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PERMANENT MISSION OF HUNGARY TO THE OSCE

**STATEMENT ON MEDIA FREEDOM IN HUNGARY AT THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 20th January 2011

As delivered by Ambassador György Molnár

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

In response to the distinguished Ambassador of the United States I would like to make the following statement in my national capacity.

The Hungarian Parliament has passed with a two-thirds majority a new Media Law that entered into force on 1st of January 2011. The new media law, together with the earlier adopted Media Constitution, replaces an outdated and contradictory collection of media regulations.

The Hungarian Government regrets that most of the critical statements and comments that have been made on this issue are in part factually incorrect and seem to have been made without knowledge of the legislation's exact wording. My Government is of the view that the new legislation is consistent with the principles and ideas expressed in the European Convention of Human Rights, and in other international legal instruments and political commitments, including OSCE commitments.

Nevertheless the Hungarian Government is open to constructive dialogue. At the same time, my Government deems it important that such a dialogue and the examination of the media legislation should be factual and based on objective criteria and should not be politicised.

The Hungarian Government has provided the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the European Commission and partner countries with the official translation of the new legislation and sent detailed replies to the main points of criticism.

During the last six months we have been in contact with the Representative on Freedom of the Media. At the invitation of my Government, Ms. Mijatovic paid a visit on the 18th January to Hungary, and conducted consultations with Zoltán Kovács, Minister of State for Government Communication and with high ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The in

depth discussions on the new Hungarian media legislation were open, frank and constructive and, in our assessment, have clarified several misunderstandings.

The new media legislation is under legal review by the European Commission. The Hungarian Government has expressed its readiness to consider possible amendments to the law, in light of the outcome of this review. We are also ready to conduct further consultations with the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson