



**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

The issues of our time – freedom and safety off and online

Internet freedom

There is little doubt that the technological revolution that gave rise to the Internet is far from over, nor is the debate on its affect on mankind. Every year we seem to come to yet another crossroads in the future of the Internet and every year we engage in passionate arguments about if and how the technology can be controlled, molded, modified or simply stopped in order to achieve political, social and economic goals and many keep forgetting that governments and technology should serve people and not vice versa.

That, in large part, was the message that came from the Dublin Conference on Internet Freedom which was held earlier this week under the auspices of the Irish Chairmanship.

This event was of great importance for the future discussions related to the Internet among participating States and beyond. But for my Office the tasks remain the same: freedom of the media, free flow of information, plurality of voices for the Internet and its users. Government regulation should be minimal at best and designed only to help move forward its development and protect the institutions that allow it to exist. There is absolutely no reason to get sidetracked by issues which amount to very little and, in some cases, outright fabrications designed to increase government controls.

The 56 participating States in this organization may hold almost an equal number of opinions about what constitutes open, free and safe Internet. Sometimes consensus on the issue seems far away. But it doesn't have to be. All we need to do is look back to the past.

Hence, I begin this report by directing your attention to the Document of the Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension¹ held 22 years ago, when the participating States agreed that everyone has the right to free expression and to communication without government interference, and Permanent Council Decision 633 of November 2004² in which the participating States expressly committed themselves to ensuring that the Internet remains and open and public forum for freedom of opinion and expression.

¹ Commitments: Freedom of the Media, Freedom of Expression, Free Flow of Information 1975-2011, 2nd Edition. <http://www.osce.org/fom/31232>, p. 11.

² Commitments: Freedom of the Media, Freedom of Expression, Free Flow of Information 1975-2011, 2nd Edition. <http://www.osce.org/fom/31232>, p. 32.

Defending an Internet as whole and free is a continuing struggle that needs to be led both online and offline. Participating States have an obligation to safeguard all means used for the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and free media.

A global struggle for control of the Internet is under way. There are competing views about rights, freedoms, security and regulations online. The discussions of freedoms and rights and the discussions around security often appear to be running on parallel tracks. We need to bring these debates and perspectives together and we need to encourage a more interdisciplinary understanding of cyberspace governance while enabling broad consultation. The OSCE offers a framework for the rights-security debate that we need to take advantage of.

Let me also draw your attention to another development which was mentioned by quite a number of participants of the Dublin Conference.

Tomorrow in Geneva, preparations continue for the World Conference on International Telecommunications, which is organized by the ITU and will take place in Dubai in December.

I share the concerns of many experts that this conference has been organized without sufficient participation of and consultation with civil society and the private sector and the results of which might unduly restrict the free flow of information on the Internet and establish excessive regulatory regimes which are not necessary for the functioning of the Internet.

Even purely technical regulations might have consequences on people, on Internet users, on the free flow of information and on online freedoms. I call upon all 56 participating States to keep this in mind while preparing for and participating in the ITU WCIT.

After all, the Internet is an unprecedented success story and although there is always room for improvement, I see no political or technical reason to introduce a new form of oversight of the Internet on the cost of multi-stakeholder participation.

Journalists' safety

Making news gathering safer is another critical marker for my Office in the 21st century. Throughout this reporting term, assaults on journalists continue. But for the first time I sense a critical mass of public awareness and international organizations' attention growing that could turn words into deeds.

Yesterday I took part in a UN event in Geneva to promote journalists' safety, organized by the by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. I welcome this continuing engagement by the Austrian government for leading the way on this topic. The UN Human Rights Council event was the latest in a series that are designed to put the issue front-and-center on the international docket.

Our efforts, however, will not end.

Recently the newly appointed Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe, Nils Muižniecks, published a Human Rights Comment emphasizing the urgent need to reverse the negative trend. Article 19, the International Press Institute, the Committee to Protect Journalists, IFJ, EFJ, Reporters sans Frontiers and many other NGOs around the world track assaults on journalists and have courageously stepped up their lobbying efforts. I commend them for their courageous and tremendously important work.

On 17 July the OSCE will discuss safety of journalists in the context of the Human Dimension Committee, along with Article 19 and media representatives. The work of other international organizations in this area needs to be recognized as well. I would like to mention UNESCO and the Council of Europe as two organizations with which my Office extensively co-operates on these issues.

