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PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT BY NORWAY IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA, MS DUNJA MIJATOVIĆ

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 28 November 2013

Thank you, Mr Chairman,

Let me join previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ms Dunja Mijatović back to the Permanent Council. Her area of responsibility is a top priority for my delegation. We highly appreciate the quality of work done by her office and the way she fulfils her mandate.

Mr Chairman,

The report of the Representative on Freedom of the Media regrettably shows that freedom of expression is threatened in several participating states. Journalists who have the courage to be critical and expose illegal actions by those in power are subject to violence, harassment and prosecution. In some participating states journalists are imprisoned on trumped-up charges and given disproportionately long sentences. Attacks on journalists are not always investigated or punished. Some participating states use anti-terrorism laws to crack down on journalists and citizens who express themselves in the media, including social media.

We need the Representative on Freedom of the Media to follow these cases, voice her concerns with the relevant participating states and bring violations of OSCE commitments to our attention.

Mr Chairman,

The safety of journalists is a condition for a democratic society. Participating states must ensure a safe and enabling environment for the exercise of freedom of expression. We welcome the Ukrainian chairmanship's proposal for a decision in Kyiv on the protection of journalists. A decision must strengthen our commitments and be in line with the principles agreed in other organizations, as the UN.

Mr Chairman,

Independent media are important for ensuring freedom of expression. Whether citizens express themselves on paper, by broadcasting or through the internet, is of no consequence for the basic principle of media freedom. Social media clearly fall within the mandate of the Representative of Freedom of the Media. We welcome her forward-looking approach in including on-line media in her work.

Mr Chairman,

We welcome that the Representative on Freedom of the Media has criticised violations of media freedom commitments in all parts of the OSCE area. Her office has also co-operated with governments in a wide range of participating states to help them fulfil their commitments. She is making active use of the tools provided in her mandate in an unbiased and professional way. This shows the importance of the independence of her institution. As participating states we must provide her office with the resources they need and leave it to her office to fulfil the mandate.

Mr Chairman,

I join previous speakers in congratulating Ms Dunja Mijatović and her excellent team on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. We thank them for their important work and can assure them of our full support also in the future.

Thank you, Mr Chairman