

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting - Working Session 2, 17 September 2019

## **United Kingdom Statement in response to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

The United Kingdom fully aligns ourselves with the statements given by Sweden and just now by Finland on behalf of the EU and would like to add some comments in our national capacity.

We have two principal recommendations for participating states: first, to consider joining the Media Freedom Coalition by signing the Global Pledge; and second, to consider developing a national action plan that protects the safety of journalists.

The United Kingdom has long been committed to promoting media freedom and the safety of journalists as part of how we champion human rights globally. In 2018, together with Canada, we launched a Global Campaign for Media Freedom, with the aim of increasing the global spotlight on media freedom and raising the cost for those who restrict or abuse journalists for doing their jobs.

Our Global Conference for Media Freedom held in July, co-hosted with Canada, brought together over 60 ministers and 1500 delegates from over 100 countries. We were delighted that many across the OSCE region attended.

We were pleased that you, Mr Desir, and your team from the Office of the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of Media joined us there, and that we were able, in particular, to host the launch of the Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression, with your counterparts from the UN, Organisation of American States, African Union and civil society.

In response to your and the OSCE's appeal for member states to develop national committees and action plans on the safety of journalists, the United Kingdom is now in the process of developing its own committee and plan. Through the Global Campaign we are encouraging all governments to develop national action plans. We are delighted that the OSCE is joining UNESCO to spearhead the international task force to support member states to do this and apply best practice.

OSCE participating states can send a strong signal that we have a shared goal and are committed to promoting media freedom and the fight against impunity. We encourage governments to consider joining the Media Freedom Coalition, which will be launched at the UN General Assembly in New York on 25 September, by signing the Global Pledge, and to contribute to the new Global Media Defence Fund. Together we can make a difference.

I look forward to discussing these issues further and to updating you all on the initiatives of the Global Campaign in the sessions on safety of journalists tomorrow.