



## OMBUDSPERSON STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

- The World Press Freedom Day that is celebrated on 3 May 2018, finds again our country in an effort to overcome the current challenges in terms of guaranteeing freedom of the press as a fundamental right as well as an indicator of the level of development of democracy and observation of international human rights standards in general.
- The symbolism of this date is the focus of attention on the very importance of freedom of the press, a discourse of the concept of democracy and equality of all people, by reflecting directly on the right to information and freedom of expression.
- In 1993, the General Assembly of United Nations, with the aim of raising the awareness on the importance of freedom of the press, and to bring to attention of the governments their duty to observe and support the right to freedom of expression, the right guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has decided to set this date as a world press freedom day.
- Regarding the freedom of expression and safety of journalists, the Ombudsperson, on 2 November 2017, has published the Report with Recommendations No. 707/2017, initiated *Ex officio* with a view to address the freedom of expression and media, with particular emphasis on the safety of journalists in fulfilling their mission. The focus of the report is the cases of physical attacks and threats to journalists. The report emphasized the complexity of setting a balance between freedom of expression as a fundamental right and the definition of its limits in relation to other rights. The report has made remarks about the need to advance the legislative framework, which would provide sufficient protection for freedom of media and safety of journalists, will have better coordination between the police and the state prosecutor, as well as priority treatment by the prosecutorial and judicial system of acts committed against journalists.
- The Ombudsperson urges the country's institutions to strengthen the activities to ensure continued transparency in the function of public accountability and freedom of press as a basis for observing the human rights, to implement the recommendations of international organizations regarding freedom of expression and safety of journalists and the judiciary to handle with priority the cases of threats and attacks on journalists and provide effective solution, based on ECHR practice.