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**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN AT THE
974th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 November 2013

**In response to the report by Ms. Dunja Mijatović,
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan welcomes the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, to the Permanent Council meeting and thanks her for her informative report.

Let me tell you that Uzbekistan is continuing to take concrete measures to create the necessary legal basis to ensure favourable conditions to allow the media to operate freely.

During the last five years alone, around ten legislative acts have been adopted in Uzbekistan, with the direct aim of further democratizing and liberalizing the media and increasing its involvement in ensuring transparency and openness in the socio-political and socio-economic reforms under way in the country.

We are grateful to Ms. Mijatović's Office for its assistance in the development and discussion of a number of draft laws. We should also like to express our readiness for constructive co-operation within the framework of the concept proposed by the President of Uzbekistan for advancing democratic reforms and establishing a civil society.

We should like to draw the Permanent Council's attention to the fact that as a State the Republic of Uzbekistan has the sovereign right to punish people who have committed crimes. This right to administer punishment stems from the need to ensure the security of society and to keep the legal structure of public life in the Republic of Uzbekistan intact.

The persons mentioned in the report have been convicted of criminal offences. They were not convicted because of their professional activities as journalists, as some agenda-driven international non-governmental organizations have been trying to prove to the world community over the last few years. Furthermore, the punishment of these persons was determined by the courts and in strict accordance with the established procedural arrangements of Uzbekistan law.

Uzbekistan is one of the leading countries in terms of Internet access growth. At the beginning of 2013, there were 10.1 million Internet users in Uzbekistan, which is approximately 35 per cent of the country's population.

As part of the efforts to introduce the principles of good governance and greater transparency to the activities of State bodies, a single portal for State services is scheduled to be launched in Uzbekistan soon. Over 90 ministries and departments will be included in this portal.

In accordance with Uzbek legislation, the judicial authorities can adopt a decision to block specific online content as a result of the flagrant violation of national laws, for example, the dissemination of child pornography or destructive ideas alien to our people's way of thinking.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Ms. Mijatović and her hard-working team every success in their future activities.

Thank you for your attention.