

Original: ENGLISH



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement to welcome the new Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatovic

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 11, 2010

The United States joins with other participating States in expressing a very warm welcome to the OSCE to Ms. Dunja Mijatovic—the newest OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. It is a special pleasure for me to welcome a fellow female professional to this institution just after we celebrated the International Women's Day.

Ms. Mijatovic steps into this position at a critical time for media freedom in the OSCE region. As has been reiterated here in the Permanent Council over the past several weeks, there are serious and gathering dangers to the liberties which make a free, independent and reliable media possible in some of our participating States, and the need for a careful and tenacious watchdog has never been more pressing.

Ms. Mijatovic comes to this task well prepared by her background in Bosnia-Herzegovina as Director of Broadcasting at the Communications Regulatory Agency and as Chairperson of the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities. Her academic research on Internet freedom and her membership on a state commission to combat child pornography leave Ms. Mijatovic well-placed to deal with the nexus between the legitimate need for regulation and the rights of the people to knowledge and information. She has a well-earned reputation for refusing to bow to special interests and for speaking truth to power. We have full faith and confidence that she will continue to do so in her new posting – but we know it will not be easy. If recent history is an indicator, Ms. Mijatovic will be criticized, sometimes even unfairly. But, standing up for the voices of freedom across the OSCE is its own reward.

Ms. Mijatovic, you can count on the unflagging support of the United States government throughout your tenure. We wish you well, and we welcome you wholeheartedly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.