



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The Representative on Freedom of the Media
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Regular Report to the Permanent Council

Introduction

I am pleased to have this opportunity to address the Permanent Council on the heels of the OSCE Summit, which was so generously and capably hosted by the Kazakh Chairmanship.

I am aware that many had other expectations and aspirations for the Summit. But I am here to tell a different story.

Human rights issues and media freedom issues did not sidetrack the Summit. Indeed, the Summit was an endorsement of and a clear sign for OSCE Institutions such as my Office to redouble their efforts to engage with and assist the participating States in meeting their OSCE commitments.

Consider, if you will, Paragraph 5 of the Astana Commemorative Declaration, which, in part, states, “We stress the importance of the work carried out by the OSCE Secretariat, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and [the] Representative on Freedom of the Media, as well as the OSCE field operations, in accordance with their respective mandates, in assisting participating States with implementing their OSCE commitments.”

To those of us who work in the media-freedom field of the human dimension, the Astana Summit is a landmark event. Why? Because the Summit participants, the participating States, in their tense negotiations that came down to the final hours, recommitted their nations to the fundamental principles that guide this Office.

And consider also the ringing words in Paragraph 6: “We reaffirm categorically and irrevocably that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned. We value the important role played by civil society **and free media** in helping us to ensure full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, including free and fair elections, and the rule of law.” [Emphasis added].

The Declaration reinvigorates this Office. It charts the road ahead and allows me to pursue the Mandate of my Office with even more determination – all in the spirit of the Astana meeting.

The Summit is a call to action to complete the still-unfinished work of the participating States to achieve the goals – the commitments – proclaimed during the past 35 years.

But let's be honest with each other. Dynamic words do not always translate into dynamic actions.

Just as the negotiators of the Helsinki Final Act agreed upon a “decatalogue” of principles, allow me to come to you today with 10 simple, straightforward principles, a decatalogue for free expression and media freedom, so to speak, which this Office will pursue with enthusiasm and a clear purpose in the coming years.

1. The OSCE sees itself as a club of democracies. Yet, year after year journalists are murdered across the OSCE region; others are beaten, harassed, threatened and assaulted. This violence must stop. It is the goal of this Office to assist participating States in whatever ways imaginable to reduce and eliminate violence against media. Simply put, to make the streets safe for reporters.

2. Only 11 of the 56 participating States have decriminalized defamation. Criminal statutes still are the most often used tool to punish and imprison journalists. Criminal libel must be abolished. Civil law provisions are sufficient to deal with cases where someone's reputation is damaged by media. My Office will continue to lend its support to all participating States working to make defamation a civil law matter.

3. When considering the role of media in the public debate, prison can never be a response to a manifestation of the human mind, be it written or spoken or in the form of satire or caricature. People should not be put in prison for expressing their views.

4. A major challenge of our time is safeguarding and fostering media pluralism. It is a particular challenge today as we still see government control of media outlets in some states while, in others, economic hard times are squeezing independent media. Because of these circumstances, editorial independence is undermined and economic independence is endangered. Governments are called upon to address both issues if free media are to keep their role as a cornerstone of democracy.

5. Pluralism and the free flow of information are long-standing commitments within the OSCE. The Internet, as the first truly global medium, is the embodiment of these commitments. Hence, I call upon participating States to stop legislating the content of the Internet and to keep it free.

6. We are on the cusp of a technological revolution with the switch from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting. Governments should use this opportunity to foster pluralism in broadcast and thereby bring nationwide broadcast systems in line with their obligations under the OSCE commitments.

7. Technological advances may change how we send and receive information, but the commitments remain the same. Free expression and free media are at the heart of the OSCE corpus.

8. We often hear that the Representative on Freedom of the Media must be balanced. I disagree. Unbiased yes, but I have to point my finger to where the problems lie. Problems do

not emerge according to some preordained, perfectly laid out grid. Problems usually start at the top – from governmental actions or inaction. My interventions cannot be called balanced. If I see a problem or a potential infringement of a media-freedom commitment, I call upon the relevant governments – regardless of where they sit in relation to Vienna.

9. The OSCE commitments are universally applicable to all 56 participating States. The tendency to apply them with the proviso “in accordance with national legislation and tradition” is undermining this universality. My role is to uphold the principle and to call for nations to adapt their laws to come into compliance with media-freedom commitments.

10. And, finally, it is essential to harness the momentum generated by the Astana Summit and move forward dynamically, as a group, to collectively reinforce the media-freedom commitments participating States have subscribed to over the past 35 years and roll them over into today’s reality.

The Astana Declaration is illustrative in showing the way forward when it states in Paragraph 1: “While we have made much progress, we also acknowledge that more must be done to ensure full respect for, and implementation of, these core principles and commitments that we have undertaken in the politico-military dimension, the economic and environmental dimension and the human dimension, notably in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It repeats the call in Paragraph 2: “We reiterate our commitment to the concept, initiated in the Final Act, of comprehensive, co-operative, equal and indivisible security, which related the maintenance of peace to the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms...”

And again in Paragraph 7, when it states: “Respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law must be safeguarded and strengthened.”

Throughout the Declaration, the message rings clear: Commitment to and respect for fundamental freedoms guides this Organization today and into the future. I am honoured to take up that task when it comes to media-freedom issues.

Let me reassure you that the work of my Office is for the benefit of the participating States; we are here as a service to you. I hope that all the participating States would see this Office as an ally in the quest to meet their media-freedom commitments.

I would like to thank the government of Kazakhstan for its support during my first year in office. I also look forward to working with the Chairmanship of Lithuania in 2011. The incoming Chairmanship already has indicated that media freedom and, importantly, the safety of journalists, will be a priority.

I trust we will move forward from the impetus gained in Astana to see real progress in the coming year.

Issues Raised with the participating States

Albania

On 6 December I wrote to Foreign Minister Edmond Haxhinasta to express my concern about the assault on journalist Piro Nase of the daily *Panorama*. On 14 November Nase was beaten by two unknown assailants, suffering injuries to his head and face. The attackers reportedly also threatened the journalist by saying “Now, dare to write again what you have been writing, before, in that newspaper.”

