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# European Greens deplore brutal killing of Slovak journalist

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## PRESS RELEASE

Brussels

27 February 2018

A Slovak journalist and his girlfriend were killed in their apartment, police said on Monday, in a suspected murder believed to be connected to his work as an investigative journalist.

Jan Kuciak, 27, had reported for the news site Aktuality.sk on fraud cases, including stories such as tax frauds with connections to high profile businessmen and government officials. He had also investigated the Slovak connection in the Panama Papers.

Commenting on the killing, European Green co-chairs Monica Frassoni and Reinard Bütikofer said:

“We deplore the brutal murder of 27-year-old Slovak journalist Jan Kuciak who was killed

together with his girlfriend in an attack suspected to be connected to his work as an investigative journalist. We send our deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues affected by this tragic loss.

Europe cannot pretend to be a beacon of free speech in the world when journalists are killed for speaking truth to power. The Slovak authorities must show they are committed to defending free speech and ready to crack down hard on attempts to undermine it. It must also show that it is wholly genuine in its attempt to tackle corruption and cronyism head on.

Words are insufficient to convey the heinous nature of this attack on truth, justice, and transparency. Just months ago, we were shocked and saddened to learn of the brutal murder of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. Journalists must be able to do their work without being dangerously exposed to threats, violence and even death.

Whistleblowers and investigative journalists in Europe should not have to go into hiding or resort to private security to ensure their safety as is increasingly the case. Europe must show it can live up to its ideals - and defend them vigorously.

In an era of fake news and click bait, we must do everything in our power to ring-fence the fundamental role of journalism in a flourishing democracy. It is an issue that goes beyond national borders so we need a Europe-wide response. We look forward to seeing concrete steps by European Parliament President Antonio Tajani to defend freedom of speech wherever it is threatened across Europe's 27 member countries.”

END

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