



**PERMANENT DELEGATION  
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON THE ADDRESS BY THE REPRESENTATIVE ON  
FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile to the Permanent Council,  
Vienna 29 November 2012

**Thank you Mr. Chairman,**

Let me join others in warmly welcoming Ms Dunja Mijatović back to the Permanent Council. We fully subscribe to the appreciation expressed by previous speakers for the quality of the work done by her office.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The long list of activities in today's report underlines both the engagement of the representative and her staff and how much work that still has to be done in the area of media freedom. The report clearly shows that several participating States actively walk away from their OSCE commitments instead of making efforts to fully implement them. This is a worrying trend which we need to discuss in an open and transparent way.

Some participating States have recently reintroduced defamation legislation or have pending bills for the same purpose. This is a clear sign that not all law makers respect human rights and move national legislation in the wrong direction. Too often defamation legislation is used to silence critical voices.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We all realize that there may be a potential conflict between freedom of expression and the fight against terrorism and other security threats. In our discussions on texts for the

Dublin Ministerial we disagree on how to deal with this potential conflict. I must underline that the fight against terrorism cannot be fought by restricting the freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

The universality of human rights does not change with the introduction of new information technologies. They apply with equal force online as they do offline. Governments and regulators are therefore obliged to safeguard media pluralism in an increasingly digital world. The same authorities must also ensure safe working environments for journalists.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Representative is mandated to monitor how we implement our media freedom obligations. She can fulfil her mandate only if we respect her independence and integrity. And she can fulfil her mandate only if all participating States give her access to their countries for assessment visits. There is no excuse for any participating State not to welcome representatives of the OSCE when they travel on a mission.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Freedom of expression is a priority in Norway's human rights policy. Freedom of expression is essential for the realisation of other fundamental rights, like freedom of assembly and access to information. It is a cornerstone of democracy.

All OSCE participating States need legislation that safeguards freedom of expression and media freedom in the digital age. We are fully behind the priorities given by the Representative, and we will continue to give considerable financial support to her project activities also in the years to come.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman**