



## Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

### ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, MEDIA AND INFORMATION

22 - 23 June 2020  
(Online)

## FINAL REPORT



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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) on “Freedom of Expression, Media and Information” was held in Vienna on 22-23 June 2020. It was organized by the Albanian OSCE Chair-in-Office (CiO), with the support of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The meeting provided an opportunity to assess the progress made by participating States in implementing OSCE commitments on freedom of information, freedom of expression and freedom of the media during compound crises, both online and offline, such as the risks related to undue restrictions stemming from governmental policies aimed at protecting public health or countering terrorism and violent extremism. It also served as a platform to present and share good practices that demonstrate how governments, intergovernmental organizations, educational experts, media professionals and civil society promote these freedoms, including in crisis situations.

The meeting brought together 346 registered participants (171 men, 173 women, 2 non-defined), including 125 representatives from 51 OSCE participating States, 46 participants from OSCE institutions, executive structures, and missions/field operations, 7 representatives of 4 international organisations, 5 representatives of national human rights institutions from 5 participating States and 163 participants representing 114 civil society and other organizations.

## **II. SYNOPSIS OF THE SESSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section summarizes the discussions which took place during the opening session, the three thematic sessions, and presents recommendations made by participants. The recommendations were directed towards a variety of actors, including OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, and civil society organizations. These recommendations have no official status as they are not based on consensus among the 57 OSCE participating States. Further, the inclusion of a recommendation in this report does not suggest that it reflects the views or policies of the OSCE. Nevertheless, these recommendations serve as useful indicators of how participating States are meeting their commitments on freedom of information, freedom of expression and freedom of the media during compound crises, both online and offline.

## OPENING SESSION

*Opening remarks:*

**Ms. Inid Milo**, Head of the 2020 Albanian OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

**Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir**, Director, OSCE/ODIHR

**Mr. Harlem Désir**, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM)

Summary of opening remarks:

**Ms. Inid Milo**, Head of the 2020 Albanian OSCE Chairmanship Task Force welcomed the participants stating that the promotion of freedom of expression, freedom of the media and freedom of information is an important topic for the 2020 Albanian OSCE Chair-in-Office. The current COVID-19 crisis has affected these freedoms, alongside public health. She shared with the participants that modern media is characterized by the previously unimagined advances in technology, they offer an unprecedented opportunity for humans throughout the world to enjoy the right of free expression and to exercise their right to seek, impart and receive information. It is critically important that the methods used to share the benefits of these new platforms be open to all. As to the media freedom, the OSCE strives to have many voices heard on any available platform across the borders, whether it be digital broadcasting, the Internet, or mobile devices.

She recalled the [joint statement](#) that the RFOM issued together with David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and Edison Lanza, the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights' Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. This document stressed: "The right of access to information means that governments must be making exceptional efforts to protect the work of journalists. Journalism serves a crucial function at a moment of public health emergency, particularly when it aims to inform the public of critical information and monitors government actions."

She noted that Albania closely co-operates with RFOM and ODIHR on issues linked to freedom of expression, freedom of the media and freedom of information, and is grateful to both OSCE institutions for the support and assistance they have provided over almost three years, including to Albania.

In her opening remarks, ODIHR's Director, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir reminded the participants of key relevant OSCE commitments to freedom of expression, freedom of the media and freedom of information. Without the right to freely hold an opinion, the freedom to receive and impart information and access to free media, democratic societies will struggle to survive and function. Freedom of the media, freedom of expression and free flow of information are the building blocks of accountable governments and strong civil societies. As all human rights are interlinked and interdependent, so are these rights essential for the enjoyment of other rights, such as freedom of religion or belief and freedom of peaceful assembly.

During a time of crisis, free media and free flow of information becomes even more critical. Allowing for expression of diverse views—whether in the form of print publications, social media posts, or slogans chanted during peaceful protests—and fostering platforms for discussion of important topics makes our societies more and not less resilient. She welcomed the opportunity to examine challenges and good practices in the OSCE region in promoting these freedoms and ensuring unhindered access to information, particularly in times of crisis. ODIHR stands ready to assist States in taking steps to minimize the gap between their commitments and national action, whether through conducting monitoring or providing policy or legislative advice or training.

**Mr. Harlem Désir**, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, in his presentation noted that access to information and freedom of the media, both online and offline, are indispensable conditions for the development and well-being of any society. Well-informed people make well-informed decisions, which is an indispensable foundation for modern democracies to build upon. It is for this reason that the freedom of expression and freedom of information lie at the heart of the Helsinki process and of the OSCE principles and commitments.

The latest proof of this commitment was the adoption, by all 57 OSCE participating States of a Ministerial Council Decision on safety of journalists in December 2018. In this decision, all participating States reaffirmed their conviction “that independent media are essential to a free and open society and accountable systems of government and are of particular importance in safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms”. These commitments remain as relevant as ever, even if the COVID-19 crisis has added new layers of context to addressing freedom of information and freedom of the media.

