

## **OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2018**

### **Statement by the Czech Republic**

Working session 3: Fundamental freedoms I, including freedom of expression, free media and information, 11 September 2018

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Mr Chairman,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to add some comments in its national capacity.

We share the concern expressed repeatedly by the EU and other partners over the worsening situation with regard to freedom of expression and opinion in several OSCE participating states. We do also believe that persecutions and restrictions on civil society actors and independent media as well as intimidation and attacks on journalists should be properly investigated by the state authorities, which is not always the case.

Continuous and significant support to independent media, especially in the Eastern Europe and Western Balkans regions, constitutes an integral part of our foreign policy and development cooperation. The importance of this support has only grown over the last couple of years as we have been facing numerous disinformation campaigns across the OSCE region. Therefore, in 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has allocated extra funding aiming at support to independent media that are committed to impartial and unbiased reporting and investigation.

We are also concerned by those legal initiatives threatening to restrict the free media and freedom of expression by misusing the anti-terrorism legislation or citing security concerns for this purpose. It is of course the responsibility of all governments to ensure the safety of their citizens, but in today's worsening climate, the security of journalists is particularly endangered.

Thank you.