

EU should heed call of "One Million for Press Freedom" in Hungary, says IFJ

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY: The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the European group of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) supported the massive protest which took place on Sunday in Budapest as part of ongoing campaign waged by journalists and civil society groups for media pluralism in Hungary.



"When media and journalists are put in a difficult situation, it is essential that journalists are supported by civil society groups. We are happy that demonstrations in Hungary also saw the need for free and democratic information" said EFJ president Arne König.

This year's commemoration of the anti-Soviet uprising in Hungary held on 23 October 1956 was marked by a rally at which nearly 100 000 people demonstrated against the Hungarian government's policies in Budapest under the banner "You don't like the system?"

Some 50 000 symbolic "press cards" were given away to the demonstrators to make them raise their voice and to underline the importance of a free press for a democratic society. Demonstrators also denounced the current policies that chip away at social and working conditions, including for journalists and media workers as was observed by an EFJ mission to the country on 4 October.

Heed the call for press freedom in Hungary

The rally was organised by the "One Million for the Freedom of Press" Facebook group and other civil organisations.

The EFJ calls on the EU leaders, including the EU Commission president, Jose Manuel Barroso, the EU Commissioners and MEPs with responsibility for good governance to heed this call, to revise their so far timid position and adopt an unequivocal stand regarding press freedom in Hungary. The Federation also reiterates its call for the creation of a proper and independent media freedom monitoring body by the European Union.

The EFJ stresses that press freedom and media pluralism are explicitly included in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights but accused the European Union of failing to take any proactive step to enforce them or agree to sanctions against countries that do not respect them.

An international mission of professional organisations and civil society groups will go to Hungary on 14-16 November to assess the situation and make specific recommendations.

Source: International Federation of Journalists

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>