Prior to that attack, Nase allegedly received verbal threats following the publication of an article on insufficient police action related to the cultivation of illegal drugs in the town of Lazarat. I reminded the authorities that the safety of journalists and safe working conditions are indispensable for free media and for investigative journalism, indispensable for the public’s right to know.

Armenia

Following a meeting in May with President Serzh Sargsyan in Yerevan to discuss broadcast media reform, on 19 October I welcomed his initiative to create a working group to draft amendments to the new Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting. This working group held its first meeting on 13-15 October.

During the Astana Summit, I was once again given the opportunity to discuss the ongoing reforms with the President. Our discussion focused on the activities of the working group. I expressed hope that the law soon will be amended fully taking into account the recommendations of my Office and other international organizations.

Azerbaijan

On 18 and 19 of November I welcomed the release of the jailed bloggers Adnan Hacizade and Emin Milli. Both were set free after serving more than half of the prison terms handed to them following controversial convictions on hooliganism and other charges. My Office will continue to monitor the two cases and I hope that the criminal record of the two bloggers will be expunged so they continue working without limitations.

I am encouraged by these developments and hope that, following this positive trend, the imprisoned editor, Eynulla Fatullayev, also will be released soon. On 11 November the Supreme Court of Azerbaijan upheld a European Court of Human Rights decision demanding Fatullayev’s immediate release on the grounds that his right to freedom of expression had been violated and that he had been denied a fair trial. Fatullayev remains behind bars on questionable drug-possession charges that were leveled against him while he was already in jail.

I repeat my call on the Azerbaijani authorities to decriminalize defamation so that journalists can practice their profession freely without fear of imprisonment no matter how provocative, satirical or insensitive their expressed views.

I had the opportunity to meet with President Ilham Aliyev during the Astana Summit and discussed with him the above-mentioned issues and plans for my first visit to Azerbaijan early next year.

Belarus

On 5 September I called for a thorough and independent investigation into the death of opposition website director Oleg Bebenin.

On 25-27 October I visited Minsk at the invitation of the Government. I participated in a round-table event on recently enacted measures regulating the Internet and held meetings with high-ranking officials, journalists and civil society representatives.

At the round table I raised concerns about some provisions of the new legislation, such as the requirement for mandatory identification of all users and the vaguely defined limitations and bans on illegal information. I called upon the Government not to draft or enact new legislation that would limit media freedom on the Internet.

During the discussion, however, I noted some positive signs, including the absence of politically motivated denials of website registration, as well as the lack of action on the requirement to create a list of websites to be blocked in public buildings.

I hope that any further attempts to regulate the Internet would be undertaken in close consultation with my Office, independent NGOs, media and the private sector.

On 26 October I met with Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov, Information Minister Oleg Proleskovsky, Vsevolod Yanchevsky, Aide of the President and Head of the Chief Ideological Department of the Presidential Administration, and Lidiya Yermoshina, Head of the Central Electoral Commission.

I was encouraged by the readiness of the officials to discuss the problems faced by independent media in an open and constructive manner. During my meetings I emphasized the need for pluralism in the media, as it is non-existent in broadcasting, restricted in the print media and vulnerable to interference on the Internet. I urged officials to lift all current administrative restrictions which have a chilling effect on independent media, including warnings that could lead to closures of newspapers. A mutual understanding was reached about the need to gradually overhaul media legislation so that it allows for more pluralism.

The Government can rely on my Office's assistance to reform media legislation, including amending the law on mass media and drafting laws on access to official information, privatizing state media and decriminalizing defamation.

On a related point, in my meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Minsk on 26 October I raised the issue of accreditation of foreign journalists as required by law. I shared with the Minister my concern that several media outlets, including *Belsat* and *Radio Racyja*, had not been granted accreditation.

On 12 November I received a reply from the authorities explaining that national media legislation does not restrict the number of accredited journalists from individual media outlets. I was informed that *Radio Racyja* reporters were denied accreditation for the period

of six months for previously working in Belarus without MFA accreditation, thus violating the Regulation on Accreditation of Foreign Media Reporters in Belarus. Finally, I was also informed that a request from *Belsat*, a Polish broadcaster producing programmes in Belarusian, to open an office in Belarus was denied. The stated reason is that a number of Belarusian citizens had been working in Belarus on behalf of *Belsat* without MFA accreditation.

Finally, on 13 December my Office was notified by the Delegation that the mandatory identification of customers at Internet cafes may be abolished in the near future. I am pleased that this change may take place, following, as it does, a suggestion I made during my trip to Minsk.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 2 December my Office attended a joint OSCE, OHR and EU working group meeting in Sarajevo. The working group was established under my Office's auspices a year ago and aims to establish a coherent international mechanism to advocate for and assist in finalizing long-overdue media reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The working group agreed to coordinate their activities in the field of media advocacy and media reform and to identify future joint actions. Of particular concern is the blocked work of the Communication Regulatory Agency (CRA) and the incomplete public-service broadcasting system. Since 2007, the government has failed to nominate a director for the CRA. The government also has not made a decision on the nomination of two CRA Council members whose mandate expired in April 2009.

I am pleased to see that my Office's repeated calls for the European Union to place more emphasis on the media dimension when assessing Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress toward EU standards are reflected in this year's EU progress report and in the EU's active engagement in the inter-agency working group on the ground. For more information, see also the March 2010 and July 2009 Reports to the Permanent Council.

Canada

On 2 August the Delegation of Canada responded to my 5 July letter regarding reports of mistreatment of media covering the G20 Summit in Toronto. I was told a "Commission for Public Complaint" against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had been established to collect and investigate complaints against the police involved in the matter. I fully support this initiative and hope that the right of journalists to have access to and report about public demonstrations will be recognized.

At the Astana Summit I met with Peter Kent, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs. We discussed the activities of my Office and potential areas of co-operation.

Croatia

On 12 August I addressed the authorities regarding an August 5 attack on a television crew of the public broadcaster HTV. The crew had covered the Victory Day celebrations in a small town. I welcomed the swift response and the Government's claim that it had given priority to the investigation. Governments and law-enforcement agencies have an important role to play in countering negative attitudes against journalists. I reiterated that safe working conditions are essential for media to report freely. I was pleased to learn that four suspects have been identified.

