



## PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

### STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile  
to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 10 March 2016

Mr Chairman,

The Representative on Freedom of the Media has once again shown her keen understanding of how freedom of the media and freedom of expression are closely linked to other challenges confronting us. Freedom of opinion and expression is fundamental for the enjoyment of other human rights. Indeed, restrictions on freedom of opinion, expression and media are of great concern also because they are an indication of other restrictions on human rights and democracy.

Mr Chairman,

Protecting national security and countering terrorism are legitimate concerns for governments. Freedom of expression and free media do not undermine these goals. On the contrary, they are mutually reinforcing. Respect for human rights and the rule of law reinforces national security and deters recruitment to terrorism. Regrettably, we have seen examples of security laws being used to jail journalists, force them to reveal their sources or punish dissemination of certain information or opinions. This is not in accordance with OSCE commitments. Security concerns should never be used as a pretext for undermining human rights.

The need to promote and protect human rights while countering terrorism was the topic of the first joint meeting held of all three dimension committees last year. We need to discuss these issues further, with help from the Representative on Freedom of the Media, among others. We welcome the first step that was done through the joint effort between your office and the Anti-terrorism Unit in Bucharest last year.

Mr Chairman,

In January, Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende launched Norway's strategy for promoting freedom of expression. The strategy was presented for representatives from civil society, academia and the media, with Representative Dunja Mijatovic and UN Special

Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression David Kaye as guest speakers. Let me take this opportunity to thank you, Dunja, for contributing to this event.

As part of Norway's foreign and development policy, the Government will focus on three cornerstones:

- strengthening our support for independent media
- providing protection for people who express their opinions publicly and
- improving public access to information.

Mr. Chairman,

Protecting journalists who uncover corruption and abuse of power, or journalists who work in areas of conflict, is vital to safeguard democracy. For every journalist who is attacked or harassed, many others are silenced. That is why it is so important that attacks against journalists are investigated, prosecuted and punished.

*Hvis vedtak om forlengelse:*

Mr Chairman,

We were close to coming to a decision on appointing the new Representative. My delegation regrets that it was not possible to reach a decision.

We are satisfied that we have decided to prolong the mandate of Ms Mijatović and avoid a vacancy in this important position.

Mr Chairman,

Through her principled and high quality work, Dunja Mijatović has raised the standing of, and the respect for, the institution of Representative on Freedom of the Media. She has fulfilled her function as watchdog in a fair and impartial way. Indeed, every single participating State has experienced that she has commented on situations in our countries that we had perhaps hoped would go unnoticed. She has made countless visits to our governments to assist in drafting legislation, regulate media freedom or improve our understanding of the issues covered by her mandate. By assisting us, and encouraging us to make the right choices, she is helping to guide us towards more free, informed and secure societies.

Dunja, we thank you for your energy, your personal engagement and your great achievements in the important position you hold. (*Hvis vedtak:*) We are pleased that you will continue your efforts for another year and look forward to cooperating further with you.

Thank you, Mr Chairman