



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

**FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA WITH A
SPECIAL FOCUS ON CONFLICT SITUATIONS, INCLUDING
PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS AND REPORTING DURING ARMED
CONFLICT**

**27-28 October 2016
Hofburg, Vienna**

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Safe working conditions for journalists have been at the forefront of OSCE commitments since 1975. The Helsinki Final Act set out to “improve the conditions under which journalists from one participating State exercise their profession in another participating State”, while the Vienna Follow-Up meeting in 1989 stated that participating States “will make further efforts to facilitate the freer and wider dissemination of information of all kinds, to encourage co-operation in the field of information and to improve the working conditions of journalists.” Two years later, they agreed to adopt “all feasible measures to protect journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions, particularly in cases of armed conflict”, and to co-operate to that effect, as stated in the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE in 1991. In 1994, the Budapest CSCE Summit stated that participating States “condemn all attacks on and harassment of journalists and will endeavour to hold those directly responsible for such attacks and harassment accountable.”

Responsibility for upholding all OSCE commitments lies with the governments of the participating States. National governments are called on to take the necessary steps to protect the physical safety and security of journalists who face threats of violence. That obligation calls for coordinated and consistent State policies and practices. It is necessary to ensure that national laws, administrative and judicial systems protect and promote freedom of expression and safeguard the lives and professional rights of journalists.

In 1997, when the office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media was established, participating States gave the RFOM a mandate to “address serious problems caused by, inter alia, obstruction of media activities and unfavourable working conditions for journalists”.

Safety of journalists during armed conflict continues to be an important issue when it comes to safety of journalists. This event provides a forum to exchange information, share problems as well as good practices, to discover the principal necessities to reform related legislation and judicial instruments and to start formulation of recommendations for the governments as to how to improve the security of journalists in the OSCE area.

15:00 – 16:00 **OPENING SESSION**

Opening remarks:

Ms. Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (*Introducer*)

Mr. Michael Georg Link, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR)

Ambassador Eberhard Pohl, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Germany to the OSCE

Keynote speech:

Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Technical information by **Mr. Frane Maroevic**, Director, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM)

16:00 – 18:00 **SESSION I: Safety of Journalists in Armed Conflict**

With the start of the conflict in and around Ukraine in spring of 2014, especially in eastern parts of the country, safety of journalists and other members of the media became one of the primary concerns. Numerous reports by the OSCE RFoM detail the killings, beatings, and harassment of journalists in and around the country since the beginning of the conflict. In addition to being specifically targeted for their work, on many occasions journalists were sent on assignment without special training, protective gear, insurance or awareness of the conditions they could expect to face as a result of the conflict. Since then, attention for the issue of safety of journalists and other members of media has risen considerably in the OSCE region. This session will explore such questions as:

- What are the main threats faced by journalists in times of conflict?
- How to make the work of journalists and their media organizations safer?
- How to combat impunity for crimes against journalists?
- Are journalists more at risk, now that they are no longer the only channel to convey messages from belligerent parties?
- How can participating States better implement existing international standards and OSCE commitments in this field?

Panelists:

Mr. Gerhard Doujak, Human Rights Department of the Austrian Foreign Ministry

Ms. Nadezhda Azhghina, Vice President of the European Federation of Journalists

Mr Patrick Penninckx, Head of the Information Department of the Council of Europe

Moderator:

Mr. Frane Maroevic, Director, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM)

19:00– 21:30 - Reception hosted by the German OSCE Chairmanship and the Permanent Delegation of Sweden, Schwedenhaus (*transport provided upon registration, shuttle from Hofburg leaving at 18:15, doors open at 18:30*)

10:00 – 12:00 SESSION II: Media co- and self-regulation as an instrument to improve ethical standards and counter propaganda

Media co- and self-regulation have long been regarded as a powerful tool to increase ethical standards and enable quality journalism. Its significance only increases in times of conflict. Broadcasting is one of the most pervasive and powerful means of communication and, therefore, broadcast regulation is a challenging task that requires a set of clear and balanced rules and mechanisms. Strict regulation is a way for governments to ensure that they have monopoly over the means of national broadcasting and the distribution of information. But controlling information weakens the role of journalism in providing accurate and critical scrutiny of the exercise of power. Governments have a responsibility to provide an appropriate media regulatory framework, in accord with democratic principles and with full respect for freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Particularly relevant areas of regulation include licensing, as well as content regulation regarding accuracy, balance, defamation, incitement to violence, threats to public order and national security issues.

This session will explore such questions as:

- Is there a need for specific content rules for traditional and new media in times of conflict?
- What regulatory tools can be established and applied in order to deal with biased and misleading information?
- How can media pluralism be ensured to avoid information monopolies as well as a confrontational media environment?
- How can serious threats against public order and national security be tackled without stifling free expression and free media?
- How to best guarantee the independence of the media regulator?
- What is the specialized role of public service media in times of crisis?

Panelists:

Ms. Maria Donde, International Policy Manager, Office of Communications, U.K.

Mr. Boris Navasardyan, President, Yerevan Press Club

Prof. Wolfgang Kenntemich, Director of Europäisches Institut für Qualitätsjournalismus, Germany

Moderator:

Mr. Andrey Rikhter, Senior Adviser to the Representative on Freedom of the Media, OSCE

12.00-14.00 – Lunch break

14:00 – 16:00 <u>SESSION III: The Roles of the OSCE, Governments and the Civil Society to Protect Media Freedom in Times of Crises</u>

A fundamental characteristic of democratic governments and free societies is that they encourage and promote the expression of diverse views both through free and pluralistic media and through the activities of citizens in independent non-governmental organizations which engage in vigorous, open public debate.

The OSCE, as well as other international organizations such as the United Nations and Council of Europe, are tasked not only to set international standards on how to ensure freedom of expression and media freedom, but also to insist on the implementation of these standards into national legislation and into the practices of the judiciary. Governments remain responsible for ensuring safe working conditions for journalists, by not only adopting but also by swiftly incorporating international standards into their national legislation, and by actively ensuring their daily implementation. Robust and independent NGOs also play a vital role in sustaining open democracy. They provide independent and pluralistic information to the media and to the whole society on matters of public concern and they show a mirror to governments and other vested interests over a wide variety of matters of legitimate concern. It remains their responsibility to carry out this essential role by following the highest ethical standards that they themselves have established.

This session will explore such questions as:

- The role of the OSCE on the ground and in diplomacy – do journalists rely on the OSCE as a partner?
- Does the absence of journalists in conflict zones increase the risk of violence against civilian population?
- From commitments to action: how to hold governments better accountable for the safety of journalists?
- How can the OSCE, and other international organizations, become more effective in ensuring better and faster implementation of commitments in the field of safety of journalists?
- How can governments uphold the commitments that they adopted to protect safety of journalists?
- What are the main challenges that journalists, as well as media and human rights NGOs face in ensuring their vital role in reporting on issues of public importance, including during crises?

Panelists:

Ambassador Vaidotas Verba, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

Ms Lucie Morillon, Reporters Without Borders Programme Director, New Media Specialist

Moderator:

Mr. Thijs Berman, Principal Adviser to the Representative on Freedom of the Media, OSCE

16:00 – 16:30 Break

16.30-17.30 – CLOSING SESSION

Report by the Rapporteur from the Working Sessions:

Ms. Barbara Trionfi, Executive Director, International Press Institute

Comments from the floor

Closing remarks:

Ms. Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Ambassador Eberhard Pohl, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Germany to the OSCE

17:30 **Closing of the meeting**