

**Priority question for written answer P-001987/2024
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign
Affairs and Security Policy**

Rule 144

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Subject: Protecting European journalists in war zones

Yesterday, a court in Russia's Kursk region issued an arrest warrant against Stefania Battistini, a correspondent for Italian public broadcaster Rai, and cameraman Simone Traini, after their names were added to Russian secret services' wanted-persons list for allegedly illegally crossing the country's border to cover Ukraine's military incursion into Kursk in August.

Carrying a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment in flagrant breach of the Geneva Convention, the criminal charges brought for 'entering Russia without a visa and filming without a permit' undoubtedly undermine the freedom of the press and transparency – fundamental principles in times of war.

This is not an isolated incident, but part of a broader trend: other foreign journalists have been added to the same wanted-persons list in what is undeniably a concerted endeavour to quash independent media coverage and criticism of the conflict.

Top-level diplomatic efforts are urgently needed; we wrote a letter to that effect to President von der Leyen but have yet to receive a response.

In view of the above, what action will the European External Action Service take to protect journalists covering war zones?

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