These consciousness-raising efforts have resulted in quicker and more intense efforts by authorities across the region to hunt down and prosecute assailants. Success or failure of this movement cannot be judged in simple numbers – a decrease in violence does not, *ipso facto*, mean the environment is safer. The campaign to end the attacks will be long and hard and only joint and coordinated efforts engaging all stakeholders can bring success. My Office will continue to vigorously address issues of safety for the benefit of our societies.

Issues Raised with the participating States

Albania

On **3 April** I received a reply from Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Edmond Haxhinasto to my letter of 12 March regarding the recent changes in criminal and civil defamation laws. Prison is no longer a punishment for defamation, but other criminal sanctions remain. The Deputy Prime Minister took note of my request to completely decriminalize defamation and offered to discuss this during my visit to Albania.

On **4 April** I wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister expressing my concern about a criminal defamation case filed by a public official against Lindita Cela, a journalist with the newspaper Shekulli. Charges were filed under the old law, which allowed for a prison sentence of up to two years. The charges were based on a 7 October 2011 article about a row between public officials of a state agency regarding a leaked classified document.

On 5 April I was pleased to learn that the charges against Cela had been dismissed.

On **4-7 June** upon invitation of the Government I visited Tirana to meet with high-level officials and civil society representatives to discuss the media freedom situation in the country. I had meetings with Prime Minister Sali Berisha, Foreign Minister Edmond Haxhinasto, Justice Minister Eduard Halimi, and Minister of Innovation and ICT Genc Pollo. Furthermore, I met with the Director General of the public service broadcaster RTVSh, the Chairperson of the broadcast regulator – the National Council on Radio and Television, journalists, representatives of the Media Institute and NGOs.

The constructive and fruitful discussions focused on the need for full decriminalization of defamation, necessary reforms of the public service broadcaster and broadcast regulator to ensure their political and financial independence, on poor working conditions of journalists

and the need to establish a transparent allocation system for state advertising to avoid favouritism.

During my visit I also spoke to the rector and students of the Media Department of the University of Tirana.

Azerbaijan

On **18 April** in a public statement I condemned the assault on several journalists, including Idrak Abbasov, a reporter with both the newspaper Ayna/Zerkalo and the Baku-based Institute for the Freedom and Safety of Reporters. On that day Abbasov and other journalists – Gunay Musayeva of the Yeni Musavat newspaper and an Obyektiv TV crew – were attacked by employees of the state oil company, SOCAR, while filming the demolition of a house in Baku’s Sulu Tepe settlement. Abbasov, who was wearing a yellow reflective vest identifying him as a journalist, suffered multiple wounds. On this occasion I asked the authorities to take resolute steps to end all forms of violence against journalists.

On **23 May** I received a letter from the authorities in response to cases I had raised in my previous report to the Permanent Council. The letter detailed legal proceedings initiated against Anar Bayramli, a reporter with an Iranian media outlet and two Xayal TV executives, Zaur Quliyev and Vüqar Qonaqov, who were charged in connection with the March 2012 unrest in the northeastern town of Quba. The letter also said that authorities were investigating blackmail attempts against RFE/RL correspondent Khadija Ismayilova and denied reports that journalists were hurt during the Quba unrest.

On **4 June** I issued a public statement welcoming a Supreme Court decision to parole social media activist Bakhtiyar Hajiyev. I also said I hoped that journalists Bayramli, Quliyev and Qonaqov would soon be released from prison.

On **13 June** I wrote to Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov to express my concerns about the sentencing of Bayramli to two years in prison on drug-possession charges. I also raised the case of Mehman Hüseynov, a photo blogger who faces up to five years in prison over an incident with police officers in May during coverage of a demonstration in Baku. Finally, I expressed regret that Parliament adopted restrictive amendments to the nation’s access to information laws. I repeated these concerns in a public statement issued on 14 June.

I continue to monitor the criminal trial of Avaz Zeynalli, the chief editor of the Khural newspaper, who faces charges of extortion and tax evasion.

Belarus

On 26 April I received a response from the authorities to my 19 March letter expressing concern over foreign travel restrictions placed by Belarusian authorities on several non-government members of the media. On 14 March Zhanna Litvina, Chairperson of the Belarusian Association of Journalists, Andrey Dynko, Chief Editor of Nasha Niva newspaper, and Mikhas Yanchuk, a representative of Belsat TV channel in Minsk, intended to travel outside of Belarus but were informed by the border guards that they were “temporarily banned” from foreign travel. Their passports were stamped accordingly.

