



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The Representative on Freedom of the Media
Dunja Mijatović**

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2nd Communiqué on Open Journalism

Online media covers a wide range of formats and languages. Today the Internet provides easy access to electronic or online-only versions of traditional print and broadcast media, as well as emerging New Media based on different and more participatory forms of expression.

Even in the case of traditional media, the Internet offers a method of distribution which enables access to information and resources as well as a more interactive framework for dialogue between media outlets and consumers.

Within this framework the phenomenon of Open Journalism has to be considered, of course, in light of already existing rights and other legal provisions in the field of free expression and media freedom. While technological changes mean that journalism and media are irreversibly changing, our basic human rights remain the same.

The latest expert debate on Open Journalism focused on how traditional and well-established media legal statutes should be applied or re-interpreted to protect innovation and media plurality.

As a conclusion to this session the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media issues the following recommendations to the participating States:

- The participating States need to recognise that the new participants in journalism act as public watchdogs, contribute to a free and open society, make systems of government more accountable, and foster democratic development by connecting people and building bridges between nations.
- The participating States need to ensure that the Internet remains an open platform for free flow of information and ideas, and that any proposals to regulate the Internet properly respect and promote freedom of expression and freedom of the media.
- Online content should be dealt with as any other form of expression, and there is therefore no need to create new principles of regulation to deal with illegal or harmful content.
- The new media actors should also enjoy some if not all of the privileges that were in the past only granted to traditional journalists. They might include, but not necessarily be limited to confidentiality of sources, media accreditation, information requests, and perishability of news.
- The existing national systems of media self-regulation should be open to new media actors.

The next meeting on legal/regulatory aspects of Open Journalism is planned for spring 2015.

Dunja Mijatović

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

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