

**Declaration by participants of the OSCE South East Europe Conference
on the shooting of journalist Olivera Lakić**

We, the participants of the OSCE South East Europe Conference, which is taking place in Struga on 10 and 11 May 2018 strongly condemn the shooting of Olivera Lakić, an investigative journalist with the Vijesti newspaper in Montenegro, on the evening of 8 May 2018. We send a strong message of support and solidarity to Olivera Lakić, the employees of Vijesti, and all journalists and media workers facing attacks, threats, and intimidation in Montenegro and in the region of South East Europe.

We recall that this incident was not an isolated occurrence: Ms Lakić received horrible threats in 2011, was beaten six years ago, and there have been twenty-five attacks and threats against Vijesti journalists, media workers and property since 2007.

We underline that many journalists and media workers across the South East Europe region face attacks, including physical and online threats and intimidation, on a regular basis. Yet, too often there has been impunity and too many of the perpetrators of the crimes against journalists and media workers in the region have never been brought to justice;

We note that a criminal investigation into the shooting of Ms Lakić has been opened by the state authorities and that political leaders – notably the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament – have publicly condemned the attack. We call on the state authorities of Montenegro to ensure that the investigation into the shooting of Ms Lakić is independent, effective and speedy and that the perpetrators of the attack, including its masterminds, are brought to justice;

Politicians and public officials should not create a hostile environment for the media through their statements and actions. They must demonstrate a higher level of tolerance for critical journalism and support a plurality of voices and opinions in a society.

All state and non-state actors should recognise that any attack on a journalist not only violates the rights of the journalist involved, but also undermines the public's 'right to know', the rule of law and democracy itself.

10 May 2018