The response set forth the steps enforced in Belarus to temporarily restrict freedom of movement of its citizens. It also cited a law requiring confidentiality concerning reasons for such restrictions in individual cases.

On **8 May** I wrote to President Alexander Lukashenko to bring his attention to the dismal media freedom situation in the country. On **10 May** I issued a public statement reiterating that the President should end the repressive policy toward the media. I emphasized in my letter and in the statement that media freedom could only be achieved if, as a start, all unfair convictions and pending charges against journalists were annulled.

I raised the cases of journalists Irina Khalip of Novaya Gazeta and Andrzej Poczobut of Gazeta Wyborcza, who were convicted and given suspended sentences for their criticism of the authorities. Additionally, I raised the case of Natalia Radina of Charter97.org, who had to leave Belarus to avoid prosecution.

I asked the President to revoke the sentences because they sent a clear signal to all media in Belarus that critical voices toward authorities and state policies will not be tolerated by the government. I noted that journalists expressing independent views live in fear for their safety and that of their families. I reiterated that public officials should tolerate a higher degree of media criticism than ordinary citizens and allow for a free debate on issues of public interest.

On **5 June** I wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Martynov to express concern over several incidents of arbitrary detention and obstruction of activities involving journalists in Belarus.

On 31 May several journalists were temporarily detained while covering a local public protest against the construction of a toxic factory in Yakimova Sloboda village, which is in the Gomel region. Sergey Balay of Solidarnost, Ina Studzinskaya of Radyo Svaboda and television journalists Alina Radachynskaya and Ales Barazhenka were driving in one car on the way out of the village when they were stopped by police for an alleged traffic violation. All were interrogated and later released. After the interrogation, a police officer obstructed Ina Studzinskaya's reporting by twisting her arm when she spoke live on a telephone with Radyo Svaboda's studio.

On 1 June two television journalists, Tatyana Belashova and Olga Chaychyts, were detained while they were covering an International Children's Day event in Gorky Park in Minsk. They were interrogated and released.

On the same day in Grodno, police detained journalists Andrzej Poczobut and Jan Roman when they were leaving their homes, apparently to prevent them from covering a protest rally of a non-governmental organization, the Union of Poles of Belarus. They were released after spending three hours at police stations. Later during the protest rally, Grazhyna Shalkevich of Glos z-nad Niemna and Yuliya Kalyada, an independent reporter, were detained by police. Administrative charges were filed against them.

I asked the Minister to clarify the legal grounds for detaining and questioning journalists in the above cases. I also offered the Government to consider a joint project with my office on professional interaction between law-enforcement agencies and journalists during public events. I proposed that such an event could be a good occasion for me to visit Minsk and hold meetings with high officials and media policy makers in Belarus.

I was disappointed to learn that on 6 June a court in Grodno fined Shalkevich 5 million Belarusian roubles (about €480) on charges of participating in an unsanctioned protest rally. I would like to reiterate that demonstrations are events of public interest, whether or not approved by the authorities and journalists should be free to report on them.

Bulgaria

On **31 May** I wrote to Tsvetan Tsvetanov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Nickolay Mladenov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to express concern about an incident involving investigative journalist Lidia Pavlova. The journalist's car was set on fire twice. I asked the authorities to ensure her safety. As Pavlova and her family has been the target of many threats over the years, I expressed hope that the incident will be swiftly investigated. I also hope to receive news of successful investigations into attacks against journalists, including a bomb placed under the car of Sasho Dikov in October, as well as unsolved murders and other acts of violence against journalists in the past.

Croatia

On **8 May** I issued a public statement expressing concern over the public service broadcaster's practice of reprimanding critical journalists. The journalist, Elizabeta Gojan of Hrvatska Radio Televizija (HRT), received warnings and was threatened with dismissal for having given interviews to other media on the topic of media freedom in Croatia and commenting on the state of affairs at HRT.

Gojan gave these interviews in her capacity as president of the managing board of the Croatian Journalists' Association. Another HRT journalist and editor of the show "Croatia Life," Maja Sever, is also facing disciplinary proceedings for allegedly being unbalanced in the selection of guests for the show.