Every crisis can be a catalyst for change, as much as it can turn into a lost opportunity. It can be a moment to recognize the essential contribution that journalism and free, independent and pluralistic media make to our lives, and to our societies. It can thus be a turning point for further strengthening media pluralism and quality journalism.

OSCE must make sure that this crisis situation will not have a long-term negative impact on access to information and media freedom. He added that many media outlets were financially struggling after weeks of restrictions that resulted in huge losses in advertisement revenues. This threat to their existence should remind us of what would happen if we lose the voices of independent journalists and professional media. Who would take their place? In a time when false information and rumours can have such a detrimental impact, including on health, we must stand for media freedom, quality media and the role of journalism in democracy.

He noted that this is an important moment to engage in proactive protection of media freedom and expressed his conviction that multilateralism and co-operation at various levels and among different stakeholders would be necessary.

In conclusion, the RFOM presented the coming three sessions of the SHDM and its speakers, to whom he expressed his gratitude. He said, that coming deliberations would be a valuable contribution to implementing appropriate approaches to safeguarding OSCE commitments regarding human rights.

## **SESSION I: Freedom of Expression and its Relation to Other Fundamental Freedoms**

*Introducers:*

**Ms. Sarah Clarke**, Head of Europe and Central Asia Team, ARTICLE 19

**Ms. Nataliya Gumenyuk**, Journalist, Writer, Member of the Council on Freedom of Speech and Protection of Journalists at the Office of the President of Ukraine

*Moderator:*

**Mr. Andrey Rikhter**, Senior Adviser, Office of RFOM

Summary of introducers' interventions:

**Ms. Clarke** stressed that this meeting comes at an extremely critical moment for the right to freedom of expression (FoE) and the related rights. The coronavirus has emerged into environments of censorship and rising repression of dissent. It has underlined the importance of the FoE and freedom of information (FoI) as they relate to public health and safety. While some OSCE pSs have worked to ensure the public right to know, others used the pandemics as a pretext to suppress these rights. The spread of COVID-19 was accompanied by a spread of orchestrated misinformation, conspiracy theories on the virus and hate speech towards individuals and communities. ARTICLE 19 has noted that states are trying to restrict reporting on the spread of the virus and use restrictive legislation and arrest people who are sharing information about it. Journalists and whistle-blowers have been harassed and arrested for revealing problems and accused of spreading fake news in the absence of transparency. In many countries, governments have restricted or stopped holding press conferences all together, hampering the journalists' ability to report on the pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, there has been an increase of assaults against journalists especially against female journalists. Many of these attacks remained unpunished.

ARTICLE 19 has been monitoring the COVID-19 responses in the OSCE PSs and their impact on the FoE. Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkey were among the countries having introduced laws and implementation practices that create serious restrictions for the work of the journalists and compromise their safety. ARTICLE 19 called on Turkey to abide by its international commitments and to release all detained journalists. Physical attacks are on the rise across the Western Balkans, including in Serbia. ARTICLE 19 and its partner organizations welcome the decision of the Venice Commission urging the President of Albania to abandon its proposed defamation bill, which if adopted in its current form would induce a chilling effect on the FoE. Other countries with restrictive legislation include Slovenia and Hungary and Poland. Across Germany, France, Spain, UK and Northern Ireland ARTICLE 19 notes a rise in the physical attacks against journalists, many of them women covering public protests. In Malta, ARTICLE 19 continues to witness extraordinary developments in the public investigation of the case of assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia. ARTICLE 19 calls on the Maltese authorities to establish joint investigation teams on issues related to her assassination.

This March, ARTICLE 19 and six partner organisations have launched a rapid response mechanism on the safety of journalists, offering practical, legal and advocacy support to journalists.

**Ms. Gumenyuk** spoke on behalf of practicing journalists working in Russia, Georgia, Poland and Ukraine, with whom she was in regular contact. Although Ukraine has moved up on the press freedom index in the past year, at the same time the Government needs to do more to investigate crimes against journalists and fight against hate speech. Recently civil society managed to stop the adoption of a law, which would criminalize disinformation, such laws can be used to silence journalists and limit access to information, using COVID-19 as a pretext to curb these rights.

Economic pressure is also used to silence journalists. Hundreds of journalists have lost their jobs and many more fear they will lose their jobs if they speak out. Another issue, which is not new, is the polarization of the media. There is oligarch-owned media, government-controlled media in different countries and in Ukraine. One may face the risk of being attacked by the haters on the internet. So it is absolutely critical to know who is standing behind such troll factories, influencing algorithms. Today, in the region and globally, the notion of the media being the enemy of the people is present and societies need to condemn this kind of attacks against media. It is crucial to support establishment of public media.

In conclusion, Ms Gumenyuk said that it was necessary to release the political prisoners wherever they were, to counter hate crimes, to investigate crimes against journalists, support journalists economically, be extremely careful with the legislation on fighting disinformation and work towards fighting the impunity and curbing polarization.