On 3 November I was pleased to learn that after a nine-month trial six persons were convicted for the murder of Ivo Pukanić, the director of the weekly *Nacional*, and his marketing director, Niko Franjić. The six were found guilty by the Zagreb County Court and given prison sentences ranging between 15 and 40 years. Three persons (including one of the six convicted by the Zagreb court) are also on trial in Serbia for the same crime. Franjić and Pukanić, who was a well-known investigative journalist and reported on high-profile corruption cases, were killed on 23 October 2008 by a car bomb in front of the newspaper's office. While the court identified and convicted the perpetrators, it was not able to determine who commissioned the killing.

France

On 2 November I addressed authorities about reports of alleged mistreatment of some journalists covering street protests on 12 October. I welcomed the fact that an investigation into the case of Thierry Vincent, a reporter for *Canal Plus* and one of the allegedly mistreated journalists, had been launched by the police and asked for additional information on the other cases.

I also mentioned that my Office was closely monitoring the lawsuit filed by *Le Monde* concerning an alleged violation of the law protecting journalists' confidential sources. According to the newspaper, the authorities used the intelligence services to identify one of the newspaper's sources in an alleged corruption scandal known as the 'Bettencourt' affair. I stressed the importance of a clarification to prove to the media community that a new law protecting journalists' sources, adopted in January 2010, provides sufficient guarantees for unhindered investigative journalism.

On 23 November I called upon the authorities to ensure that the theft of journalists' computers from four different locations is thoroughly and promptly investigated. On 7 October two computers were stolen from the office of the website *Mediapart*. On 21 October the computer of Herve Gattenot, an investigative journalist at *Le Point*, was stolen, while the same night the computer of Gerard Davet, an investigative journalist at *Le Monde*, was stolen from his home. Finally, on 20 November approximately 20 computers were stolen from the offices of the website *Rue89.com*. Although perhaps coincidental, the thefts create a chilling effect on investigative journalism.

On 3 December I received an answer indicating that my letter had been transferred to the relevant authorities.

On 10 December, I wrote to Bernard Accoyer, President of the French Assemblée Nationale, to raise concerns about problematic amendments of the draft “Loppsi 2” law which is now being debated in the Parliament. While I recognized the importance and legitimate duty of the State to better guarantee the internal security of the country, I stressed that this should not risk restricting freedom of expression, limiting the right to access government-held information or impeding the free flow of information on the Internet.

Georgia

On 29 October I wrote to Davit Bakradze, Chairman of the Parliament, to welcome his recent call for new legislation on media ownership transparency. I raised this issue again with Bakradze when I visited Tbilisi on 11-12 November on the occasion of our 7th South Caucasus Media Conference. Our meeting took place on the day when a draft bill on the matter was introduced in Parliament. Ownership transparency is essential to foster genuine media pluralism and promote a competitive and vibrant media market, especially in the field of television broadcasting. I hope this initiative will help achieve this goal. My Office is currently reviewing the draft law.

During my visit to Tbilisi I also met with then-First Deputy Foreign Minister Giorgi Bokeria to discuss joint project activities, including ways to raise public awareness about the Code of Conduct for Georgian Broadcasters so that this important document is fully implemented.

On 23 November I wrote to Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze requesting additional information on a recent attack against Enri Kobakhidze, the director of the Telavi-based *Tanamgzavri* television station. I expressed hope that law enforcement agencies would thoroughly investigate this incident.

Germany

On 23 September I wrote to Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, Minister of Justice, to convey my concern over the conviction of two journalists, Arndt Ginzel and Thomas Datt, by a Dresden court for libelling two judges. In my letter, I indicated that the civil code provisions of German law were sufficient to redress moral harm done to individuals by offensive statements and that adequate compensation for damages caused could have been provided by using the “right of reply” mechanism granted by the national media self-regulatory body. I also suggested that German authorities start procedures to repeal laws relating to criminal libel, as is being done in an increasing number of countries throughout the OSCE region.

On 25 October I received a letter from the Justice Minister saying she could not comment on the pending judgment because of the principle of separation of executive and judicial powers. The Minister also said that legislative measures to reform criminal libel laws were not necessary since the German criminal code complies with international standards by providing sufficient guarantees to protect freedom of expression. I would like to recall that it has long been the position of my Office that criminal libel is not conducive to a free-media environment.

I also received an answer from the Justice Minister on 29 September regarding a letter sent on 6 May in which I expressed appreciation and support for her recent legislative proposal to strengthen media freedom by better protecting journalists' confidential sources. She said she was seeking quick adoption of this legislation by the Bundestag and Bundesrat. I wish her success in this important endeavour and look forward to Germany joining the list of OSCE participating States that have adopted a shield law for journalists.

Hungary

On 3 September I wrote to Minister of Foreign Affairs Janos Martonyi to present an expert legal analysis on the media legislation package introduced in Parliament last summer. I asked the Government to reconsider and amend the package, as it significantly contradicted OSCE standards of media freedom. I warned that if left unchanged, the legislation could seriously restrict media pluralism, curb the independence of the press, abolish the autonomy of public-service media and create a chilling effect on freedom of expression and public debate.

On 28 September I received a reply from Zoltan Kovacs, Minister of State for Government Communication, stating that the goal of the ongoing legislative changes is to strengthen guarantees of freedom of expression. The reply contained a detailed analysis of the legal review prepared by my Office.

On 21 October I replied to Minister Kovacs, stressing that my Office's legal review contains numerous elements that call for consideration in the ongoing reform. On 2 November the Parliament adopted the law with minor changes. In mid-November, the government appointed new heads to all public service media outlets. All new directors are the nominees supported by the governing party, Fidesz, which raises questions about the political independence of public service media.

My Office is monitoring the latest draft media law that is currently awaiting debate and adoption in Parliament. If left unchanged, the law will regulate the content of all media – electronic, print and online – based on identical principles, which runs against OSCE media freedom standards. It will also give unprecedented powers in content regulation to the newly established media authority. Among other restrictions, the draft would require all media (electronic, print and online) to be registered with the media authority; violations would be punishable by very high fines. There is an urgent need to develop procedures that would clarify key terms currently undefined in the draft.

I emphasize that regulating print media can curb media freedom and free public debate, which are indispensable elements of democracies. I also stress that regulating online media is not only technologically impossible but it exerts a chilling, self-censoring effect on free expression.