I noted that it should be a public service broadcaster's role to highlight topics of public interest, including the important issue of media freedom. I called upon the HRT management to revise its practice and to re-establish trust with its journalists and the audience.

On 10 May I received a letter from the president of HRT saying that Gojan's right to free expression had not been violated and that HRT did not ban certain subjects or practice censorship. According to management, the warnings were issued because she was providing false information and making false accusations regarding the management of HRT.

Estonia

On **14 May** I wrote to Urmas Paet, Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressing concern about the case of Russian journalist Igor Korotchenko, whose short-term Schengen visa was annulled by Estonian border authorities upon his arrival in Tallinn on 6 May. Korotchenko, the chief editor of Natsionalnaya Oborona magazine, was scheduled to meet with a group of readers on 7 May. I requested a clarification of the reasons to determine whether the entry denial was related to Korotchenko's work.

In a 25 May response, the Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to me about the underlying European and national regulations on which Korotchenko was denied entry. I was assured that the decision was not connected to his work as a journalist.

Georgia

On **4 May** I wrote to Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze calling for an investigation into an attack on Irakli Vachiberadze, a reporter with a newspaper titled P.S. The journalist said that on 3 May he was assaulted by plain-clothed Interior Ministry officers after he attempted to record the proceedings of a closed meeting of the National Movement party in the town of Kutaisi.

On **9 May** I wrote again to Minister Vashadze, this time in connection with media reports indicating that presidential security guards, law enforcement officers and National Movement party members prevented several journalists from covering events. The reported incidents took place in towns of Kutaisi, Zugdidi and Gori on 2-6 May. The journalists involved represented several regional media outlets, including the Shida Qartli Information Center, the Dzveli kalaki radio station and the tspress.ge, livepress.ge and netgazeti news agencies.

I received a reply to both letters on 12 June. In it, the authorities assured me that Vachiberadze was not physically abused. They also denied that the journalists mentioned in my second letter were prevented from fulfilling their professional activities, blaming them for either failing to provide proper identification or not abiding by security regulations. The reply made no mention of the Gori incident.

Greece

On **12 April** I wrote to Minister of Foreign Affairs Stavros Dimas expressing concern about the mistreatment of several journalists by police officers while covering anti-government demonstrations in Athens on 5-6 April.

I welcomed the fact that the police launched an investigation into allegations of excessive use of force. I said that journalists must be free to report on public events, including protests and demonstrations, and that it is the duty of law enforcement to ensure that journalists can carry out their work freely. I asked for further details on the progress of the investigation.

On **11 May** I wrote to the authorities and issued a public statement expressing concern over an attack against journalist Konstantinos Bogdanos and asking that a swift and thorough investigation take place.

According to media reports, Bogdanos, a journalist for Skai television and a radio presenter, was attacked by three unidentified men while he was walking to his car on the night of 9 May in Athens. He said that the attackers knew he was a journalist because they referred to Skai television during the beating. He was hospitalized with head injuries and a fractured hand.

I expressed hope that the investigation will find the attackers and clarify the motives behind the beating. I said that by bringing the assailants to justice the authorities would send a message that such attacks cannot be tolerated.

I also asked the authorities to provide my Office with any further information they may have. I expressed hope in receiving updates on the police investigation launched into the death of journalist Socratis Giolias, who was murdered in July 2010 in Athens.

On 7 June I received a reply from the authorities to my letter of 12 April, stating that a police investigation and administrative inquiries are ongoing to determine whether police officers acted properly. It said that if found that their conduct was unlawful, disciplinary penalties would be imposed.

I also received an English translation of “Guidelines for co-operation between policemen and media representatives during the discharge of their duties,” issued by the Hellenic Police Chief on 10 April. I was encouraged by the professional approach toward the handling of the press by the police, which falls in line with the “Special Report on Handling of the Media during Political Demonstrations: Observations and Recommendations” issued by my Office in 2007.

The Guidelines state that the media play a vital role in informing the public. They call upon the police to ensure the safety of journalists and facilitate them in the performance of their professional activities. They also emphasize that the police should fully respect the role of the media and protect each citizen’s constitutionally established right to be informed.

I hope that the Guidelines, the publication of which is very timely, will help ensure that journalists can carry out their important work unhindered during all public events, including demonstrations.

