

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2014

Monday, September 23, Working Session 2

Latvian delegation, Right of reply

Mister Chair,

I would like to reply to the statement regarding freedom of the media and freedom of speech in Latvia.

Regarding the temporary restriction placed on Russian state owned TV channel *Rossiya RTR* in April this year by the National Electronic Mass Media Council of Latvia. This was done temporarily, for a period of three months, in accordance with the provisions of the Electronic Mass Media Law. The Council concluded that Russia state TV's broadcasts repeatedly contained hate speech, incitement to war and military conflict, as well as ethnic and national hatred. This restriction pursued a legitimate aim and fully met the relevant international standards and OSCE commitments.

Considering the well-known and, shall I say, *sui generis*, content of the TV channels controlled by the Russian government, the fact that RTR as well as other such TV channels are today freely available in Latvia testifies to the depth of our commitment to freedom of speech and freedom of the media.

As for the amendments to the Latvian Criminal Law adopted this year, they criminalize glorification, denial, justification or gross derogation of genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes against peace or war crimes against Latvia perpetrated by the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany.

These amendments are not unique – many EU countries have criminalized crimes against humanity, peace and the denial of war crimes. The amendments are in full compliance with EU Council Framework Decision which provides guidelines for the criminalization of racism and xenophobia, including guidelines concerning crimes against humanity/denial of war crimes.

Thank you.