

General guidelines on dealing with media inquiries

Take your time

If a journalist catches you in the middle of something or if you would like to think carefully about your response first, you can arrange to call back later. However, make sure to stick to the time arranged because journalists work under time pressure.

Note down names and publication details

If you are happy to take part in an interview, note down the journalist's contact details. Ask about the context in which your statements are required. Try to find out which questions the journalist would like to ask and who they believe to be the target group for the program or article.

Decide what you want to say

Know your core messages! Think of 2–3 key messages you want to communicate – even if the journalist doesn't ask for them. Be concise and stick to the facts. Short sentences will help to keep your statements clear. You can also reinforce them with examples.

Arrange an appointment and use the time to prepare

Arrange an appointment that will allow you enough time to prepare. Compile a fact sheet (for example) for your statement beforehand. The media love facts. However, expect to face some difficult questions, too, and try to prepare your answers. Never say "No comment". Instead, explain why you do not want to or are unable to answer the question. Do not give radio interviews from your cell phone; your reception could cut out unexpectedly.

Do not read out statements

Reading out prewritten answers or entire press releases can make you appear unprofessional. Try to stay authentic and answer in your own personal style. If appropriate to the topic, feel free to express your commitment and enthusiasm.

Nothing is "off the record"

Don't say anything you wouldn't want to read in the newspaper – even if the formal interview seems to be over.

Double-check quotes and facts in written media reports

In the case of complex topics, you can offer to read the journalist's report before publication to check that the facts are correct. Ask to see your quotes so that you can double-check them.

Give feedback

If the media report contains major errors, request that it be corrected. Also make sure to tell the journalist if you are happy with the report.