



**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
SERBIA AMBASSADOR VUK ŽUGIĆ AT THE 933rd MEETING OF
THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 November 2012

Mr Chairperson,

We would like to join others in warmly welcoming the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Ms. Dunja Mijatović back to the Permanent Council and thank her for the comprehensive report.

While subscribing to the statement presented by the distinguished representative of Cyprus on behalf of the EU, we would like to take this opportunity to share a few comments in our national capacity.

We highly value the work done by the Representative and her Office and reaffirm our support for her tireless efforts in fulfilling her mandate. We took note of all the remarks from the report in relation to the media freedoms in Serbia and will dully convey them to our authorities for thorough consideration.

We welcome the valuable contribution of the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE Mission to Serbia in organizing the Second OSCE South East Europe Media Conference in Belgrade on 20 and 21 September which focused on best practices and perspectives for regional media. This was also a timely opportunity for the Representative on Freedom of the Media and her team to pay a first official visit to Serbia. We welcome Ms. Mijatović's first-hand assessment of the constructive dialogue she enjoyed during meetings with several high officials of the Serbian Government.

Our authorities expressed continued readiness to engage in fruitful cooperation with OSCE structures and address issues aimed at improving media climate in Serbia in an open and inclusive manner. In his exposé to the Parliament, Prime Minister Dačić devoted significant attention to media related matters and emphasized the importance of further advancing media freedoms and media transformation process.

In this vein, we take due consideration of the recommendations of the Representative regarding improvement of media legislation, financial and political independence of public service broadcasters, independence of broadcast regulators and transparency of media ownership. Latest indications on the debate regarding the draft amendments of the Criminal Code, which included thorough consultations with the media associations, are that the provisions pertaining to the defamation will be removed from the Criminal Code. We will continue to work on reforms aimed at fighting censorship, political or any other form of influence on the work of journalists, and ensuring transparency of the media ownership.

Safety of journalists remains one of the key challenges in the entire OSCE area. Our authorities condemned the recent attacks on journalists and expressed determination to step up efforts to enable safer working conditions for journalists. Investigations of these cases have been undertaken by the law enforcement agencies and we expect it will result in bringing perpetrators to justice.

I would like to add that Serbia supported the Ministerial Council Draft Decision on the Freedom of the Media for the second consecutive year. In doing so, our intention is to send a clear signal that we are committed to fostering environment conducive to free media and safety of journalists, as well as that no attempt to jeopardize the safety of journalists will remain unpunished.

In conclusion, we wish all the best to Ms. Dunja Mijatović in her widely recognized endeavours.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.