In the following discussion, participants strongly condemned violations of freedom of expression and raised their concerns about information about growing reports of such violations. They provided national perspectives on the issues presented by the speakers.

Some of the participants noted that freedom of expression should not be a justification of discrimination, hostility or violence. Certain participants questioned the emergency measures taken by Governments in the context of Covid-19 pandemic and the way they restrict free expression. Others raised the unjustified censorship of different segments of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. They called on OSCE participating States (pSs) to guarantee the right to FoE by not blocking websites or platforms except for cases when provided by the international law.

Some participants noted, that in many countries, defamation, blasphemy and religious insults are still crimes that can lead to imprisonment. Recently some of these laws resulted in convictions and sometimes in prison sentences. It is therefore high time for the OSCE pSs to abolish such laws.

A number of participants representing delegations of the OSCE pSs reaffirmed that the FoE is a cornerstone for any democracy and called on all OSCE pSs to abide by their freedom of expression commitments, support and use expertise of the RFOM.

Participants made the following specific recommendations in Session I:

*Recommendations to the OSCE participating States:*

- OSCE participating States should abide by their freedom of expression commitments and international obligations, including those adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on Safety of Journalists (2018);
- OSCE participating States should ensure that any coronavirus response legislation is in compliance with the requirements in the international human rights law;
- OSCE participating States should repeal laws that criminalize speech.

*Specific recommendations for the OSCE institutions and field operations:*

- OSCE institutions, the RFOM and ODIHR, should develop guidelines for professional standards to promote tolerance and non-discrimination in the media;
- OSCE should develop guidelines for the OSCE pSs on countering disinformation while respecting freedom of expression.

## **SESSION II: Access to Information**

*Introducers:*

**Mr. Patrick Penninckx**, Head of Department Information Society, Council of Europe

**Ms. Helen Darbishire**, Executive Director, Access Info Europe

*Moderator:*

**Ms. Kristin Olson**, Principal Advisor to Head of Institution, Office of RFOM

Summary of introducers' interventions:

**Mr. Penninckx** started his presentation by saying that the OSCE and the Council of Europe (CoE) pursue a common goal of promoting and ensuring respect for the right to freedom of expression and information as a foundation of democracy, an individual human right and a vital aspect of the rule of law. Both organisations face similar challenges in assisting States during pandemic outbreak. Right to access information is an inherent part of Article 10 of the Convention for the Protection of **Human Rights** and Fundamental Freedoms.

He noted that disinformation related to Covid-19 has surged, and led to distrust in information, including "news avoidance". At the same time, access to information contributes to an effective crisis response, as success of measures during Covid-19 pandemic depends on availability of accurate, reliable and timely information.



CoE tried to provide a guidance toolbox on freedom of expression to governments. It underlines that restrictions on free access to information should be an exception as it is crucial for an ability of humans to make informed decisions, limit rumours, enhance government accountability and properly implement crisis-related decisions.

In the words of Mr. Penninckx, today freedom of information influences: a) health, as public has the need and right to know, b) accountability, to ensure access to official information held by public authorities, and c) trust building, as timely and reliable information helps increase trust in government.

**Ms. Darbshire** reiterated that the right of access to information is a human right in and of itself, but it is also an instrumental right, essential for the defence of other human rights and for combatting corruption. During the current public health crisis, we observe that the public demand for data, including scientific data, has never been higher. Governments which have been more open, have found it easier to manage the response to Covid-19. Transparency of public data has been essential to counter disinformation, whilst whistle-blowers have come forward.

In some countries, such as Finland and Switzerland, the time frames for response to request information were extended. In the case of Switzerland, the time limit to answer a request was extended from 20 working days to 120 days. In times of emergency, this is far too long to wait for a request to be answered. There are also positive examples: At the EU level the Council continued to answer requests, even with officials working from home, as did the Luxembourg Commission on Access to Documents and the Croatian Information Commissioner.

In the subsequent discussion, participants reaffirmed the vital importance of OSCE commitments on freedom of information and called on participating States to bring their domestic policies in line with OSCE commitments and international human rights standards. A number of participants reported on the national law and policy related to access to information in the OSCE participating States. They gave examples of countries, where authorities, being obliged to provide information after request within certain period, refused requests or further delayed with the provision of required information.

Speakers from some of the OSCE pSs delegations underscored that access and ability to share information is essential during public crisis, offline and online information access is important. There were calls to the Governments to sign, ratify and implement Tromsø Convention on Access to Official Documents that recently became effective in the CoE.

Certain participants underscored the importance of providing public information in the languages of ethnic minorities to defend an open and pluralist society.

Participants drew attention to the ongoing criminalization of disinformation in some States. “Fake news” laws are used in the OSCE region to harass journalists, who can be fined and in some countries even imprisoned. Criminalization is the wrong approach, according to some participants, as laws are being used to silence critics. The best strategy would be to empower individuals in critical thinking.

