all journalists in Malta.

A 2021 [public inquiry](#), established independently to assess the circumstances of her murder found the state had to “shoulder responsibility” because it had created an “atmosphere of impunity” and failed to take reasonable steps to protect her.

The authorities have not since provided political backing for the implementation of the public inquiry recommendations, or for meaningful media reforms.

On 15 October 2025, our organizations submitted a proposal to Malta, as part of [national consultations](#) led by the Maltese authorities. The joint [submission](#) proposed that Malta set up a National Action Plan on Media Freedom and Journalist Safety, and provided a broad set of recommendations aimed at building an enabling environment for all journalists in Malta.

After national consultations concluded on 31 October 2025, the Maltese authorities provided no clarification on what the planned next steps would be, despite repeated requests for information from our groups.

On 16 April, six months after our submission, the Maltese authorities stated that they were examining the recommendations and that next steps would only be identified after this assessment. Such continued delays cause concern for our organizations.

European Union monitoring

In its [2025 Rule of Law report](#), the European Commission found that Malta had made “no progress in adopting legislative and other safeguards to improve the working environment of journalists and limited progress on access to official documents, taking into account European standards on the protection of journalists and on access to official documents”.

Our organizations therefore call on the European Commission to critically assess Malta’s inaction on media reforms, and to consider our recommendations as benchmarks for the next Rule of Law report on Malta, including those required under the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA).

While the government issued a [legal notice](#) shortly after EMFA entered into full force in August 2025, which outlined its intent to align Maltese laws with the regulation - including on media

ownership transparency, state advertising, and public service media governance - little concrete progress has been made and the status of these reforms is unclear. If implemented in their current form, these changes would only represent a partial implementation of EMFA.

In addition to the recent transposition of the [EU anti-SLAPP Directive](#), the authorities in Malta should also undertake further legislative reforms to meet the standards set by the Council of Europe anti-SLAPP [Recommendation](#) and extend judicial protection to domestic SLAPPs cases, as well as cross-border cases.

We also call on the Council of Europe and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to offer their full support and expertise for the planning and implementation of future reforms.

Eight and a half years after the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia, Malta must create an enabling environment that meets international standards for all working journalists in the country. Our organizations continue to express our willingness and support to the Maltese authorities to make successful media reforms a reality.

Committee to Protect Journalists
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)
European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
International Press Institute (IPI)