



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 26 November 2015

Mr Chairman,

We thank the Representative on Freedom of the Media for her report, which again shows the wide scope of her work and the wide variety of countries she assists. It is clear that none of us can feel safe from her watchful eye. We welcome this scrutiny. Issues as fighting terrorism, tackling conflict situations and developments in media technology pose new challenges to our governments. We need the professional and unbiased approach of the Representative on Freedom of the Media to help us comply with our commitments.

Mr Chairman,

Investigative journalism and independent media are essential for citizens to be informed and to be able to form their own opinions. This is important not least in times of conflict. It is therefore particularly worrying to see media being closed or journalists attacked when they are trying to report on situations of conflict or political instability.

All threats, intimidation or attacks against journalists are a threat to freedom of opinion and expression. Governments who fail to investigate, prosecute and punish such incidents are failing to protect one of the cornerstones of democracy.

Mr Chairman,

We thank the Representative for bringing the issue of harassment and threats against female journalists to our attention. Female journalists are increasingly being singled out and attacked on the Internet. We appreciate the expert meeting held in September and the resulting recommendations on ways to combat this growing problem.

Mr Chairman,

The widespread use of propaganda, not least in the Ukraine conflict, is a cause for concern. The Representative on Freedom of the Media has assisted us in confronting this by organizing discussions on what propaganda is and how to counter it. Her answer, and our answer, is not

restricting media freedom, but promoting media pluralism, promoting ethics in journalism and educating journalists and the public.

Norway commends RFoMs initiative to bring together Ukrainian and Russian journalists' organizations to improve professional standards and discuss ways to improve the safety of journalists in the conflict in and around Ukraine. This is a constructive contribution to improving reporting and countering propaganda.

Mr Chairman,

Freedom of expression, freedom of the media and the safety of journalists are key priorities for my government. We hope to see strong decisions in Belgrade that will strengthen our commitments and ensure that they are not weaker than other international obligations.

Madame Representative,

Let me once again thank you for chairing our side event at HDIM on a topic of interest to both your office and my government, namely protection of journalists' sources.

Thank you, Mr Chairman