Others pointed to the increased role of citizen journalists in promoting access to information and resilience of the public to disinformation campaigns.

Participants made the following specific recommendations in Session II:

*Recommendations to the OSCE participating States:*

- OSCE participating States should bring their domestic legislation and policies in line with OSCE commitments and international human rights standards pertaining to freedom of information and its enforcement;
- OSCE participating States should engage in regular dialogue with media professionals and wider public and be more transparent in public affairs, including on public health matters;
- OSCE participating States should sign, ratify and implement the CoE Tromsø Convention on Access to Official Documents, open for all states;
- OSCE participating States should strongly support the monitoring bodies to be established under the Tromsø Convention so as to strengthen mechanisms for oversight of the right of access to information in Europe;
- OSCE participating States should address misleading and false information, providing comprehensive and reliable public health information;
- OSCE participating States should abolish criminalization of disinformation if no public harm was made by the falsities, while the Government should not assume the role of truth-brokers.

*Specific recommendations for civil society organizations:*

- Civil society should improve citizens' media literacy to help understand how to spot and fend off "information disorder" with the aim to build societal resilience against mis- and disinformation related to COVID-19;
- Civil society should increase awareness of AI systems and their manipulative capabilities on access to information.

*Specific recommendations for the OSCE institutions and field operations:*

- OSCE RFoM should urge all pSs to join the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents, the Tromsø Convention, as it is open to all, and to ensure that they improve their laws accordingly;
- OSCE RFoM should collaborate more with the Open Government Partnership, an international alliance of 78 countries that works with civil society to advance transparency and accountability in efforts to strengthen the right of access to information.

### **SESSION III: Freedom of the Media**

*Introducers:*

**Ms. Barbara Trionfi**, Executive Director, International Press Institute

**Mr. Ricardo Gutiérrez**, General Secretary, European Federation of Journalists

*Moderator:*

**Mr. Antonius van den Brandt**, Senior Adviser, Office of RFoM

Summary of introducers' interventions:

**Ms. Trionfi** presented IPI monitoring of press freedom violations in connection with COVID-19 restrictions and brought specific examples of media freedom restrictions in the OSCE area: <https://ipi.media/covid19-media-freedom-monitoring/>. She said that during the crisis, governments have taken extreme measures, often heavily limiting people's rights, such as criminalisation of journalism, suspending access to information, etc. This is when the media is most needed to monitor that the governments act in the public interest, and yet journalists were hindered in this function.

The independent media were weakened in other ways: bans on printing and distribution; suspension of advertisements coupled with an unfair distribution of public funds and publicly-funded ads to "friendly" media; lack of public funds for online media; public funds not linked to quality criteria. While news organisations are trying to develop new business models to survive, there is a need to develop models of public support to support a pluralistic media offer.

Ms Trionfi recommended that the OSCE puts the Office of the RFoM in charge of developing a concrete plan of action for the implementation of the 2018 OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on safety of journalists. The implementation of that decision requires regular monitoring of each participating State's compliance with the principles included in the Decision, and an opportunity for the OSCE to put forward recommendations to support participating states' compliance with that decision. Without a clear implementation plan, the MC decision will remain an empty commitment.

**Mr. Gutiérrez**, in his turn, noted that the media in Europe had suffered an economic disaster. Hundreds of media outlets are under threat of closure, starting with local media, which are simply in danger of disappearing for lack of financial support. Tens of thousands of journalists have been put on temporary unemployment. Most European governments have not taken urgent measures needed to ensure the economic viability of the media at this time of crisis. Instead of supporting the media, and thus providing access to quality information, which is the best antidote against disinformation, many governments have taken measures that restrict press freedom.

The national organizations of the EFJ witnessed an unprecedented wave of pressure as part of the measures to combat the pandemic. In total, they reported more than 60 press freedom violations related to anti-pandemic measures in 19 European countries.

In conclusion, Mr. Gutiérrez called the participating States to respect the OSCE Ministerial Council decision of December 2018 on the Safety of Journalists.

Following the best practices shared by the introducers of the Session III, the participants presented their national perspectives on the state of freedom of the media, stressed the importance of preserving the relevant OSCE commitments and international obligations, even in times of public health threats, such as COVID-19.

Some of the delegations shared best practices of their countries in ensuring freedom of the media. However, they noted an abundance of laws that need to be refined, such as on defamation or on access to information, which leave unnecessarily long deadlines for requests. They recognised the importance of investigative journalism and the ability of media to investigate and publish the results of their investigation, and condemned threats against members of the media. Threats and attacks on media workers are unacceptable and need to be properly investigated.

A participant recalled a recent OSCE PA declaration that called for parliamentary oversight of government actions towards all cases of journalists. The participant expressed hope that all governments will take note of the call for strategies to eliminate harassment of women journalists who are disproportionately targeted because of their gender. The declaration mentioned that attacks are not just limited to professional journalists but also affect citizen journalists and active bloggers.