On 13 June I received a reply from the authorities to my letter of 11 May, indicating that the police investigation in the beating of Konstantinos Bogdanos is continuing. The letter also said that the police investigation into the murder of Socratis Giolias is still pending. I was assured that my Office would be informed about any updates in these cases.

Hungary

On **16 May** I wrote to Zoltan Kovacs, the Minister of State for Government Communications, requesting a copy of the new draft media legislation.

On **23 May** I wrote to Speaker of Parliament Laszlo Kover, expressing concern about certain elements of the proposed media law changes, and asking the Parliament not to adopt those amendments that could harm media pluralism. I pointed out that several provisions that I was critical of in June 2010 remain problematic. I also noted that most recent motions introduced by individual parliamentarians could restrict media pluralism even further..

On 25 May, a day after Parliament still adopted the new media laws, I issued a public statement emphasizing that the new legislation could continue curbing media pluralism and putting the media at risk of political control. I welcomed the fact that some important provisions, which had to be reformed following a Constitutional Court decision in December last year, were improved; these changes provide broader protection of sources, annulled the ban of certain content from print and online media and abolished the right of the Media and Communications Commissioner to interfere with editorial decisions in case of complaints.

Other fundamental elements of the legislation have not been improved. These include the way to nominate and appoint the president and members of the Media Authority and Media Council, their power over content in broadcast media and the imposition of high fines that can lead to self-censorship among journalists. Furthermore, key provisions are still not clearly defined in the laws and the financial and editorial independence of public broadcasters is not

guaranteed. These elements were also among the concerns raised by Council of Europe in its recent analysis.

I also pointed out that several amendments to the media package were introduced and adopted on short notice without consulting stakeholders and the public. As a result of these amendments, rules of frequency tendering, which is a core requirement of independent regulation, have significantly changed. The legislation does not clearly state that the Media Council has the obligation to sign a contract with the winning candidate even when the winner is confirmed by a court decision.

Given the lack of clarity in definitions and procedures stipulated by the new legislation, these amendments can negatively affect broadcast pluralism.

On 15 June I received a reply from Speaker Kover providing detailed information on the legislative changes. Kover said that, together with the amendments adopted by Parliament, the Media Act will ensure complete freedom of opinion and the press.

My Office continues to monitor the developments, and stands ready to assist Hungary in case the authorities decide to bring the media package in line with the OSCE commitments.

Kazakhstan

On **20 April** I issued a public statement expressing concern about the attack on Lukpan Akhmedyarov, a reporter with the newspaper Uralskaya Nedelya. The journalist had been stabbed and shot in the chest by several assailants in the northwestern city of Uralsk.

On 25 April I received a letter from authorities informing me that a criminal probe had been launched into the attack and they would keep me informed about the investigation. I take note of the subsequent arrest of two suspects and the detention of another two. I hope that all those responsible for the crime will be brought to justice.

On 14 June I received a letter from the Foreign Ministry saying the investigation into the attack on Akhmedyarov is continuing.

Kyrgyzstan

I hope a June 2011 parliamentary decision to block access to the fergana.ru website will be repealed soon. The Russian-registered Internet resource has been inaccessible to the customers of the state-run Kyrgyztelekom since mid-February.

I continue to monitor the case of journalist Vladimir Farafonov who is facing charges of incitement to national hatred in online articles.

Latvia

On **2 April** I wrote to Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis and issued a public statement regarding the 29 March attack on Leonids Jakobsons, owner of the independent news website Kompromat. He suffered multiple bruises to his head and a cut on the face. Kompromat is

known for its investigative reporting on sensitive topics. Jakobsons said he believes the attack was connected to his professional work.

On 8 May I received a response from Interior Minister Rihards Kozlovskis setting forth the details of the criminal investigation that was launched. He wrote that since this crime “threatens or may threaten” freedom of expression, the investigation would be strictly supervised by the General Prosecutor’s Office.

I look forward to the results of the investigation and hope that the perpetrators will be brought to justice soon.

Lithuania

I welcome the statement made by Audronius Ažubalis, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the World Press Freedom Day, 3 May. Particularly noteworthy was the Minister’s call for all states to improve working conditions for journalists, provide freer access to information and to decriminalize defamation.

