



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Mission to Montenegro

## **Statement to the media**

**Head of the OSCE Mission, Ambassador Janina Hrebickova,  
Thursday 18 September 2014,  
Congress Centre Premier Hotel, Podgorica**

Good morning and thank you for coming.

You will recall that shortly after I began working as the Head of the OSCE Mission in Montenegro, we had a similar encounter, when we were introduced and when I promised that we would meet occasionally to give you more information on what was achieved in the meantime.

Let me say that after my first 10 months my impressions generally are very positive and I have experienced openness and constructive engagement in meetings with the highest state officials, prime minister, president, heads of state institutions and representatives of civil society, media, heads of various international organisations and many diplomats working in Montenegro.

We would like to thank them most deeply, since without their support and understanding our success would not be guaranteed.

The Mission is currently working on planning the activities and budget for the next year and that report will be presented end of October in Vienna.

Ladies and gentleman,

Although the mandate of the OSCE encompasses a wide spectrum of areas, the Mission believes that the support in the area of further strengthening of the rule of law and efforts towards achieving consistent results is still the priority and this will continue to be the main area of our support in the upcoming period.

Attaining the highest possible level of independence and effectiveness in the state institutions are at the same time the essential requirements in the country's EU integration objectives, as well as in its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

It means judges, prosecutors, police, as well as public administration officials, are able to exercise the competences of their profession efficiently and free from political interference.

It also means good governance at Parliament and local municipal level that is accountable and transparent.

In the coming period the country's ability to implement its action plans fully, will indicate the extent to which the civil service is becoming professional, the prosecution is becoming independent and the security sector is more open and effective.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last December I expressed concern at what I assessed was a rising polarization in the Montenegrin society.

I believe that a combination of inflammatory reporting by the strongly divided media, in-effective self-regulatory bodies and a lack of intervention by civil society and citizens are just some of the contributing factors in this process.

I believe that in every society there should be clear awareness of what both the rights and responsibilities are, and that those should be fully respected.

State institutions, as well as all other public scene stake holders, and especially the media, need to have a better and more constructive communication and cooperation. Their cooperation and communication are reflected through the reporting of the media, and may serve both as a positive and as a negative model of communication, which in fact happens.

Media reporting is unfortunately not on a desirable level, and there are cases of violations of human rights, professional and ethical standards.

On the other hand, the rule of law and law enforcement institutions are still facing the various shortcomings and challenges.

Furthermore, the cases of unresolved attacks on journalists and media property, as well as on other individuals, contribute to perception of inefficiency, which adds up to the overall polarization.

At the same time lack of effort to communicate information in a timely and consistent manner to the media is creating an additionally tense relationship among the media and institutions.

Over the past nine months, our Mission, together with the state institutions, civil sector and you – media representatives was making an effort to find ways to diminish the potential for further polarization and antagonism.

Our key goal in the next period will be to extend the support of the Mission to this area and to provide a platform for dialogue and raising of awareness towards

respecting the rule of law, human rights and rights of individuals, as well as in enhancing the professionalism of all state institutions, media, and all other societal stake holders.

The Mission will launch a project which will consist of several phases:

The first part of the project will consist of workshops aimed at strengthening the capacities of judges, prosecutors and police forces. The aim is to raise the awareness of complex responsibility to balance transparency, public access to information, protection of private data, personal and official information, to guarantee the presumption of innocence of persons accused or suspected of a crime, and to respect rights of individuals, especially of detained persons. At the same time, we will proceed further to work on improving the relations with the media by investing efforts in their further professionalizing of PR Offices.

The second part of the project will offer training for journalists on specific topics aimed at improving media reporting on rule of law and law enforcement matters.

The third part of the project will be public debates which will be aired live starting from February 2015. Those live shows will be produced by the RTCG, since the OSCE has been cooperating with the RTCG for years. The RTCG, as a Public Service Broadcaster, could serve as the best platform to bring together all segments of society to carry out open discussions about crucial issues that the Montenegrin society faces - work of the rule of law institutions, media functioning, and other issues of vital societal relevance.

In those debates we wish to give the space to citizens since they are, together with the institutions, vital for the diminishing the polarization in the society. Making their voice stronger is of huge significance in the overall process of democratization. The use of social media to raise questions related to the topics discussed in the live TV series will be an added feature in furthering debate.

In that light I would like to inform you that yesterday I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the RTCG. This defines the framework through which the OSCE will help to advance its transformation as the Public Service Broadcaster.

The fourth part of the project will consist of evaluation and monitoring of results of the implemented activities, both in media and institutions. We will also identify the segments where eventually additional support might be needed.

As a fifth part of the project we are planning to organize a large scale international conference attended by relevant international and national experts, who would competently discuss these issues, assess the achieved results, and give recommendations for the year 2016.

To make further progress, a further challenge for the Government will be in solving the issue of sustainable and sufficient financing to RTCG. OSCE stands ready to assist in seeking a sound solution

To that extent, the Mission is planning to organize a Round Table on sustainable financing and digitalization of the Public Service Broadcaster on October 21, in cooperation with the RTCG and European Broadcasting Union – EBU, of which I spoke recently to the Prime Minister. The deadline for digitalization for European countries is June 2015. The RTCG should become a modern Public Service Broadcaster, which is in the interest of not only the Government, but all citizens of this country.

In closing, I would use this opportunity to inform you that next year, besides our priority assistance in the rule of law, especially toward effective results in confronting corruption and organized crime, our Mission plans to provide support to strengthen the accountability and transparency of institutions.

We will also assist the Parliament to increase its interaction with citizens, build good governance standards at local level. We will also increase activities to promote gender equality, for greater political participation of women and their economic empowerment, for Roma inclusion through access to education and in efforts toward durable solutions for displaced persons.

In the light of the OSCE support to the ongoing security and defence sector reforms, we welcome the approach and efforts that Montenegro is investing on that area.

Next year our Mission will expand this support to a series of trainings on human rights and gender issues for other security sector personnel, police, prisons, army personnel, including those to be deployed in international missions, and other institutions.

The trainings will be organized in cooperation with the parliamentary committees for security and defence and gender.

We plan to incorporate these educations and trainings for all members of armed and security sector forces, security sector and educational institutions into the human rights and gender policies and educational curriculums of the country.

Thank you for your attention.