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Delegation of Italy

**STATEMENT BY  
AMBASSADOR STEFANO BALDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY  
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1397th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 November 2022

**On the report by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media,  
Teresa Ribeiro**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to add some brief observations in a national capacity.

First of all, I should like to thank Teresa Ribeiro, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and reiterate Italy's support of and appreciation for her mandate and continued commitment.

It is important and meaningful to celebrate 25 years since the establishment of the mandate of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. Freedom of the media and the right to freedom of opinion and expression are fundamental pillars of our democratic systems and contribute to strengthening our societies and making them inclusive and resilient. Everyone has the right to be informed in order to participate consciously in the political decision-making processes that affect them. Without the invaluable contribution of the independent media and the necessary protection of countless media workers, our pluralistic democracies, respect for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law would be at stake.

This is why we are utterly convinced that there can be no security without media freedom. This theme, chosen for the 25th anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the mandate of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and as the subject of the report and recommendations of the Advisory Group of Eminent Experts on Freedom of the Media presented yesterday, is as timely as ever. As highlighted by the Representative in her numerous speeches in recent months, examples of threats to freedom of information and the safety of journalists, both online and offline, are unfortunately becoming more and more frequent, particularly in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine or with regard to the severe restrictions on freedom of expression in Russia and Belarus. Regrettably, we are increasingly witnessing physical attacks against and intimidation of journalists, cases of information manipulation, including disinformation and incitement to hatred, and censorship and restrictions on the free flow of information.

Italy is strongly committed to the promotion and protection of freedom of information and media freedom around the world. At the international level, in addition to our engagement in the United Nations and the Council of Europe, we contribute, for example, to the Global Media Defence Fund of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which helps civil society organizations working to provide legal protection for journalists and support for investigative journalism, and to the Media Freedom Coalition, an alliance of more than 50 countries working towards media freedom and the safety of journalists and media workers.

Within the OSCE, I should like to express our strong appreciation for the recently launched extrabudgetary project on the safety of journalists, which aims to help participating States to implement the shared commitments endorsed by the Milan Ministerial Council decision adopted during the Italian OSCE Chairmanship in 2018. Italy has responded to the questionnaire prepared for the participating States and, as also expressed at the first round table last September, we are ready to contribute to the success of the project by sharing further good practices and initiatives adopted at the national level.

Finally, I am pleased to confirm our intention to contribute to the project on the safety of journalists also financially, which attests to Italy's strong focus on and the importance it attaches to this issue.

Thank you.