Another participant noted that combating intolerance and negative stereotyping based on religion and belief remains an important issue. In this regard the media are invited to demonstrate the highest degree of professionalism.

Some participants noted that a number of journalists in the region face criminal persecution on bogus charges of condoning terrorism, which the participants stated was an abuse of law. The legislation and law enforcement practice that pertain to countering propaganda of terrorism or disinformation need scrutiny with ODIHR participation.

A number of participants strongly praised the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media for assisting participating States to implement their commitments. This was particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants made the following specific recommendations in Session III:

*Recommendations to the OSCE participating States:*

- OSCE participating States should follow their OSCE commitments on media freedom and safety of journalists, refrain from pressure on independent media and investigate interference on their work;

- OSCE participating States should defend, protect and promote freedom the media in law and policy, and implement recommendations made by the Representative on Freedom of the Media to improve their media legislation;
- OSCE participating States should release all imprisoned journalists ;
- OSCE participating States should ensure that penal codes and anti-terror law are not used to restrict freedom of the media; criminalization of journalists based on peaceful reporting must be stopped immediately;
- OSCE participating States should put the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in charge of developing a concrete plan of action for the implementation of the 2018 OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on safety of journalists.

*Specific recommendations for the OSCE institutions and field operations:*

- OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media should assist national authorities in following their international obligations, as well as OSCE commitments related to the freedom of the media, and offer support for their draft laws to ensure they are developed in close coordination with the civil society;
- ODIHR should engage in court monitoring so as to follow and address the cases of prosecution of journalists;
- ODIHR should engage in the work on expanding on its guidelines on legislation and law enforcement practice that pertain to countering propaganda of terrorism;
- OSCE should support an establishment of a Roma information center in Austria so as to pass on more information and to resolve Roma issues at an international level.

## CLOSING SESSION

*Opening remarks:*

**Mr. Juergen Heissel**, Director, Office of RFOM

**Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, First Deputy Director, OSCE/ODIHR

**Ms. Erida Dobrush**i, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative, 2020 Albanian Chairmanship

Summary of closing remarks:

**Mr. Heissel** observed that the lively debates throughout the last two days clearly demonstrated that this meeting came at a critical moment for the right to free expression and the related rights of access to information and media freedom. It came at a time when COVID-19 related responses across the OSCE region seriously impacted on the human rights under discussion. We heard of many cases where laws and implementation measures created serious restrictions on the work of journalists. We also witness a rise in physical attacks against journalists, many of them women, covering public protests in various OSCE participating States.

The current pandemic is a strong case for open government. Only if we know the full scope of the threat posed by this disease can individuals and their communities make appropriate personal choices and health decisions. Never has the public demand for data, including scientific data, been higher.

We have heard that an increasing part of the population has been exposed to false news about the crisis. Such disinformation brings distrust, sometimes leading to “news abstention”. Mr. Heissel said that the best way to address disinformation remains to counter it with reliable information available to the public, including in a crisis situation. This requires full, honest and evolving communication with the public, and the promotion and protection of an independent press, including strong public service broadcasting. It also calls for the careful and public correction of misinformation that could lead to public health harm. Lack of sustainability of an independent public media can prove to be a boomerang in situations, like the current one, when most needed.

The OSCE is based on the concept that there can be no comprehensive security without the full respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Freedom and security are values that do not clash with each other, but indeed can strengthen each other. Our modern human rights system is the response to one of the greatest tragedies in recent history. Mr. Heissel called to draw the right lessons from the challenges we are facing today and strengthen these rights for the benefit of all.

In her closing remarks, **Ms. Gardapkhadze** highlighted that free media are fundamentally important for keeping those in power in check. They are a check on corruption, extravagances and carelessness in government and in business. Any government, unless kept in check by knowledgeable and well-informed citizens, can become a vulture praying on its own people.

Free media show where society's problems are, even when some might prefer to look away. And people can act upon wrongs in the society – but only if they know about them. Information is power. Knowledge is power.

The governments of today understand it. And yet, there is a growing number of governments who are not interested in having knowledgeable and well-informed citizens. No matter what these governments say, their actions show that they want our societies to be blind and deaf to even the most important issues that affect us. She suggested that it would be appropriate to end this meeting with a tribute to all those brave representatives of the free media, who resist our societies being zombified, and our democracies disappear.

**Ms. Dobrush**i thanked all speakers for their insightful remarks and all participants for addressing a lot of important pressing issues related to the freedom of expression, media and information during this Second Supplementary Human Dimension. The three working sessions have reaffirmed once more the importance of free media, access to information online and offline as fundamental prerequisites for healthy democracies and free societies and their interlinkage in safeguarding fundamental freedoms and human rights and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination.

