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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement**

**in response to the address of Ms. Teresa Ribeiro,  
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media  
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan  
at the 1346<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

*25 November 2021*

Madame Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Ms. Teresa Ribeiro back to the Permanent Council and thanks for her report, which we have considered carefully.

Armenia acknowledges the crucial role of free, independent and pluralistic media for a democratic society and accountable governance. Freedom of expression and media freedom are among the key priorities of the Armenian Government.

Madame Representative,

Unfortunately, since your last report at the Permanent Council, the overall situation with media freedom in the OSCE region has not changed for the better. As you rightly noted in your report, many deep-rooted problems, threats and challenges continue to persist in the OSCE area. We consider your report to be an important reminder to all participating States of their respective commitments in the area of freedom of the media.

As I have said, we have studied the report carefully. As a general remark, let me say, that we believe that one should criticize not only those who are accepting the criticism and ready to engage constructively with your office, but more importantly those whose abysmal track record with freedom of the media is well documented, as is the general situation with human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and

the rule of law. Otherwise it might be interpreted as if the RFOM has certain limitations or certain considerations while exercising its mandate. We think that we should avoid creating such an impression.

We welcome the launch of the Joint Declaration on Politicians and Public Officials and Freedom of Expression, which addresses and denounces the manifestations and dangerous repercussions and consequences of hateful public statements and rhetoric coming from politicians and public officials, especially high-ranking ones. Unfortunately, we continue to witness such extreme manifestations of hate speech in our region, including by the public officials of highest rank. We consider that this situation is extremely worrying, which should be kept in the focus of your attention and merits a proper reaction from the RFOM. In this context we would welcome your thoughts and considerations on this matter.

Madame Ribeiro,

My delegation underlines the necessity of ensuring and safeguarding the conditions for journalists to freely perform their professional duties without any limitation, restrictions, fear of reprisal, blacklisting or punishment. We also remind that the mandate of the Representative on Freedom of the Media covers the entire OSCE region, including conflict zones.

We also believe that the RFOM should exercise the utmost vigilance and caution when considering any possible activity or engagement with those participating States who are notorious for curbing and harassing free media, for challenging media freedom and for failing to implement the relevant OSCE commitments. We have seen previously how such an engagement was construed by some as a sign of acquiescence regarding their non-compliance and was used to whitewash their image.

Let me express my sincere hope that our collective efforts towards the adoption of the Draft MC Decision on the Right to Freedom of Expression in the Digital Age will be successful, and your office will receive a new tool, including for the implementation of media literacy projects, which my delegation supports.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to thank you for your continued dialogue and effective co-operation with the Armenian authorities, including your legal analysis and comments on the relevant laws and draft legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

In closing, Madame Ribeiro, let me once again thank you for your report today and assure you of Armenia's continued support for your Office and mandated activities.

I thank you