In this context, I hope to see Lithuania decriminalize speech offences soon. Dainius Radzevicius, the Chair of the Lithuanian Union of Journalists, has been on trial for defamation since October 2011 as a result of his online post commenting on alleged corruption in the media based on a Wikileaks cable. The court’s decision is expected to be announced on 29 June.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

On **2 May** I wrote to Foreign Minister Nikola Poposki on the state of affairs of the draft civil defamation law. The negotiations on future decriminalization of defamation are stymied by a disagreement over a ceiling on moral damages. I said that damages in civil defamation cases must be proportionate to the harm inflicted and take into account the economic situation of the defendant. I asked the government to adopt an approach that would do away with the dangers of self-censorship when deciding on the ceiling. I also reiterated my Office’s readiness to provide assistance in having the draft law reviewed.

On 15 May I received a reply from the Foreign Minister saying negotiations are continuing and that a copy of a consolidated version would be shared with my Office as soon as available.

On 13 June I learned that the Association of Journalists and the Government reached an agreement on a ceiling on moral damages. I am pleased that a solution acceptable to both sides was found and remain hopeful that the Government will continue with media reforms.

Moldova

On **10 April** I wrote to Iurie Leanca, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and Deputy Prime Minister, expressing concern about the revocation of the broadcasting license of NIT TV by the Audiovisual Coordinating Council (ACC), the Moldovan broadcast regulator.

In my letter to the Minister I stressed that my Office pays particular attention to the importance of independent and efficient broadcast regulation, but this sanction, which falls afoul of the customary regulatory practice, could be viewed as unduly harsh and harmful to media pluralism.

If it loses its pending court case challenging the ACC decision before the Chisinau Court of Appeals, NIT will permanently lose its license and frequencies.

Hence, I was disappointed to learn that on 10 May the Supreme Court of Justice rejected NIT's appeal requesting to continue broadcasting until a final judgment on the appeal against the license revocation is issued by the Court of Appeals.

I hope that NIT's broadcasting frequencies will not be tendered out until a final court decision is reached that will respect the need to preserve pluralism of the broadcasting sector. NIT's programmes now can only be watched online.

On **7 May** I issued a public statement expressing concern over the 5 May attack against Vladimir Vivici, a camera operator of the OMEGA news agency in Chisinau and asked the authorities to begin a swift investigation. Vivici was attacked by four men on a street in Chisinau and suffered multiple head and internal injuries which required hospitalization.

In their 17 May response the authorities said their investigation showed that the attack was not related to the victim's professional activities and was "an unfortunate and regrettable hooliganism case." They also reiterated the willingness of the government to continue the fruitful co-operation with my Office. I was invited to visit Moldova to discuss pending media issues with relevant authorities. I gladly accept this invitation.

On 14 June I received a letter from the Minister Leanca, stating the position of the authorities in the NIT case and assuring me that all measures taken are in line with Moldovan legislation. I was also informed that later this month the Court of Appeals will re-examine the revocation of NIT's license.

Montenegro

I was pleased to learn on 13 March that a suspect had been arrested for the attack on Olivera Lakić, a journalist with the daily newspaper Vijesti. On 8 March I issued a public statement condemning the attack and called upon authorities to ensure a safe working environment for journalists. I hope that the case will soon be concluded and the perpetrators brought to justice.

On **2 May** I wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Milan Roćen, about the case of Petar Komnenić, a freelance journalist who was convicted of criminal defamation in October 2009 for an article about alleged illegal surveillance of high court judges. Komnenić was ordered to pay a fine of €3,000 or serve four months in prison. He refused to pay the fine and on 18 April was ordered to serve the prison sentence. I pointed out that Montenegro decriminalized defamation in June 2011 and that while the court's decision may have met the letter of the law, the jail sentence is disproportionate and could have a chilling affect on journalism. I remain hopeful that the Court of Appeals will reach a decision in accordance with OSCE media freedom commitments and international standards.

The Netherlands

On **14 May** I issued a public statement welcoming the adoption of a net neutrality law making the Netherlands the first OSCE country to do so. The law is an important step to protect Internet traffic from undue restrictions and prioritization. The law requires operators to treat all Internet traffic equally, regardless of author, origin, destination or content. The law also prohibits network operators from slowing or blocking third-party services that allow for Internet-based communications, such as Skype.

I encourage participating States to study and follow this example by applying transparent and non-discriminatory rules on how information is transmitted by way of the Internet.