My Office continues to stand ready to assist the Government in its ongoing media reform.

Kazakhstan

On 3 November I wrote to Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev to express concern about several negative developments in media freedom in Kazakhstan, including tax inspections of five independent newspapers, *Vzglyad*, *Azat*, *Algi*, *Golos respubliki* and *Moya respublika* and the Internet site *Stan.tv*, and the seizure of the bank account and confiscation of property of the newspaper *Uralskaya Nedelya*, which is on the brink of closure. I also once again expressed my hope that journalist Ramazan Yesergepov would be released from prison.

On 25 November I received a response to my letter from Konstantin Zhigalov, Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, summarizing the actions of tax officials against the publications and emphasizing that tax inspections are carried out “regardless of the sphere of activity of the party being inspected, because payment of taxes, fees and other mandatory charges as maintained by law is a duty and obligation of everyone.”

Regarding *Uralskaya nedelya*, Deputy Minister Zhigalov indicated that collection actions were being carried out to satisfy a libel judgment against the newspaper won by a private company.

On another note, my Office is following the debate in Parliament on several media initiatives. It endorsed the “Opinion on the draft Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Access to Information,” prepared by ODIHR at the request of the Head of the Parliamentary working group responsible for drafting that law. The Opinion is available at ODIHR's legal database website: www.legislationline.org

I hope that Kazakhstan will soon adopt a comprehensive law on access to information and also decriminalize defamation.

Kyrgyzstan

On 30 July upon my return from Bishkek, I wrote to President Roza Otunbaeva reiterating several issues related to media freedom, including the establishment of a supervisory board of the public service broadcaster, creation of a national platform to ensure respect for media and efforts to co-operate with other international organizations to provide training for journalists. As issues related to the safety of journalists were raised, I also provided the President with a list of cases my Office is aware of regarding violence and intimidation.

On 30 August I commended the appointment of a Supervisory Board for the public service broadcaster and called on the board to provide viewers with fair and impartial news. I emphasized the importance of a professionally run public service broadcaster in promoting tolerance and understanding in a society, as well as impartial reporting during elections. My Office looks forward to working with the new entity.

On 7 September in a letter to President Otunbaeva I expressed concern over the criminal case filed against Ulugbek Abdusalomov, editor-in-chief of the Uzbek (language) Kyrgyz newspaper *Diydor*. Abdusalomov was arrested in June and charged with abuse of office, incitement to ethnic hatred, organization of and participation in mass unrest and separatism.

I received a response on 11 November from the Office of the Prosecutor General, through the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. I was informed that on 28 September the case against Abdusalomov was dropped due to his illness.

On 10 November I issued a public statement calling on the newly elected Parliament to continue media reforms in the country. I expressed hope that, as stipulated in the recently adopted Constitution, Parliament will introduce necessary amendments to the Criminal Code so that defamation is decriminalized and journalists cannot be imprisoned for their work.

During the Astana Summit I met with Foreign Affairs Minister Ruslan Kazakvaev and expressed my hope that media legislative reform will continue and Kyrgyzstan will become the first country in Central Asia to decriminalize defamation.

Portugal

On 9 September I wrote to Luís Filipe Marques Amado, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Alberto Martins, Minister of Justice, to express concern about a decision of a Lisbon court, confirmed by a Court of Appeal on 1 July, to fine the newspaper *Sol* €1.5 million, its editor, José António Saraiva, €110,000 and journalists Felícia Cabrita and Ana Paula Azevedo, €50,000. The court found that the journalists violated the confidentiality of a judicial investigation and did not respect a court injunction because it published transcripts of phone-taps carried out by the police. I believe that the publication of these materials in the context of an alleged corruption affair was a legitimate matter of public interest. I stressed that reasonable limits should be introduced for the size of fines in civil cases in order to prevent the bankruptcy or jeopardizing of the normal operations of media outlets and individual journalists.

On 7 October I received a reply from both ministers pointing out that the matter was in the hand of the courts and outside the purview of the executive branch following the principle of the separation of powers. They assured me that the court decision was taken without interference by any political or administrative body. I still hope that a higher court will review the sentence against *Sol* and its journalists according to international standards and OSCE media-freedom commitments.

Russian Federation

On 21 September I welcomed the adoption of a resolution by the Supreme Court which recommends that damages awarded by lower courts in civil libel lawsuits should be “reasonable and justified” and “not be conducive to media-freedom violations.” This resolution also says that civil defamation lawsuits should serve only to decide on damages for physical or moral harm and that they should not restrict individuals’ right to express opinions and to receive and impart information without authorities’ interference. By preventing abuses and setting reasonable limits on compensation, this resolution should deter many from suing media outlets for political or economic incentives. It should also lessen the instances of self-censorship and help protect a free and vibrant public debate.

On 8 November in a letter to Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and in a press release I condemned the brutal attack on Oleg Kashin, a correspondent for the Moscow-based *Kommersant* daily. I welcomed the swift reaction of President Dmitry Medvedev, who pledged that those responsible for this assault would be brought to justice and instructed law enforcement agencies to thoroughly and rapidly investigate this new case of media-related violence.

Also on 8 November I publicly condemned the assault on yet another journalist, *Zhukovskie vesti*'s correspondent Anatoly Adamchuk. According to reports, police and Adamchuk's fellow journalists, who conducted their own investigation into this incident, say they suspect the journalist staged the attack for reasons that remain to be clarified. My Office continues to follow this case.

I am encouraged by the announcement made on 28 September by Aleksandr Bastrykin, the head of the Investigative Committee of the Prosecutor-General's Office, that several cases of murdered journalists will be reopened and further investigated.

I also welcome the fact that the deputy chair of the State Duma's Information Policy Committee, Boris Reznik, and President Medvedev's human rights adviser, Mikhail Fedotov, drafted amendments to the Criminal Code with a view to toughening punishment for attacks against journalists.

I urged authorities to turn their declarations into real action and ensure the safety of journalists, which is one of their most important OSCE media-freedom commitments.

On 24 November I received a detailed response on the Kashin case from the authorities, explaining the specific actions that have been taken in the investigation and assuring me of their determination to find and prosecute the perpetrator of the attack. They also said they support legislative initiatives to increase penalties for those who attack journalists.

