



EUROPEAN UNION
Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe

Weekly Media Report of developments related to the Council of Europe **18 - 22 January 2016**

The Weekly Media Report gives an overview of recent news in international media. Please note that the Report does not constitute a formal communication, does not represent the official position of the Delegation and does not commit the European Union in any way.

Ce rapport donne un aperçu de nouvelles récentes dans les médias internationaux. Ce rapport n'est pas une communication formelle, ne représente pas la position officielle de la Délégation et n'engage en aucun cas l'Union Européenne.

Poland's new media law

[Polish president defends country's legal changes](#)

18/01 – The Irish Times / Ireland

Andrzej Duda appeals to EU to 'calm down'. Polish president Andrzej Duda has defended his country's recent changes to media and constitutional law, appealing to the European Union to "calm down" over legislative changes introduced by the government. "I can assure you nothing exceptional is happening in Poland," said Mr Duda following a meeting with former Polish prime minister and European Council president Donald Tusk at the European Council headquarters in Brussels. "This is what happens after a change in government. There is no conflict about it. There is no divergence in opinion about our position in the EU – these are internal conflicts and I am convinced that we will find understanding with our partners." Poland's Law and Justice Party, which was elected with an overall majority in October's general election, has provoked widespread criticism from the international community, including the human rights body the Council of Europe, over new laws which may curb judicial and media freedom.



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[Poland defends controversial measures in EU letter](#)

21/01 – EUObserver / International

Poland's government has defended its changes to the constitutional tribunal and media law in a letter sent Tuesday (19 January) in response to the EU Commission's inquiry launched last week. The tone of the letter signed by Poland's justice minister, Zbigniew Ziobro, to EU Commission vice president Frans Timmermans is more conciliatory than previous letters by the minister, which have accused the Dutch commissioner of left-wing bias and "astonishing" lack of knowledge. There are no accusations that the EU Commission is trying to exert pressure on Poland in this letter, possibly signalling a shift in Poland's strategy for dealing with the commission's probe into its rule of law practices.

European Court of Human Rights

[La Turquie condamnée par la CEDH pour avoir cherché à identifier les sources de journalistes](#)

19/01 – Le Parisien / France

La Cour européenne des droits de l'homme (CEDH) a condamné mardi la Turquie pour avoir violé la liberté d'expression en cherchant à identifier les sources de journalistes d'un magazine d'opposition, qui avaient révélé des pratiques des forces armées. La CEDH a estimé que l'interférence dans le travail de ces journalistes n'était "pas nécessaire dans une société démocratique" et était de nature à "dissuader toutes les sources potentielles d'aider la presse à informer le public sur des questions d'intérêt général, y compris celles concernant les forces armées". Les juges ont condamné Ankara à verser au titre du dommage moral subi des sommes allant de 500 à 2.750 euros aux six journalistes qui avaient saisi la Cour, en novembre 2007.

[European human rights court rules mass surveillance illegal](#)

20/01/2016 - The Register / International

Decision may kill off UK government spying law. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has ruled that mass surveillance is illegal, in a little-noticed case in Hungary. In a judgment last week, the court ruled that the Hungarian government had violated article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the right to privacy) due to its failure to include "sufficiently precise, effective and comprehensive" measures that would limit surveillance to only people it suspected of crimes. Under a section of the 2011 National Security Act, a minister of the government is able to approve a police request to search people's houses, mail, phones and laptops if they are seeking to protect national security.



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Human Rights

[Bulgarian police robbing, torturing refugees: Human Rights Watch](#)

20/01 - DW/Germany

Law enforcement officials in Bulgaria have been accused of returning migrants to Turkey, often after stealing their belongings. Human Rights Watch says some refugees were also subjected to brutal violence. Human Rights Watch interviewed 45 asylum seekers and migrants from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, who described their experiences while traveling from Turkey to central Europe through Bulgaria last year. "Bulgaria needs to end the abuse and unlawful treatment of people seeking protection in Europe," Lydia Gall, Balkans and Eastern Europe researcher at Human Rights Watch (HRW) said. "The Bulgarian government should immediately put a stop to summary returns, investigate allegations of abuse and pushbacks and hold those responsible to account," she added.

[Danish lawmakers back seizing migrant valuables](#)

21/01 – EUObserver / International

Denmark is moving ahead with plans to seize refugees' valuables despite a growing international backlash over its legislative proposal. The bill to confiscate valuables and toughen other migration policies received wide support among Danish lawmakers on Thursday (21 January) and is set to be voted into law early next week. It allows police to seize anything worth more than €1,340, including cash, in a government effort to finance their stay in Denmark. Similar proposals are also being introduced in Switzerland and now reportedly in Germany's Baden-Wurttemberg and Bavaria regions. The Danish bill also imposes strict measures on family reunification and makes it more difficult to obtain permanent residency permits. So-called "war refugees" would have to wait up to three years before being eligible to apply for family reunification.

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