

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

Closing remarks

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished participants,

We should like to thank the Chairmanship, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for organizing this important and topical meeting.

Unfortunately, the appeal by the organizers of the event to refrain from direct name-calling that diverts attention from the actual subject of the meeting has not been heeded by some representatives of participating States and non-governmental organizations. For our part, we have made every effort to concentrate as fully as possible on the essence of the problems under consideration and to avoid politicization.

The position of some States reveals a persistent unwillingness to recognize that their personal point of view might not be the only true and incontestable one and that we have gathered here to exchange opinions and in particular to attempt to listen to and understand one another.

In every country there is a certain portion of society, and frequently a large portion, that supports its leadership. The journalistic environment is no exception. We are all in the same situation here, and to hurl accusations of propaganda at one another is not very clever, to put it mildly.

During the course of this meeting, the need for States to meet their commitments to ensure freedom of expression and freedom of the media has been emphasized on more than one occasion. Our discussions show that there are problems in this regard throughout the entire OSCE area.

We find the policy of obstructing the work of the media, particularly the Russian media, in OSCE countries to be absolutely unacceptable.

Some countries, including Western ones, continue to exert pressure on Russian information resources like the agencies TASS and Rossiya Segodnya, the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VGTRK) and the television station Russia Today.

In addition, the drawing up of blacklists, the barring of entry or deportation of journalists, preventing television stations from broadcasting, demonization of the media and their labelling as disseminators of “disinformation” or “propaganda” are widely employed practices. All this is a sign of weakness and an inability to take criticism or to defend one’s point of view in a fair and competitive information environment.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, has repeatedly urged participating States to refrain from restrictive measures towards the media and to counter the presentation of information slanted in favour of one country or other not through bans but through the development of a pluralistic media landscape.

We call on the participating States to meet their OSCE commitments to freedom of expression and freedom of the media, to put an end to the propaganda hysteria and to return to sober and constructive dialogue on all these questions.

With a view to objectively seeking answers together to the challenges of freedom of expression and freedom and pluralism of the media, we invite the participating States to consider the Russian draft Ministerial Council decision on this subject, which covers most of the questions discussed during this meeting.

In conclusion, I should like to say the following. It is regrettable that organizations recognized in participating States as extremist or terrorist have access to the work of the OSCE. The recent Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw clearly showed what this practice can lead to, as two delegations were forced to leave the meeting. The so-called “Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People” is regarded in the Russian Federation as an extremist organization, and its participation in the meeting is unacceptable for us. We are bewildered by the persistent attempts of some OSCE countries to pass off this organization as some kind of body supposedly representing the interests of the entire Crimean Tatar people, a claim that is completely at odds with reality.

This once again confirms the need to settle the unresolved procedural questions regarding the functioning of our Organization, particularly the participation of civil society in OSCE events.

Thank you for your attention.