I am following closely the case of Mikhail Beketov, the editor of the *Khimkinskaya Pravda* newspaper, who is still recovering from a near-fatal beating in November 2008. I welcome the fact that the probe into this appalling attack was recently reopened and, additionally, that a Russian appeals court has overturned a verdict rendered in November that found Beketov guilty of criminally slandering the mayor of the town of Khimki.

At the Astana Summit I met with Aleksandr Grushko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to discuss a host of issues, including violence against journalists and legislative efforts to get tough with those who attack media. Deputy Minister Grushko assured me that the issue of crime against media has the attention of the highest officials in the Government. I offered my Office's support in all efforts to combat violence against journalists.

I hope to visit Russia soon to continue a dialogue with officials on media-freedom issues.

Serbia

On 4 August I noted with satisfaction that in the civil defamation case against journalist Dragana Kocić of *Narodne Novine*, the High Court in Niš ruled in favour of the journalist. Kocić had been fined 1 million Dinars by a lower court for having quoted from an official

indictment in a news story about the conduct of a public official and the official's use of public funds. I am pleased that the High Court followed European standards in deciding the appeal. My predecessor had intervened on 28 April 2009 in the case.

On 6 August I welcomed the Government's swift investigation into the attacks against Teofil Pančić, a political columnist for the weekly *Vreme*, and Brankica Stanković, a prominent *B92* journalist. On 3 August the First Municipal Court in Belgrade had ordered the arrest of two persons suspected to have brutally beaten Pančić on a Belgrade bus on 24 July.

On 4 August Belgrade's First Basic Court had convicted a football fan for pronouncing death threats against Stanković in December 2009. Stanković had reported about the link between organized crime and football hooligan groups.

I expressed my hope that the Government also will shed light on several unresolved murders and attempted assassinations of Serbian journalists: In 1994, Dada Vujasinović, a journalist of *Duga* magazine, was found dead in her apartment; Slavko Čuruvija of *Dnevni Telegraph* daily was murdered in 1999; Milan Pantić of *Vecernje Novosti* was killed in 2001 and in 2007 two hand grenades were thrown into the house of Dejan Anastasijević, also a journalist at *Vreme*.

Spain

On 18 October I sent a letter to authorities requesting a copy of the draft law on access to official information which was reported to have been developed by the Government. I offered my Office's assistance in reviewing the draft and encouraged the Government to publish the document so that all stakeholders' opinions are taken into consideration before the law is sent to Parliament for consideration.

On 17 November I received an answer indicating that the issues raised were in a stage of internal discussion and no official text was available for review.

Tajikistan

On 26 July in a letter to the Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi, I once again raised the issue of criminal defamation lawsuits against the independent newspapers *Ozodagon*, *Farazh*, *Aziya Plus*, *Paykon* and *Millat*. I offered my Office's assistance in drafting legislation to decriminalize libel.

On 13 October in a letter to Minister Zarifi and in a public statement on 18 October, I publicly expressed my concern about the ongoing deterioration of the media freedom situation in the country. For more than two months, except for a short period in mid-November, access to two Tajik websites, *Avesta.tj* and *Tojnews.tj*, as well as three foreign sites, *Tjknews.com*, *Fergana.ru* and *Centrasia.ru*, has been blocked. Tax inspections also have taken place at the offices of independent newspapers *Farazh*, *Nigoh*, and *Millat* and the print houses Intishor, Mushfiqi and Oila-print, following which the companies refused to print a number of independent newspapers, citing technical reasons.

I once again raised the pending cases against the newspapers and said that the possible closure due to disproportionate damage awards in libel lawsuits brought by public officials would severely diminish pluralism in print media.

I hope that the authorities will recognize the importance of maintaining media pluralism and thus reverse the ongoing deterioration of the media-freedom situation.

Turkey

On 9 September I wrote to Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, asking for his co-operation in addressing the continuing pressure that journalists face for their critical writing. I also asked for his assistance to promote much-needed media law reforms.

I noted with concern the high number of lawsuits that threaten journalists with imprisonment. Turkey holds the most journalists in prison in the OSCE region. Currently more than 40 are in prison, either already convicted or awaiting trial. Hundreds more are facing potential imprisonment if found guilty. The charges vary: Some of the journalists face prison sentences for publishing classified documents; some for free speech critical of the authorities and others for reporting on sensitive issues, including terrorism.

In the letter, I spoke out against governmental restrictions on media freedom in order to fight terrorism. The criminalization of speech relating to terrorism should be restricted to instances of intentional incitement to terrorism. Fully acknowledging the threat posed by terrorism to national security and the need to fight it, I also stressed the right of the public to know about issues of public importance.

On 1 November I welcomed the lifting of a ban on the YouTube website. I am pleased that after three years people can once again freely access YouTube. The ban prevented Internet users from being part of the global information society.

I hope that this is not the only ban lifted. I encourage the Government to continue in this direction by reforming its Internet law which has served since 2007 as the basis for blocking thousands of websites.

In recent months, I was encouraged to read statements from high officials on plans to reform media legislation. On 3 September I read with interest the statement of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu announcing plans to take steps necessary to avoid trials on freedom of expression issues at the European Court of Human Rights. On 21 October Justice Minister Sadullah Ergin spoke about plans to introduce in the Cabinet a bill aimed at easing pressure on journalists who face trial for their work.

I look forward to receiving details on these legal reforms and I offer my Office's full assistance in this very important endeavour.

Ukraine

On 20 August I wrote to Konstantyn Gryshchenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and expressed concern over the 11 August disappearance of Vasyl Klymentyev, chief editor of the Kharkiv-based newspaper *Novy Stil*.

On 9 September I asked the Foreign Minister to provide my Office with information on the 25 August incident at *Svitlytsya* newspaper when two gun shots were fired at the windows of the editor-in-chief's office and on the 27 August attack on Valery Ivanovsky, editor of newspaper *Silske Zhittyia*.

On 9 October I received a response from the authorities. Concerning the case of Klymentyev, I was informed that President Viktor Yanukovich keeps the progress of the investigation under his personal control, that a special inquiry group was set up to intensify the investigation and that several leads are being pursued, including one connected with the journalist's professional activities. In the case of Valery Ivanovsky, two suspects had been detained and their testimonies indicated hooliganism as the motive behind the crime. According to authorities, preliminarily results of the investigation in the case of *Svitlytsya* newspaper indicated hooliganism as the motive.

