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Maltese court rules on Daphne Caruana Galizia case: The EU must step up its protection of journalists

Marthe Jansen · Friday, September 4th, 2026

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After almost a decade, the nine-member jury at the Maltese court yesterday reached a verdict in the case of the brutal assassination of investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. It found the accused, Yorgen Fenech, not guilty of both counts against him: complicity in the intentional killing of Daphne Caruana Galizia, and association with intent to commit a crime.

Just like Daphne's family, some politicians, and other campaigners, we see this verdict as a setback in the fight to protect journalists across the EU Member States. This tragic murder case once again highlights that journalists within the EU face greater risks than they should when covering corruption. The European Union must do more to protect its journalists from heinous attacks.

We call on the European Commission to use all its means to strengthen the legal protection of journalists across the EU in order to guarantee press freedom and the safety of journalists, particularly those investigating corruption and organised crime. This cannot – and must not – happen again.

Nick Aiossa, Director at TI EU, said:

“A free press is the backbone of European democracy – and today, that backbone was struck. The jury's failure to convict Fenech sends a chilling message to every journalist who dares to hold power accountable. We call on the European Commission to act decisively, using every tool at its disposal, to protect those who risk everything to safeguard our democracies.”

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