A special focus was given to the safety of journalists as reporters, and the vital role reporters play in ensuring free flow of information in times of crisis, like the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and on governments' responses to crises. Accurate, free and timely reporting helps protect people and communities and serves to guarantee transparency and build public trust. Through supporting freedom of expression, free media and access to information, we also further strengthen free societies and protect the indispensable role of the human rights defenders.

To this end, she thanked ODIHR for their support in organizing the SHDM and the office of the Representative on Freedom of Media for enormous contribution to this meeting and for their work in the protection of freedom of expression, media and information and closed the meeting.

## ANNEX 1: AGENDA



**Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting**  
**on Freedom of Expression, Media and Information**

**22-23 June 2020**  
**(online)**

### **AGENDA**

**Day 1**                      **22 June**

15.00 – 16.00

**OPENING SESSION**

*Opening remarks:*

**Ms. Inid Milo**, Head of the 2020 Albanian OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

**Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir**, Director, OSCE/ODIHR

**Mr. Harlem Désir**, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM)

*Technical information:*

**Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, First Deputy Director, OSCE/ODIHR

16.00 – 18.00

**SESSION I: Freedom of Expression and its Relation to Other Fundamental Freedoms**

*Introducers:*

**Ms. Sarah Clarke**, Head of Europe and Central Asia Team, Article 19

**Ms. Nataliya Gumenyuk**, Journalist, Writer, Member of the Council on Freedom of Speech and Protection of Journalists at the Office of the President of Ukraine

*Moderator:* **Mr. Andrey Rikhter**, Senior Adviser, Office of RFOM



**Day 2**                      **23 June**

10.30 – 12.30                      **SESSION II: Access to Information**

*Introducers:*

**Mr. Patrick Penninckx**, Head of Department Information Society, Council of Europe

**Ms. Helen Darbshire**, Executive Director, Access Info Europe

*Moderator:* Ms. Kristin Olson, Principal Advisor to Head of Institution, Office of RFOM

14.30 – 16.30                      **SESSION III: Freedom of the Media**

*Introducers:*

**Ms. Barbara Trionfi**, Executive Director, International Press Institute

**Mr. Ricardo Gutiérrez**, General Secretary, European Federation of Journalists

*Moderator:* Mr. Antonius van den Brandt, Senior Adviser, Office of RFoM

16.30 – 17.30                      **CLOSING SESSION**

*Rapports from the working sessions*

*Comments from the floor*

*Closing remarks:*

**Mr. Juergen Heissel**, Director, Office of RFOM

**Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, First Deputy Director, OSCE/ODIHR

**Ms. Erida Dobrush**i, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative, 2020 Albanian Chairmanship

17.30                      Closing of the meeting

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## **ANNEX 2: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Introducers and Moderators**

*Opening remarks:*

**Ms. Inid Milo**, Head of the 2020 Albanian OSCE Chairmanship Task Force

Inid Milo is a career diplomat from the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania, currently Head of the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship 2020 Task Force since April 2019.

After finishing her Master degree (Mag.phil) at the University of Vienna in October 2002, Ms. Inid Milo joined first the administration of the Council of Ministers of Albania, the Department on Information Policy and Politics for about 14 months until February 2004. She joined the diplomatic service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania in May 2004, as a Desk Officer for OSCE matters.

Her first appointment was as a Second Secretary at the Albanian Embassy in Berlin, Germany in March 2006. Then she served in several other positions. She became a First Secretary at the Albanian Permanent Mission in UN -Geneva between February 2009 and June 2012. In July 2012, Ms Milo was appointed First Secretary at the Albanian Permanent Delegation to NATO where she served as a Political Councillor until March 2014. In April 2014 Ms. Milo was appointed as a Councillor/Number two at the Albanian Embassy in Berlin, until January 2018.

In February 2018 she moved to Tirana where she became NATO Director and Security Policies at the Albanian Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs until April 2019 when she assumed her current position.

**Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir**, Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Ingibjörg was a politician for 25 years. She served as Mayor of Reykjavik from 1994 to 2003, Member of Parliament for 7 years and Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2007 to 2009. Before taking up the position of ODIHR Director, she served as Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia at UN Women and Country Representative to Turkey. She also served as Country Representative of UN Women to Afghanistan.

Throughout Ingibjörg's career, she has been involved in policy and development working in both conflict and non-conflict countries aiming to strengthen democratic institutions and human rights. In 1982, the early years of her political career, Ingibjörg was one of the founders of the Women's Party, laying the ground for Iceland's remarkable progress in gender equality. Ingibjörg studied history and literature at the University of Iceland and then at the University of Copenhagen, and has been a Visiting Scholar at the European Institute of the London School of Economics.

**Mr. Harlem Désir**, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Harlem Désir was appointed as the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in July 2017. Prior to this position, Désir was the French Minister of State for European Affairs since

2014. Harlem was a Member of the European Parliament as well as a member of the Committee on Industry, Energy and Research, the Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Development.

