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**DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

**Statement**

**Response to the Representative on the Freedom of Media Ms. Dunja Mijatovic  
delivered by the Permanent Delegation of Armenia at the 1136th Meeting of the OSCE  
Permanent Council**

**March 09, 2017**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to warmly welcome Ms. Dunja Mijatovic and thank her for the comprehensive report, which in open and transparent manner reveals the challenges in the field of freedom of media and safety of journalists in the OSCE area. We also thank Ms. Herbst and Ms. Havlicek for sharing with us their personal experience.

We reiterate firm resolve of the Armenian authorities to further protect freedom of expression and strengthen safety of journalists. In this context we will continue to rely on the expertise of and fruitful cooperation with the RFOM.

We would like to highlight two points related to this report. First, there should be no grey zones throughout OSCE area for exercising the freedom of media. Second, there are attempts by some participating states to resort to violent means in silencing dissenting voices even beyond their jurisdiction. Not accidentally these attempts are made by those participating states which already effectively abolished the freedom of media in their own countries through wide range of repressions against journalists and bloggers and now are trying to export their ill practices elsewhere. These attempts should not go unnoticed and thus create dangerous precedents for the freedom of expression throughout the entire OSCE area and in this respect we share the concerns of Ms. Mijatovic on the case of Alexander Lapshin.

The criminalization and other impediments to visit conflict areas for journalists and bloggers is another worrying sign, that the party, who resorts to it is willing to perpetrate unprecedented mass atrocities in the region. It is well known from history of mass atrocities that perpetrators try to limit information flow and freedom of movement in order to hide their ongoing and planned crimes.

Therefore, presence of the journalists is essential in conflict areas. Freedom of media in conflict areas is also key to countering propaganda of war, aggression and hate crimes.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank Ms. Mijatovic for reflecting in her report the problem of fighting impunity for crimes against journalists, and their killing, including in the context of prominent Armenian-Turkish intellectual, chief editor of the newspaper Agos Hrant Dink.

Mr. Chairman,

Since this is last appearance of Ms. Mijatovic to the Permanent Council in her capacity of the Representative on the Freedom of Media, we would like to take the opportunity and express our gratitude and appreciation to her for the years of close and pragmatic cooperation on implementation of Armenia's commitments in the sphere of freedom of media.

We wish Ms. Mijatovic all the best in her future endeavours.

Thank You.