

Equality for female staff in the media: media leaders take action!

8 March 2019

Today, on International Women's Day 2019, we want to call upon all media leaders around the globe to stand up and protect the rights of female journalists, both staff and freelance.

The facts shown by recent research are alarming.

Female journalists are systematically paid less in the media industry – in the UK alone female journalists earn 17.4% less than their male colleagues.

Almost a third of female journalists consider leaving the profession because of the threats, intimidation or attacks they endure, and these figures are even higher in fragile contexts and conflict zones.

More than a third of female journalists avoided reporting certain stories for the same reason.

Almost half of female journalists experience online abuse. Many of them indicate the abuse has led them to become less active or even inactive on social media, while it's a crucial part of the job.

The voices of far too many female journalists are silenced, which leads to many untold stories.

This has to stop.

Media must hire a diverse workforce and adopt gender equality policies in order to stand by women journalists and to produce stories that are relevant to all groups in society: balanced representation in the newsroom is essential to effectively talk to everyone.

That is why today we ask you, as leader and role model for the whole organization, to:

- Show your female journalists, both staff and freelance, that you will protect their rights and support them when abuse occurs.
- Promote a culture of safety within your organization, have zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of sexist behavior and gender-based discrimination.
- Carefully monitor the payment to men and women and set a target for when the gender pay gap shall be closed.
- Treat all instances of intimidation and violence against female journalists as attacks against the whole organization, instead of leaving your employee isolated.
- Ensure that you have a system in place to act upon abuse; collect the evidence and take it to the authorities every single time.
- Set clear and transparent procedures related to content moderation, with the view of tackling abusive content swiftly while protecting the right to freedom of expression.
- Provide sex disaggregated data to monitor where women stand in the newsrooms and act upon the findings.

The undersigned organisations stand ready to support in such efforts.

