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Urgent Motion from the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM)

The World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists, meeting in Angers from June 7 – 10 June, 2016

Condemns the arrest of freelance journalist and founder of the online media **Burevensik.org** Zoran Bozhinovski , on 21 April, after his extradition from Serbia where he lived for the past 3 years;

Note with concern that Bozhinovski was arrested and kept in detention for an additional 30 days because the Macedonian Prosecutor in 2013 accused him for espionage, criminal association and blackmail;

Further noting that the arresting of the journalist for criminal activities without any evidence is unacceptable in a free and democratic country; and such accusations contribute to discredit journalists as traitors and criminals and destroy the trust of the public on them;

Considering that we are witnesses that Bozhinovski has published a lot of factual stories about the involvement of government officials in criminal activities; we therefore believe that the only reason for arresting him is to prevent him from publishing new stories, which has a negative effect on media freedom in Macedonia and will restrain other journalists from investigating into the wrongdoings of public institutions;

Reaffirms that the right of journalist to investigate and write their stories is a right enshrined in European law as guaranteed by internationally recognised standards and a central tenet of journalism and also clearly stated in Article 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia;

Congress therefore:

- Gives its full support to Zoran Bozhinovski and its affiliate, The Association of Journalists of Macedonia, in its campaign on press freedom and the defence of journalists' rights;
- Instructs the incoming Executive Committee to launch an immediate appeal to the state institutions in Macedonia (the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Criminal Court in Skopje and the Public Prosecutors office), responsible for his arrest and urge them to release him immediately and unconditionally.