On 11-13 October I visited Ukraine on invitation from President Yanukovich. The purpose of my visit was to meet with representatives of the authorities, civil society and journalists to receive first-hand information on the media-freedom situation.

During my stay in Kyiv I met with Parliament Speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn; Foreign Minister Konstantyn Gryshchenko; Hanna Herman, Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration; Andriy Shevchenko, Head of the Parliamentary Committee on Freedom of Speech and Information and other top officials.

I was encouraged by the openness of the authorities for dialogue at the highest level, which shows that media remains priority a on Ukraine's political agenda. While I commended the public calls by Government representatives to honour media freedom, I warned the authorities that the lack of results in the disappearance Vasyl Klymentyev and the growing number of physical attacks against journalists have a chilling effect on the media. In this regard, I welcomed the reopening of the investigation into the death in 2000 of journalist Georgiy Gongadze, and hope that his family, colleagues and friends will achieve their deserved justice.

I discussed with the authorities the need for further steps in the media-law reform and welcomed the adoption of a recent concept for public service broadcasting in Ukraine. I was assured that Ukraine will adopt a comprehensive access to information law during the current session of the Parliament and will establish the legal framework for a public service broadcaster by the end of the year. We agreed that there is a need to adopt laws on the transparency of media ownership; on privatization of state media and that amendments are needed to the law on Television and Radio Broadcasting to ensure the political and financial autonomy of the regulatory body.

I hope that Ukraine will take swift and resolute measures to entrench its exemplary record in media pluralism in the CIS region. I offer my Office's full support in this endeavor.

I was pleased to learn that on 30 November the Verkhovna Rada, in a first reading, voted in favor of a consolidated draft bill on access to information. Representatives of the opposition and the pro-government majority in Parliament last month agreed on the wording of the draft.

United States

On 22 November I wrote to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the next day publically condemned the arrest of several journalists, including a television crew from Russia Today, who were covering a demonstration at the Fort Benning military base in Columbus, Georgia, in mid-November.

The arrests, which resulted in convictions for violations of city ordinances only one day later, is a disturbing sign for free media. I indicated that while it is clear that police play a crucial role in maintaining order during public demonstrations, the indiscriminate rounding up of media and bringing charges against them goes well beyond what is necessary to keep the peace.

I asked for a thorough investigation of the incident. I also suggested local police become familiar with methods of crowd control that do not impinge on media coverage of such events.

On 15 December I received an answer from the State Department indicating that the cases brought against the Russia Today journalists on city code violations were resolved by paying a fine. However, I was also informed that criminal charges under state law brought by the authorities for failure to follow police instructions to remain in a certain area, and judicial proceedings are likely to begin in January.2011.

I find these developments a reason for continued concern and will keep monitoring the case.

Uzbekistan

On 22 September in a letter to Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov and in a press release on 24 September, I expressed concern over unrelenting judicial pressure exerted on independent journalists in Uzbekistan. I raised the cases of two journalists, Abdumalik Boboyev, a freelance reporter for the U.S.-funded broadcaster *Voice of America*, and Vladimir Berezovsky, the chief editor of the Russian-language *Vesti.uz* website and Central Asia correspondent for Russia's *Parlamentskaya gazeta* newspaper, who were both at that time facing charges which included libel and defamation.

I also once again addressed the cases of three journalists who are serving jail sentences of six to 12 and one-half years: Dilmurod Saiid, an independent news writer, Solijon Abdurahmanov, a former reporter for *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* and the *uznews.net* website, and Hairullo Khamidov, the deputy chief editor of *Champion* sports newspaper.

On 20 October in a letter to Minister Norov, I welcomed the encouraging developments in the cases of journalists Vladimir Berezovskiy and Abdumalik Boboyev. Although Berezovskiy was found guilty of libel and insult, on 13 October the Yakka-Saray district court in Tashkent ruled that he should be amnestied. On 15 October the Mirzo-Ulugbek district court in Tashkent sentenced Boboyev to a fine of approximately €5,800. However, one illegal-border crossing charge was dropped and the court refused to accede to the prosecutor's request that Boboyev be denied the right to work as a journalist for three years. I expressed my relief that neither of the journalists was sentenced to jail. My Office will continue to monitor the two

cases and I hope that the higher courts will annul their verdicts and the records of both journalists will be cleared.

I also urged Uzbekistan to decriminalize defamation. My Office stands ready to assist with this reform.

Projects and activities since the last report

Visits and participation in events

On 29-30 August on invitation from the Slovenian Foreign Minister, I attended and participated in the Bled Strategic Forum in **Slovenia** titled “the global outlook for the next decade” and spoke on the topic of the transformative power of the Internet.

On 13 September, I delivered the keynote speech in **Vienna** at the dinner and award ceremony for 60 World Press Heroes of the International Press Institute World Congress. See: <http://www.ipiworldcongress.com/home>

On 14-15 September my Office attended the Regional Meeting of Heads of Field Operations in the South Caucasus in **Baku**.

On 16 September a staff member from my Office spoke at an Article 19 sponsored event: “10 Years On – No Justice for Georgiy Gongadze: The Need to Find New Ways to Fight Impunity” in **Kyiv**.

On 7 October I spoke at the media freedom special session of the OSCE Review Conference in **Warsaw**. The session focused on violence, imprisonment and all forms of harassment committed against journalists.

On 6-8 October my Office participated in a European Platform of Regulatory Authorities meeting in **Belgrade**. This Office will become a standing observer of the EPRA in May 2011, joining the Council of Europe and the European Union with that status.

On 12 October my Office took part in a seminar in **Vienna** organized by the Austrian Ministry of Justice which brought together representatives from the legal and media fields to discuss whether there is a need to change Austrian law protecting the confidentiality of newsroom activities.

On 11-13 October I visited **Kyiv** and met with Parliament Speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn; Foreign Minister Konstantyn Gryshchenko; Hanna Herman, Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration; Andriy Shevchenko, Head of the Parliamentary Committee on Freedom of Speech and Information, civil society and journalists.