Poland

On **16 May** I wrote to Minister of Justice Jarosław Gowin to comment on the Ministry's opposition to a campaign to decriminalize defamation.

The Ministry opposes decriminalization because the Constitution recognizes protecting the honour and dignity of people as a supreme value. I explained the need to decriminalize speech offences to secure and promote media freedom. Reforming the law in Poland would send a strong signal to other participating States to implement similar changes.

I hope that the Minister will reconsider his position and lend support to a repeal of the Criminal Code's provisions on defamation.

Portugal

On **3 April** I wrote to the authorities to express my concern about reports that Patricia de Melo Moreira of the AFP news agency and Jose Sena Goulao of the Lusa news agency were assaulted by police while covering a general strike on 22 March in Lisbon.

On 15 June I received a reply from Madalena Fischer, Head of the Cabinet of the Minister of State and for Foreign Affairs, indicating that the government deeply regrets the events relating to the photojournalists and stating an investigation started by the Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs has resulted in disciplinary procedures being taken against a police officer. She said the investigation is continuing.

Romania

On **18 May** I issued a public statement condemning the attack on journalist Dan Bucura and called on the authorities to carry out a quick and thorough investigation.

Bucura, an investigative reporter for Realitatea TV, was assaulted on 16 May by two people in the lobby of his apartment building in Bucharest. He said one of the assailants indicated that he was attacked because of his work at the station.

I emphasized that attacks against the media threaten the victims themselves and endanger media freedom in the country. I expressed hope that the authorities will carry out an investigation that will identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

I also hope that the attacks against several members of the press during demonstrations in Bucharest in January of this year will soon result in successful prosecutions.

On **25 May** I wrote to Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Marga regarding recent problems with the operation of public service broadcasting in Romania caused by freezing the bank accounts of Romanian Public Television TVR.

Following a recent decision of the National Agency for Fiscal Administration, TVR's accounts were blocked due to debts owed to the state. Until these debts are paid, TVR will only have access to money to pay employee salaries. I emphasized the importance of fiscal and editorial independence of PSBs, especially during key times such as election periods. I asked the Minister for his support in ensuring that the public service broadcaster fulfils its civic role. By doing so, Romania would guarantee that citizens can receive objective and pluralistic information.

I also asked for a copy of a law passed by Parliament on 22 May that requires telephone and Internet companies to store user data and give it to government authorities upon request. The authorities stated that the law is in line with the European Union standards, while some human rights groups claim that certain aspects of the law could infringe on personal freedoms. I look forward to receiving a copy of the law.

On 20 June I received a letter from the authorities regarding my intervention of 19 January. At that time I condemned the attacks on several members of the press that took place during demonstrations in Bucharest on 15-16 January and called for an investigation. The letter said the General Police Department of Bucharest had not received any complaints from journalists. I was also told that the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Bucharest Military Tribunal requested information about police actions in connection with the demonstrations. I was told that my Office will receive further information on this and the other cases as well.

Russian Federation

On 4 April I received an invitation from the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation to participate in a conference of the chief judges of the regions in the South of Russia on the issues of extremism and terrorism case law. My Office took part in the event.

(See Visits)

On **17 April** I issued a public statement welcoming President Dmitry Medvedev's long-anticipated decree to establish a public service broadcaster (PSB). This decree, supported with adequate laws to ensure financial and editorial independence of the PSB, could strengthen media pluralism in Russia. I expressed my readiness to provide advice on best practices to create a PSB system in line with the best international practices.

On **27 April** I wrote to Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to request further information about an attack on Ruslan Gereyev, the deputy director-general and political editor of the Makhachkala-based Nastoyashcheye Vremya newspaper. I said I hoped the perpetrators of this crime, as well as the murderers of Khadzhimurad Kamalov, the editor-in-chief of the Chernovik weekly newspaper who was killed on 16 December 2011, would be soon brought to justice.

I welcome the fact that in response to the requests of 105 deputies of the State Duma on 25 May, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation decided to take part in the investigation of the murder of Kamalov. I hope that the investigation, now raised to a new level, will progress and the perpetrators of this crime will be brought to justice.

On **10 May** I issued a public statement expressing concern about the indiscriminate detention of dozens of journalists during street protests in Moscow and about cyber attacks on the websites of five Russian media outlets (Kommersant, Ekho Moskvyy, Bolshoi Gorod, Dozhd' TV and slon.ru). I reminded the authorities that police should not detain and harass journalists who are performing their professional duties but should, on the contrary, help them collect information of public interest.

