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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

on the World Press Freedom Day as delivered by Ambassador Armen

Papikyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia,

at the 1226th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

May 2, 2019

Mr.Chairman,

Freedom of expression is an essential pillar of democracy and human rights protection. It has been an indispensable tool for promotion of human rights, civil liberties and democracy in Armenia. And on the eve of the World Press Freedom Day Armenia reiterates its unwavering commitment to the freedom of expression.

Mass media played a crucial role in Armenia last year in April-May. The protests were covered by a significant number of journalists and media outlets. No restrictions on flow of information were imposed and online broadcasting of mass protests was available throughout the country. The public protests in Armenia and ensuing Velvet Revolution have demonstrated particular significance of the freedom of expression and the strength and maturity of our public, and the civil society who stood at the forefront of the Revolution.

Almost after one year of democratic transition Armenia achieved irreversible progress in upholding freedom of expression and media. And according to the 2019 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders Armenia has improved by 19 points its press freedom score and moved up to the 61st place out of 180 countries in the world.

The close cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the Office of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media contributes to further strengthening of

pluralistic and free media in Armenia. Armenia strongly supports the activities of the Representative on Freedom of the Media Mr. Désir, whose critical voice plays a key role in promoting and advocating full implementation of the freedom of expression and free media commitments. We will count on the continued advice and support of the RFOM to address all challenges related to free media.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that independent and free media can play positive role in times of conflict through providing objective information, advocating peace, confidence and reconciliation. In line with the OSCE Milan Ministerial Decision on Safety of Journalism, we should take proper measures for protection of journalists, including in conflict situations.

My delegation would like to use this opportunity pay tribute to all journalists who showed personal courage and professionalism in reporting to the public on sensitive issues.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the freedom of media and expression will always remain priority for the Government of Armenia and will continue to play important role in further strengthening the transparency, good governance, the rule of law and democracy.

Thank you.