On 13 October in **Kyiv** I delivered a keynote speech at a conference organized by the Council of Europe and the European Union on “Safeguards to Media Pluralism in Ukraine”.

The participants of the conference discussed European standards regarding media pluralism and practical measures of safeguarding it in Ukraine.

On 15 October I addressed the European Council Working Party on the OSCE and Council of Europe in **Brussels**. I assessed media freedom in the OSCE region and described the priorities of my Office.

On 25-27 October I visited **Minsk** on invitation from the Government of Belarus. I participated in the round-table event on Internet regulation and held meetings with high-ranking officials including Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov, Information Minister Oleg Proleskovsky, Vsevolod Yanchevsky, Aide of the President and Head of the Chief Ideological Department of the Presidential Administration, and Lidiya Yermoshina, Head of the Central Electoral Commission.

On 1 November I gave a lecture on press freedom at Columbia University in **New York** at the event “A Free Press for a Global Society”. See <http://globalfreepress.columbia.edu/>

On 4-5 November my Office participated in the annual meeting in **Amsterdam** of the Alliance of International Press Councils in Europe. See: <http://www.aipce.net/>

On 10 November my Office participated in a seminar in **Brussels** organized by the broadcasting regulatory authority CSA-Belgium on the topic of excluding extremist political parties from live broadcast debates.

On 18 November My Office participated in a Council of Europe expert hearing on “Defamation and jurisdiction shopping” in **Strasbourg**.

On 26-28 November I attended the OSCE Review Conference in **Astana** in the run-up to the Summit. I spoke at the Working Session specifically devoted to freedom of expression on the Internet and the digital switchover in broadcasting. I also announced the latest publication of my Office, the Guide to the Digital Switchover, which aims to offer practical help to all stakeholders in the switchover process, and ways to strengthen media freedom in the digital age. It is available in English and Russian on my Office’s website. At the closing session, I set forth principles of my Office for the upcoming years.

See Speeches:

http://www.osce.org/documents/osce/2010/11/47872_en.pdf

http://www.osce.org/documents/osce/2010/11/47921_en.pdf

Guide to the Digital Switchover:

http://www.osce.org/publications/rfm/2010/11/47821_1571_en.pdf (English)

http://www.osce.org/publications/rfm/2010/11/47821_1571_ru.pdf (Russian)

On 1-2 December I attended the 2010 Summit in **Astana**.

On 2 December my Office participated in the second Working Group (comprised of OSCE, OHR and EU representatives) meeting in **Sarajevo** with the aim of identifying how to advance media-reform measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 10 December I participated in the Austrian chapter of the Reporters Without Borders awards ceremony in **Vienna**.

On 13 December I participated in a panel discussion on Security and Human Rights at an OSCE Roundtable in **Vienna**.

Legal reviews

Belarus

At a round table on 25 October Andrei Richter, Professor at Moscow State University and Director of the Media Law and Policy Institute, presented his findings and recommendations on the recently enacted implementing guidelines on Presidential Decree No. 60 on Internet regulation. The recommendations include:

- Take into account the existing international instruments for fighting crime on the Internet.
- Forego mandatory identification of users of subscriber units and users of Internet services.
- Clarify the meaning of and procedure for introducing restrictions and prohibitions on disseminating illegal information, clarify responsibility for unsubstantiated prohibitions.
- Entrust the judicial bodies, instead of the executive power bodies, with determining what information is harmful.
- Envisage the obligation of state bodies to post information on the Internet not only about their own activity, but also share with the public information that has been acquired and created as a result of this activity.
- Envisage the obligation to post documents on the Internet after secret or other information that the law prohibits from being disclosed is removed from them;
- Envisage the possibility of disclosing information in the event that public interest prevails.

This review was commissioned by my Office. It is available on the website:

http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2010/10/47359_en.pdf (English)

http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2010/10/47359_ru.pdf (Russian)

Hungary

In September, Dr. Karol Jakubowicz, a renowned international media expert, prepared an analysis of the draft media package of Hungary that was introduced in Parliament in June 2010. The main findings of the analysis are as follows:

- Reconsider and amend the media package, so the legislation can serve its proper function of enhancing Hungarian democracy. The current draft exceeds what is justified and necessary in a democratic society and is cause for serious concern.

- Focus the law primarily on broadcasting and audiovisual media services and retain only general provisions for the print media and for media services on the Internet. The draft extends the traditional regulatory framework to all media (electronic, print and online) and puts public-service media at risk of direct political control.
- Follow internationally accepted standards on new and not fully defined media services and apply their policy and regulatory approach. Reduce the scope of powers given to the Media Authority and the Media Council.
- Ensure that the regulatory regime with regard to the print press and online media relies primarily on the civil and penal code, and additionally on self-regulation and co-regulatory schemes, involving all stakeholders, including trade and professional associations.

The review was commissioned by my Office. It is available in English on the website: http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2010/09/45942_en.pdf

Internet-related activities

On 29-30 August I participated in the Bled Strategic Forum in **Slovenia** where I spoke on the effect of the Internet on society.

On 14-17 September I participated in this year's Internet Governance Forum held in **Vilnius**, where my Office and the Council of Europe for the first time organized a joint open forum on balancing the governance of hate speech with the right to freedom of expression and the free flow of information on the Internet. The forum assessed the impact of current regulatory initiatives on freedom of expression and free media in the light of OSCE media-freedom commitments and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

For more information on the open forum see: http://www.osce.org/fom/item_6_45810.html

In the framework of the IGF I also participated at an event organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania on the subject "Internet – an instrument to foster democracy". I gave a speech on Internet freedom, its limits but also limitations imposed on it.

On 20-22 September I gave a keynote address at the "Internet at Liberty 2010" conference in **Budapest** jointly organized by Central European University and Google. The event titled "Internet at Liberty 2010" focused on the promise and peril of online free expression.

On 23-24 November my Office participated at the ODIHR-supported annual conference of the International Network against Cyber Hate held in **Vienna**. The NGO round-table meeting discussed best practices in addressing online hate and racism.

On 26 November at the review conference in **Astana**, I circulated a preliminary report on my Office's study of legal provisions and practices related to freedom of expression, the free flow of information and media pluralism on the Internet in the OSCE region. The preliminary report represents the first step of a comprehensive assessment of Internet regulation across the OSCE. The final study is expected to be published in early 2011. I would like to use this opportunity to thank those participating States that provided answers to our questionnaire and would like to encourage those who have not yet done so, to submit their input as soon as is possible.

