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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MAXIME LEFEBVRE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE, 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,

As my country was mentioned in the discussion, I should like to make a statement on behalf of France in addition to the statement by the European Union, which I support entirely.

France thanks Ms. Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and warmly congratulates her for her activities in favour of freedom of the press and the protection of journalists.

Be they journalists, bloggers, war correspondents or associated personnel, these people every day help us to better understand the world and its developments and to make democracy live. Freedom of expression should be respected everywhere and in all media forms. We have a responsibility to everyone to work to ensure full exercise of this freedom, not least in the OSCE where we have a considerable *acquis* and a unique institution devoted specially to freedom of the media.

Regarding the issues concerning my country in the report presented this morning, notably the gun attack of 18 November at the headquarters of the newspaper *Libération* referred to by the United States of America, the suspected gunman was arrested on 21 November by the law enforcement authorities and was questioned by the investigating judge. He was already convicted of a gun attack in 1994, and the precise motives for his acts will be established during the investigation.

We have had the opportunity to communicate with the Representative on these issues and our response is faithfully reflected in her report. We welcome this communication, which contributes fully to strengthening freedom of the press, a basic pillar of democracy.

In our opinion, freedom of expression includes protection of journalistic sources. To this end, a draft law was proposed by my country in June 2013 and is currently being discussed in Parliament. Just like combating intimidation and all forms of violence against

journalists, guaranteeing the confidentiality of sources is a major aspect of freedom of the press.

In conclusion, I should like to return to the adoption by consensus by the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly of a resolution on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity on 26 November.

I should like to quote the statement by our Minister for Foreign Affairs Laurent Fabius published in response to the adoption of this resolution:

“I welcome the United Nations General Assembly’s adoption of a resolution on the safety of journalists. It calls on States to prevent acts of violence against journalists, with due regard for their independence, and to combat impunity for the perpetrators of such acts. At France’s behest, the resolution names 2 November the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists. The date was chosen in tribute to Ghislaine Dupont and Claude Verlon, murdered in Mali on 2 November 2013. It is our responsibility to do our utmost, in their memory, to ensure that such crimes against the fundamental freedom to inform and be informed do not go unpunished.”

I should like to take this opportunity, Mr. Chairperson, to make a solemn appeal to all delegations here. I trust that we are all interested in the role and credibility of this Organization. Now that the New York text has just been adopted by consensus, it would be incomprehensible if at the Ministerial Council meeting in Kyiv next week we failed to adopt the decision on the protection of journalists that is currently being negotiated.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.