

**ATƏT YANINDA
AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ
DAİMİ NÜMAYƏNDƏLİYİ**



**ENGLISH only
PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
TO THE OSCE**

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**Statement
at the 870th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
June 23, 2011**

*In response to the report of
the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media*

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation joins previous speakers in welcoming Ms. Dunja Mijatovic, the distinguished OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to this meeting of the Permanent Council.

In response to the report distributed to the Permanent Council we'd like to stress the importance of her visit to Azerbaijan in May, the meetings she held with the high-level officials and participation at the conference dedicated to the decriminalization of defamation. We are pleased to note that the meetings in Baku allowed you to collect first-hand information about the state of media in Azerbaijan and discuss relevant issues frankly and openly. We also hoped that you could personally see practical steps undertaken by the Government of Azerbaijan aimed at guaranteeing freedom of expression and media, providing for media pluralism, and strengthening the independence of mass media.

We regret that these steps have not been reflected in your report presented to PC. Therefore the Delegation of Azerbaijan doesn't share your assessment of situation with freedom of media in our country presented in the report. We invite you to go line by line over the part of the report related to Azerbaijan and find ways to improve the reporting practice as well as define issues that we should jointly work on.

In response to the statement by Hungary on behalf of the European Union, we take note of the points mentioned and would like to stress that the journalists are important part of our society, however, they have the same rights as others, they are not the privileged citizens, and there are laws and regulations they must follow even when they perform their functions.

We realize that there is still room for improvement. In this regard we are open to continue constructive dialogue and practical cooperation with partners in this field.

Mr. Chairman,

It should also be stressed that elimination of shortcomings in the field of mass media constitutes a gradual process and requires, *inter alia*, development of professional ethics of independent and, particularly, responsible media. To this end development of special target-oriented programmes aimed at upgrading level of professionalism, journalist ethics and responsibility of mass media representatives remains of importance for us. We hope close cooperation of the OSCE Office in Baku with Azerbaijani authorities in this field will result in sustainable outcomes. We invite the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to engage as well.

In conclusion we reaffirm the readiness and willingness to continue cooperation with relevant international actors, including the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.