He was also Vice President of the Delegation for relations with the United States (2002-2004), member of the Joint ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly (2002-2009) and member of the Delegation for relations with India (2009-2014). From 1984 to 1992 he was the president of the French NGO “SOS Racisme”, whose objective is to fight against racism, anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination. Harlem holds a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy from the Paris I Sorbonne University.

He has been awarded the Olof Palme Prize, the Grand Cross of the Order of the Phoenix and the Knight Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

*Session I:*

**Ms. Sarah Clarke**, Head of Europe and Central Asia Team, Article 19

Sarah joined ARTICLE 19 in January 2019 as Head of the Europe and Central Asia team, defending the human rights to freedom of expression and information in the region. Between 2012 and 2018, she led PEN International's policy and advocacy work, overseeing its engagement with the UN and regional human rights mechanisms and governments. She has a particular interest in freedom of expression in Turkey, where she has led numerous advocacy missions, trial observations and the amicus interventions on the priority cases of journalists before the European Court of Human Rights. Sarah has consulted for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, OSCE and Oxford and Harvard universities on issues relating to freedom of expression, asylum and forced migration. She speaks Spanish and is graduate of Oxford University, Trinity College Dublin and BPP Law School.

**Ms. Nataliya Gumenyuk**, Journalist, Writer, Member of the Council on Freedom of Speech and Protection of Journalists at the Office of the President of Ukraine

Nataliya Gumenyuk is a Ukrainian author and journalist specializing in foreign affairs and conflict reporting. She is CEO and co-founder of the Public Interest Journalism which aims at popularizing best practices for public interest journalism in the digital age. Since 2015 till 2020 she had been running an independent TV-channel hromadske.ua – an initiative of Ukrainian journalists to create public broadcasting in Ukraine, and Hromadske International en.hromadske.ua – a news outlet explaining the Eastern European geopolitical storm in English and Russian. Since the start of the revolution and later conflict in Ukraine Nataliya is reporting from the field: Maidan, Crimea, Donbas.

As an independent, international correspondent, she has reported on major political and social events from nearly 60 countries. Gumenyuk is the author of the book “The Lost Island. The Tales from the Occupied Crimea” (2020), based on 6 years reporting from the annexed peninsula. In 2015 published the book "Maidan Tahrir. In Search of the Lost Revolution" – a collection of reportages from the Middle East researching what happens to the societies after

the revolution. As a commentator, Nataliya cooperates with a number of Ukrainian and international media. As a moderator and a speaker participated in a number of international events. Gumenyuk is the Member of Council for Freedom Speech under the office of the President of Ukraine and Independent Media Council.

**Mr. Andrey Rikhter**, Senior Adviser, Office of the RFOM (moderator)

Andrey Rikhter is Senior Adviser at the OSCE Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. Richter holds university degrees in law, journalism and foreign languages, a doctorate in Russia and a professorship in media studies from Slovakia. He has authored some 250 publications on media law and policy in thirteen languages of the OSCE participating States, including the only standard media law textbook for journalism students in the Russian Federation (2002, 2009, 2016), a textbook on international standards of media regulation (2011), a textbook on online media law (2014), and a book on censorship and freedom of the media in post-Soviet countries, published by UNESCO (2007). Dr Richter sits on the editorial boards of a number of international journals on communications and the media. Andrey Richter was a long-time professor at the School of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University, where he chaired a department in media law and history. He also served as a commissioner at the International Commission of Jurists and the Chair of the Law Section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research.

*Session II:*

**Mr. Patrick Penninckx**, Head of Department Information Society, Council of Europe

Patrick Penninckx has spent the last 30 years of his career with the Council of Europe, contributing to the transformation processes of the Organisation and developing partnerships with international and national institutions. Currently heading the Information Society Department under the Directorate General Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Patrick coordinates standard setting and cooperation activities in the fields of media, internet governance, data protection, cybercrime and artificial intelligence.

He is also responsible for projects related to public-private partnerships and cooperation with business partners. His professional focus encompasses areas such as freedom of expression, safety of journalists, sound internet governance, international standards in the data protection, action against cybercrime and the impact of AI on human rights. An outspoken public speaker promoting the Council of Europe values and achievements, he holds Political Science and Educational degrees from the University of Leuven. Previously, Patrick oversaw Human Resources policy development, transforming the administrative management of personnel into a competency based human resource policy.

**Ms. Helen Darbshire**, Executive Director, Access Info Europe

Founder and director of Access Info Europe, Helen is a human rights activist specialising in the right of access to information (freedom of information). Helen is a member of the Steering Committee of the Open Government Partnership and the Board of the International Open Data Charter. Helen has advised organizations such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the OSCE

and the World Bank. Helen holds a degree in Philosophy of Science and Psychology from Durham University, United Kingdom.

