

Female journalists and online harassment: A threat to media freedom

Female journalists across Europe are frequent targets of online gender-based hate speech, especially when reporting on politics, migration, or gender equality. Surveys by journalist associations show that more than 60% of women journalists have experienced online abuse.

Harassment often includes sexual threats, coordinated trolling, and attempts to discredit professional credibility. In extreme cases, online attacks spill into offline stalking or intimidation.

The consequences extend beyond individual harm. When journalists self-censor or leave the profession, media pluralism and freedom of expression suffer. Recognising this risk, the EU has incorporated journalist safety into its Media Freedom initiatives.

Best practices include newsroom protocols for online harassment, legal support for journalists, and cooperation with platforms to remove abusive content swiftly.

Protecting journalists from gender-based hate speech is essential for safeguarding democratic information ecosystems.