



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

**Statement in response to the report by the
Representative on Freedom of the Media**

Delivered by Counsellor Marit H. Lillealtern at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 3 November 2022

Mr Chair,

We thank the Representative for her report and congratulate her and her colleagues in the Office of the RFOM on the 25th anniversary. We also thank the Representative and her Office for excellent cooperation throughout our period as chair of the Human Dimension Committee.

Norway supports the autonomous mandate of the Representative, and we appreciate her independent and objective assessments. Any criticism that the work of the Representative is geographically unbalanced, is refuted through her report; The RFOM has intervened in a total of 53 participating States this year. This number can unfortunately also speak to the bleak situation for media freedom in the region.

An independent, critical press is one of the most important institutions in any democratic society. A wide range of independent media channels, including local media outlets in various languages, is of great importance in ensuring that all groups in society have the chance to gain insight into and influence matters that affect them.

Mr. Chair,

Yesterday we marked the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. We paid tribute to the many journalists and media workers who have been killed because of their work, and we deplored the fact that most of these killings go unpunished.

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Norway is among the safest countries in the world to be a journalist. We strongly believe that freedom of expression and a free press are essential to protect our own democracy. Sharing our knowledge and experience is an important part of Norway's international engagement to promote freedom of expression. We are therefore pleased that our National Focal Point on Safety of Journalists will join an next RFOM roundtable to be held later this month.

For some time, we have seen an increase in authoritarian regimes worldwide. We have also witnessed an increase in the use of lawful and democratic means to restrict democracy and silence free and independent media. The fear of a free and critical press is a sign of weakness. We must counter this weakness with openness, inclusiveness, trust, and truth.

Mr. Chair,

Four years ago, our Ministers committed our States to “fully implement all OSCE commitments and their international obligations related to freedom of expression and media freedom(..)”. The RFOM's report clearly shows that the commitment of our Ministers has not been implemented.

To quote the final report that was presented during yesterday's anniversary event; “Constant scrutiny is essential to safeguard media freedom. It was with this honest and self-critical lens that OSCE participating States were able to establish the RFoM mandate and institution.” We encourage all participating States to make good use of the toolbox, competence, and capacity of the Representative of the Freedom of the Media and of her office - media freedom is indeed a shared responsibility. There can be no security without media freedom.

Thank you