**Ms. Kristin Olson**, Principal Advisor to Head of Institution, Office of RFOM (moderator)

Kristin Olson has been internationally engaged in media freedom and freedom of expression the last 25 years via different organizations. Since June 2019, she is the Principal Adviser to Mr Harlem Desir, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Prior to this, in her position as Senior Project Manager for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Chair of Sida's Media committee, she worked closely with a multitude of recognized global NGOs, multilateral bodies and bilateral decision-makers to coordinate the international efforts for increased freedom of expression.

She has a background as journalist, media manager, and TV- and radio producer in Sweden. Holding degrees in both Humanitarian assistance/Peace and conflict resolution, and in Communication for Development, she is the author of factual books on media literacy, on media and society, and independent producer of an educational TV-series on media impact.

*Session III:*

**Ms. Barbara Trionfi**, Executive Director, International Press Institute

Barbara Trionfi is Executive Director at the Vienna-based International Press Institute (IPI), a global network of editors, media executives and leading journalists dedicated to safeguarding and fostering media freedom and promoting quality, independent journalism. Barbara joined IPI in 2000, as a press freedom adviser for the Asia-Pacific region, where she had previously studied and worked for over four years, carrying out research in the field of human rights and freedom of expression. Later, as press freedom manager, she oversaw IPI's global press freedom monitoring and coordinated IPI's global advocacy.

With an academic background in international relations and human rights, Barbara has taught courses at Webster University, Vienna in Media Ethics, Media Literacy and Cultural Diversity and the Media. Her field of expertise covers different areas related to press freedom and freedom of expression, including self-regulatory media accountability systems, safety of journalists, and international mechanisms to protect press freedom.

**Mr. Ricardo Gutiérrez**, General Secretary, European Federation of Journalists

Ricardo Gutiérrez is General Secretary of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the largest journalists' organisation in Europe, representing over 320,000 journalists in 45 countries. Former journalist for the Belgian daily newspaper "Le Soir", he is senior lecturer at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). He is a member of the Belgian Press Council (CDJ), of the Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and of the

EU High Level Expert Group on Disinformation. He has conducted training for journalists on hate speech, ethical journalism and reporting on ethnicity and religion.

**Mr. Antonius van den Brandt**, Senior Adviser, Office of RFoM (moderator)

Ton van den Brandt is Senior Adviser at the OSCE Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. He holds a degree in Dutch law and (*cum laude*) in International Law, and in Journalism. Van den Brandt worked as a journalist for a national newspaper and a weekly magazine for many years, and is the published author of two journalistic books. After this, Van den Brandt worked as an ad interim legal adviser with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the Netherlands Red Cross, before taking up a position as senior political adviser with Amnesty International. He chaired the Dutch branch of the International Commission of Jurists and was a member of the Supervisory Board of the Netherlands Helsinki Committee. Before moving to the OSCE, he led and managed the Communications Department of the Amsterdam District Court of Law.

*Closing remarks:*

**Mr. Juergen Heissel**, Director, Office of RFOM

Jürgen Heissel is Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the media. He has two decades of experience in the Austrian Foreign Service, covering human rights and security policy issues. He has been working in multilateral settings with organizations including the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. His posting prior to RFOM was with the Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE, where in 2017 he was the coordinator of the Human Dimension during the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship.

**Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, First Deputy Director, OSCE/ODIHR

Katarzyna Gardapkhadze is the First Deputy Director of ODIHR, where she oversees activities of the Election, Democratization, Human Rights, Tolerance and Non- Discrimination, and Roma and Sinti Programmes. Prior to her current appointment in August 2016, she was the Head of ODIHR's Human Rights Department. Ms. Gardapkhadze is an expert in strategic planning and change management, conflict resolution and mediation, with a thematic expertise in human and children rights and gender equality. She has more than 20 years of professional experience from Poland, the United States, Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. In 2003-2011. Ms. Gardapkhadze led conflict resolution, human rights and child/social welfare reform programs in the South Caucasus, with an advisory role in similar programs in Central Asia. In 2000 – 2002, she managed initiatives focused on human rights, minorities and inter-ethnic dialogue in Western Balkans. Fluent in Polish, English and Russian, Ms. Gardapkhadze holds a Master's Degree in social sciences.

**Ms. Erida Dobrush**i, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative, 2020 Albanian Chairmanship

Ms. Erida Dobrush was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the OSCE and other International Organizations

in Vienna in November 2019. Since January 2020, she serves as Chairperson of the OSCE Preparatory Committee under the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship.

Prior to this assignment, Ms. Dobrushy has worked as senior expert in international programs, supporting good governance and democracy in Albania (April 2014-November 2019). She has extensive experience in elections management and has served as Director of Elections Infrastructure and Logistics of the Central Election Commission in Albania (December 2002 – April 2014). For several years, she has been part of civil society organizations and think tanks (1998-2002).

Ms. Dobrushy holds a BA degree in Social Sciences from the University of Tirana (1998), MSc in Politics and Administration from the University of Bologna (2002) and MA Degree in Administrative Law from the University of Tirana (2014).