

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE
OSCE SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING ON
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA WITH
A SPECIAL FOCUS ON CONFLICT SITUATIONS, INCLUDING
PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS AND REPORTING
DURING ARMED CONFLICT**

Vienna, 27 and 28 October 2016

**Session II: Media co- and self-regulation as an instrument to improve
ethical standards and counter propaganda**

Mr. Moderator,
Distinguished participants,

One of the guarantees of protection of the rights of journalists is the institution of the professional association. There are dozens of professional associations for journalists in the Russian Federation with over 120,000 members. They are guided in their activities by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Declaration of Sofia, which elaborated “sound journalistic practices” that are “the most effective safeguard against governmental restrictions and pressures”.

Journalists themselves establish norms and guidelines for their work. Whether it is called self-regulation or self-censorship depends only on the subjective point of view.

It is important that journalists themselves observe ethical standards. But this is not a panacea for preventing propaganda, which is spread with active government involvement. At the time, the Government of the United States of America “solicitously” protected its own inhabitants from information about what was really going on in Iraq and Kuwait. We are seeing the same picture today regarding the activities of the Russian Aerospace Forces in Syria.

Official representatives of the Department of State and the White House boast about “victories” of the US-led coalition, but the US and French media are not shy to “borrow” footage from the Russian Ministry of Defence of Russian air strikes on Islamic State positions to corroborate the coalition’s “successes”.

Moreover, the United States of America is elaborating national plans to “counter foreign propaganda and disinformation” so as to devise a “comprehensive strategy to combat foreign disinformation”.

Having created barriers to the spread of alternative points of view in the countries contiguous with Russia, the Euro-Atlanticists have formed propaganda structures like the East StratCom Task Force. Officially, it was set up for “effective communication and promotion of EU [European Union] policies towards the Eastern Neighbourhood” and strengthening the overall media environment including support for media freedom and independent media, but its true aim is to increase the EU’s potential for countering Russia in the information space.

The number of specialized information structures continues to grow. There is the Center for European Policy Analysis in Washington and the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (StratCom COE) in Riga. Certain OSCE participating States are involved in these structures, continuing under the pretext of combating “aggressive Russian propaganda” to rid their information space of alternative points of view. All this is completely at odds with the principles of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

Paradoxically, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, both permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and bearing particular responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, expressed reservations regarding Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states that propaganda for war “shall be prohibited by law.”

We urge these and other participating States to refrain from applying double standards, withdraw their reservations to important international agreements and meet their OSCE commitments in connection with freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

Thank you for your attention.