



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA  
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA**

**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania  
Aurimas Taurantas on freedom of media**

*Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Working Session 3, 11 September 2018*

The work that journalists do in upholding the freedom of expression is fundamental. They are world's eyes and ears, especially in conflict zones. Today, the independent media plays a crucial role not only in our society, but in our decision-making as well. Unfortunately, information comes at a price, as journalists are still being persecuted, detained or even killed not only in situations of armed conflict, but also in peacetime.

A particularly alarming trend followed the aftermath of the Russia's aggression against Ukraine: since the beginning of the conflict, we are observing disinformation campaigns and propaganda, which target Ukraine and other European countries.

As evidenced by the UNSC Resolution 2222, initiated by Lithuania, we strongly condemn any repressions not only against media professionals, but also bloggers and those voluntarily involved in journalistic activities.

Safety of journalist is our longstanding priority. Lithuania actively encourages and promotes better implementation of existing international and regional norms on the protection of journalists. We are also among the initiators of the informal Groups of Friends for the safety of journalists at the UN in New York, Geneva, the UNESCO and the OSCE.

In 2011 Lithuania, as the OSCE Chairmanship, brought the safety of journalists' issue to the top of OSCE agenda, which paved the way for the first edition of OSCE Guidebook on Safety of Journalists, which under Lithuania's initiative and in cooperation with RFoM will be soon updated, reflecting new threats for journalists and media workers.

On domestic level, in close cooperation with our Journalist Association and other relevant organisations, we are working on a number of projects in this field.

Also, we are also considering possibilities to develop the national action plan on safety of journalists, based on the UNESCO Action Plan and best practices of other countries, especially Sweden. This would allow to address new challenges for safety of journalists by applying new innovative tools.

Lithuania is strongly committed to this cause, and stands ready to do its part in strengthening international commitments relating to freedom of expression online and offline, as well as international standards on safety of journalists, especially women journalists.

In this context, we extend our strong support for RFoM and his dedicated team for their role in ensuring the safety of journalists and promotion of media pluralisms and freedom of expression in the OSCE area. We deem necessary to equip RFoM with updated monitoring tools by strengthening the OSCE commitments in area of safety of journalists, especially in the digital sphere.