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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE
917th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 June 2012

**In response to the statement by Ms. Dunja Mijatović,
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome Ms. Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, to the Permanent Council and thank her for her balanced report and for her work in general. The report once again bears witness to the importance of the commitment of the Representative on Freedom of the Media. It is astounding how much work Ms. Mijatović and her small team achieve. The report clearly reveals the extent to which all OSCE participating States can learn in principle when it comes to freedom of the media. It is in all our interests to support and encourage the institution of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and its independence.

Switzerland is extremely concerned about the continuing repressive measures directed at media workers in the OSCE area. All States have the responsibility to create a safe atmosphere in which plurality of opinion, critical discourse and peaceful protest can exist. In that context the safety of the reporters must also be guaranteed – regardless of whether they work offline or online.

Switzerland therefore welcomes the focus of the Irish Chairmanship on new media. We congratulate it on the Conference on Internet Freedom, which took place this week in Dublin. The conference impressively showed that the Internet is an important instrument for the realization of human rights and for broad access to information. States must ensure that access to the Internet is possible and that its users are adequately protected. Restrictions in Internet services should be the exception and in compliance with international law. The right balance has to be found between open access to information and freedom of opinion and protection of privacy and public security in cyberspace. This is a considerable challenge in view of the rapid development of the online world. The diverse discussions at the conference in Dublin will be helpful in the future. Building on them, we look forward to working towards consensus on these issues at the Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Ms. Mijatović and her committed team once again for their untiring efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.