The preliminary report can be viewed at:

http://www.osce.org/documents/html/pdftohtml/47857_en.pdf.html.

A Russian translation of the executive summary is available at:

http://www.osce.org/documents/html/pdftohtml/47857_ru.pdf.html.

Training activities

Training for Moldovan Journalists on Internet Media

My Office organized, in co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Moldova, a two-day seminar on Internet media in Chisinau on 20-21 September. Twenty journalists from central and regional newspapers and broadcasters, including those from Gagauzia and Transnistria, discussed the legal context, professional advantages and risks, as well as the sustainability of Internet media. The seminar offered practical solutions to challenges the Internet presents to small markets.

Projects

Expert workshop of media legislation drafting in Tajikistan

On 30 September my Office supported an expert workshop, organized by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, to facilitate a public debate on draft amendments to the law on press and other mass media. The workshop, which brought together media law experts, parliamentarians, representatives of civil society and academia, prepared specific proposals to improve the existing law and presented them to the Parliament. I commended this public debate and the openness of members of Parliament to listen to arguments of national and international media law experts as an excellent exercise in media lawmaking.

Conflict-sensitive election reporting in Kyrgyzstan

My Office supported a project on conflict-sensitive election reporting conducted by the DW-AKADEMIE (Deutsche Welle) in Kyrgyzstan. The project consisted of two modules that took place in September and November aimed at enhancing print and online journalists' skills in election coverage and adopting a set of guidelines for conflict-sensitive reporting. I hope that the guidelines drawn up by the journalists will serve as the basis of their coverage during elections in the future. I supported this media initiative as a follow-up to my meeting in Bishkek on 19 July with President Roza Otunbaeva during which we discussed practical ways of how my Office could support Kyrgyzstan's efforts to strengthen independent journalism.

Joint project with UNESCO to promote self-regulation in South East Europe

From October to November 2010, my office supported a joint project with UNESCO to promote media self-regulation in South East Europe. This project was a follow-up of another project implemented in 2009 and already funded by my Office and UNESCO through an EU grant. The synergy of efforts of these international organizations to coordinate and streamline the support to media freedom in South East Europe was very much welcomed during a time of global economic crisis.

Approximately 280 media professionals, experts, publishers and regulators attended the round tables on media self-regulation held in Skopje, Dubrovnik, Istanbul, Sarajevo, Pristina, Novi Sad, Tirana and Podgorica. International experts participated in the events in order to implement recommendations adopted during the first part of the project in 2009 and to build capacities of media professionals wishing to consolidate media self-regulation mechanisms in their countries.

South Caucasus Media Conference in Tbilisi

My Office's 7th South Caucasus Media Conference took place in Tbilisi on 11-12 November. It brought together more than 80 journalists, media experts, government officials, parliamentarians, scholars and civil society representatives from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The two-day event offered participants an opportunity to discuss issues related to access to information, the free flow of information on the Internet and regional media developments with international media experts.

Conference participants adopted a declaration on access to information and new technologies in the South Caucasus which is available in English and Russian at:

http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2010/11/47629_en.pdf (English version)

http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2010/11/47629_ru.pdf (Russian version)

Like all previous conferences, this year's event was financed by extra-budgetary contributions. My thanks go to the delegations of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States. Regional media conferences, which my Office organizes twice a year in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, offer participating States a unique opportunity to engage in a constructive dialogue on media-freedom issues.

Publications

Guide to the Digital Switchover

My Office has just published "The Guide to the Digital Switchover", in English and Russian. The guide is an update of the guide published in 2009 by my predecessor, Miklós Haraszti. As the switchover is the challenge of the coming years for many OSCE participating States, this guide aims to offer practical help to all stakeholders for the switchover process and to find ways to strengthen media freedom in the digital age.

The guide explains, in simple terms, a technological process that enables us to gain access to a previously unimaginable amount of information through television and radio. This development also makes it possible to impart information to others more easily than ever before. To what extent such technology is used to benefit people, how it can assist in creating a pluralistic electronic media and to what extent it can break down the information gap that still exists in many areas of the OSCE region very much depends on the media laws and policies governing the switch.

If carried out properly, the digital switchover can safeguard human rights, including freedom of the media and the right of access to information. If all parties involved in the process co-

operate, including broadcasters, producers, resellers and consumer associations, the result is a media landscape that protects plurality of opinion and freedom of expression.

But in the digital age, OSCE participating States must deliver on what they have subscribed to in the analogue world: to provide their citizens with pluralistic information, which strengthens democracies. Well-informed people make well-informed decisions, which are the indispensable foundation that democracies can build upon.

The guide is a comprehensive examination of issues to be considered by all stakeholders involved in the switchover process, including the successes and pitfalls encountered. It gives us a list of “Dos and Don’ts” of the switchover, which raises attention to the main difficulties and opportunities of the switch. The guide is available at:

http://www.osce.org/publications/rfm/2010/11/47821_1571_en.pdf (English)

http://www.osce.org/publications/rfm/2010/11/47821_1571_ru.pdf (Russian)

Journalism education

As a follow up to the 6th South Caucasus Media Conference held in Tbilisi on 19-20 November 2009, my Office produced a publication “Journalism education – improvement of the quality of education and new technologies”. The book compiles papers of international and national experts on the developments in journalism education and challenges that members of the media face in South Caucasus.

The publication is available in English and Russian at:

http://www.osce.org/fom/item_11_47770.html

Planned activities for the next reporting period

First Study on Internet Regulation in the OSCE area

In early 2011 my Office is planning to release the final report on the findings of a study of legal provisions and practices related to freedom of expression, the free flow of information and media pluralism on the Internet in the OSCE region. This report will represent the first OSCE-wide study on Internet regulation and its impact on free expression and the free flow of information.

Media Conferences

My Office will continue to organize media conferences in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. We will add a third site, the Balkans, for the first time in 2011. We have started consulting with media professionals and OSCE missions to identify the most relevant topic for the conferences.

I would like to thank the Delegations which already have expressed interest in our project activities and indicated their willingness to provide financial support.