



**PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL  
TO THE OSCE**

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**1452<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council**

**23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

**Statement by Portugal on the Report by the  
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

We are happy to welcome back to the Permanent Council the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Madam Teresa Ribeiro.

In addition to the EU statement, Portugal would like to emphasize some points in our national capacity.

Madam Representative,

As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said recently, on the occasion of the Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, “I am deeply alarmed (...) by the rise in threats of all kinds against journalists. Detention of journalists is at an all-time high. Online harassment of journalists, particularly women, is being used as a tool to silence them. We need better safeguards to defend the journalists who are keeping us informed”.

In this context, and as the 5th mandate holder since in 1996 the Lisbon Summit Declaration agreed on the urgent need for a OSCE RFoM, your mandate is therefore more and more relevant. This also becomes evident in light of the valuable report you are presenting here today.

Allow me to take this opportunity to highlight some of the initiatives you have launched, such as the Safety of Journalists Toolbox, an invaluable instrument for guaranteeing and promoting the safety of members of the press, and the innovative Guidelines for Monitoring Online Violence against Female Journalists

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which, as you state in your report, “will prevent online violence from escalating into real life violence”.

A safe environment for journalists is essential for media freedom. And a vibrant and free press, by ensuring the accountability of those in power and providing truthful and clear information, that allows for a meaningful debate, is a structural pillar of democracy. As you underline in your report, “digital transformations have drastically changed our information ecosystem, with many new possibilities, but also new challenges”. Yesterday’s event on Shaping the Future: Media Freedom and Security in a Changing World was, therefore, very timely.

As you also point out in your report, the essence of the mandate of the OSCE RFoM is “to promote and safeguard media freedom for the benefit of peace and security”. That is to say, your mandate spans more than one area. RFoM’s work is in fact closely related not only to the crucial Human Dimension, but also to the 1st Dimension. One more reason to stress that there can be no fully functioning OSCE without all of its institutions in place.

However, the work of the RFoM is not without hurdles, first and foremost because none of us may claim to represent a perfect State. Because there are no perfect States.

Therefore, we once again welcome the fact that, in upholding the Human Dimension, the RFoM carries her responsibilities with an emphasis on a cooperative approach, giving priority to dialogue, as much as possible through quiet diplomacy, but also when appropriate through your statements. Always advocating and promoting full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments, encouraging improvements between the Participating States and, more importantly, safeguarding independent voices in our societies. Because, as the ever-relevant motto of our Chairman-in-Office says: “It’s about people”.



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The RFoM's mandate is closely related to a fundamental principle all our nations have pledged to respect almost half a century ago, at the Helsinki Final Act. And it is well known that, in addition to their separate responsibilities to their individual societies, States have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity. Hence, it is of paramount importance for all Participating States to preserve our common acquis, including the smooth functioning and adequate financing of our irreplaceable autonomous institutions, and the integrity of their respective mandates.

To conclude, and as we strongly believe that upholding the Human Dimension is an essential factor for peace and justice, let me assure you that Portugal will continue to firmly support the mandate of the RFoM.