



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

Working Session 12-13: Freedom of Expression, Free Media and Information

As delivered by Second Secretary, Frederik G. Ranke

Permanent Delegation of Norway to the OSCE

Warsaw, 6 October 2009

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

Freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and freedom of the media are cornerstones of democracy and some of our most sensitive commitments. These freedoms need to be upheld and constantly re-stated.

These freedoms are essential to the activities of human rights defenders and journalists. The brutal murders of Stanislav Markelov, Anastasiya Barburova, Natalia Estemirova, Zarema Sadulaeva and Alik Dzhabrailov have reminded us of the dangers facing human right defenders, human rights lawyers and independent journalists in parts of our region. We hope that the ongoing investigations of these hideous crimes will be effective and transparent and bring the perpetrators to justice. The safety of journalists must remain of concern to us all.

Some human rights defenders and journalists are deliberately targeted because of their work and face serious harassments, death threats, violence and arrests. At the same time, impunity is still a fact when it comes to harassments or killing of journalists and human rights defenders. All this

may lead to self-censorship and in fact censorship which undermines the basic values of democratic societies.

Mr. Moderator

Please let me take this opportunity to express Norway's gratitude for the work carried out by the Representative of the Freedom of the Media, the OSCE and the ODIHR in protecting freedom of expression. We would also like to reiterate our strong support to the ODIHR Human Rights Department focal point in protecting human rights defenders and human rights institutions. Norway welcomes the second ODIHR report on Human Rights Defenders and we fully support the European Union's recommendations for the participating States and the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media.

Allow me in conclusion to tell how much we appreciate the important work Mr. Miklos Haraszti, the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media, has done in protecting and promoting the freedom of expression and freedom of the media in our region, he will be sorely missed by all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.