Dear Madam/Sir

I refer to your information request regarding freedom of expression in the context of conflict and violence and apologise for the delayed reply.

Please allow me to forward some information on Norway’s work against hate speech and disinformation, provided by our Ministry of Culture and Gender Equality. The Ministry of Culture and Gender Equality chose to share their information in written below instead of responding in the questionnaire. We hope that the comments may be useful to you in your important work and we look forward to reading the report.

*In 2016, the Government launched a strategy against hate speech. The strategy applied from 2016 until 2020. The efforts aim to prevent hate speech because of gender, ethnicity and religion, disability and sexual orientation. The focus areas of the strategy were children and youth, the legal system, employment, the media sector, knowledge and research and forums for discussion.*

*The strategy against hate speech was evaluated in 2020. The evaluators state that the strategy has contributed to ensure continuity in the efforts against hate speech over time and that it has contributed to develop important knowledge about hate speech. The evaluators recommend the development of a clearer definition of hate speech. The efforts in the strategy are being renewed and developed further.*

*The Norwegian Government has supported the Stop hate speech online movement in Norway since 2014. The campaign is part of the European No Hate Speech Movement, a movement started by the Council of Europe’s Youth Department in 2013. A new subsidy scheme was introduced in 2021 in order to increase the capacity of civil society and municipalities in their efforts against racism, discrimination and hate speech. In 2022 funding for the subsidy scheme was significantly increased, and is currently at 19 mill NOK. The new Government has signalled it will increase the efforts against online harassment. A commission against extremism has been established and a new action plan against extremism and radicalisation will be developed.*

*Several action plans have been developed in order to prevent racism:*

* *Action plan against racism and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and religion (2020-2023)*
* *Action plan against anti-Semitism (2020-2023)*
* *Action plan to combat discrimination and hatred towards Muslims (2020-2023)*

*The Government will introduce a new action plan against racism and discrimination. The Government is also working on at new action plan against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender expressoin and gender characteristics.”*

*Furthermore, the Civil Procedure Act and the Criminal Procedure Act in Norway contain regulations which give journalists the right to not reveal their sources.*

*The Freedom of Expression Commission was appointed by the government in 2020 and will submit its report in august 2022. Its mandate is to review the social, technological, legal and economic frameworks for freedom of expression in today's society, based on article 100 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Norway. Various surveys have documented that female journalists are particularly subject to gender-related threats and harassment which may potentially cause great harm. As part of its mandate, the Commission is asked to consider measures to ensure the safety of journalists as a prerequisite for the press’s role in society and watchdog function. In this regard, the Commission should assess whether and to what extent threats and virulent campaigns against journalists may lead to self-censure. The assessment should make relevant gender differences visible. The Commission’s report will also reflect the way digitalisation has fundamentally changed the conditions for freedom of expression.*

*Promotion of media literacy is one of the main responsibilities of the Norwegian Media Authority. This includes population surveys, campaigns and teaching programs, usually in collaboration with other public and private actors. The Norwegian Media Authority heads a network of 25 organizations/companies that work with media literacy from different perspectives.*

*The media industry cooperates on running* ***Faktisk.no*** *as its own independent fact-checking operation. Faktisk.no has an educational department, Think, which develops teaching programs on media literacy. In April 2022,* ***Faktisk.no*** *started the project* ***Faktisk verifiserbar*** *in order to fact check and visually verify information on Russia’s war against Ukraina.*