I also called upon law enforcement agencies to investigate the cyber attacks. Such attacks on websites are a threat to cyber security, which today is one of the vital conditions for freedom of the media. Unfortunately, new cyber attacks on independent websites were documented on 12 June.

On **29 May** I issued a public statement condemning an attack on radio journalist Sergey Aslanyan. Aslanyan, a regular contributor to Radio Mayak, was assaulted on 28 May near his home in Moscow. The journalist suffered several wounds and required surgery. I welcomed the fact that law enforcement agencies immediately launched an investigation and expressed hope that the perpetrators of this attack would be rapidly found and brought to justice.

On 20 June, I received an official update on the course of the investigations into the assault on Gereyev and the assassination of Kamalov. The authorities said that law enforcement agencies are exploring several leads, including that of a possible link between the attacks and the victims' professional activities.

Spain

On **21 February** I offered the authorities in Madrid assistance in the evaluation of the access to information draft law in line with international standards. My initial recommendations were welcomed by José Luis Ayllón Manso, State Secretary for Relations with the Parliament of Spain, in a 26 March letter.

On **10 April** I forwarded the legal analysis of the draft law to the authorities and on 11 April I issued a public statement welcoming the efforts of the Spanish Government to adopt a modern and comprehensive access to information law. I also stated that although the current draft is a significant step toward more government transparency and accountability, the analysis recommends further improving to make sure the law is in line with the OSCE commitments and international best practices.

Following the publication of a modified draft in April, I commissioned another review which was forwarded to the authorities on 13 June. Although certain elements of the law have been changed, it could still be improved in several important areas. I hope the recommendations of my Office will be taken into consideration.

On 20 June I received a detailed response to the legal review in Spanish from State Secretary Ayllón Manso. I look forward to reviewing this memorandum in the near future.

(See Legal Reviews)

Tajikistan

On **9 May** I wrote to Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi to enquire about an attack on Daler Sharifov of the Safina state television station. The journalist was assaulted in Dushanbe on 7 May. He suffered injuries and was taken to the hospital. Sharifov says that prior to the incident he had received several anonymous threats. I hope the investigation will help clarify whether there is a link between the assault and Sharifov's professional activities.

On **31 May** I issued a public statement welcoming the vote by the Majlisi Namoyandagon (the lower house of Parliament) on measures which would lead to decriminalization of defamation. The bill still needs to be approved by the Majlisi Milli (the upper house of Parliament) and signed by the President to take effect. In my statement, I regretted that provisions making it a crime to publicly insult the President had not been repealed. I hope all remaining criminal provisions related to defamation will be abolished.

I regret that the tkjnews.com, zvezda.ru, centrasia.ru and maxala.org websites remain blocked. These sites have been inaccessible to Tajik Internet users since early March. Furthermore on 12 June access to the Asia-Plus news agency website was blocked for two days upon an order from the Communications Service, a government agency, in reaction to readers' comments libelling high-ranking officials.

Turkey

On **28 March** I wrote to Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu to present an updated table on imprisoned journalists in Turkey. The table, together with its main findings, is a follow-up to the research carried out by my Office one year ago.

In the letter and a public statement I indicated that the findings, in principle, correspond to last year's results and called for media law reform. The most commonly used laws to put journalists behind bars have remained the same: the Anti-Terror Law (especially Articles 5 and 7, relating to articles of the Criminal Code on terrorist offences and organizations or assisting members of or making propaganda in connection with such organizations, as well as the lengthening of sentences) and Article 314 of the Criminal Code (on establishing, commanding or becoming member of an armed organization with the aim of committing certain offences). Journalists continue to face extended pre-trial detention and courts tend to give severe sentences.

I indicated that 95 journalists were in prison, up from 57 last year. The sheer number of imprisoned journalists raises fundamental questions about the legislation and policy on journalism and free expression. I expressed concern that the threat of imprisonment can lead to widespread self-censorship among journalists.

I said that during my visit to Turkey in December 2011 I was encouraged to learn from the authorities that the laws affecting media freedom would be reformed. I expressed hope that significantly improved legislation would effectively stop putting journalists in jail for reporting on issues of public interest and would ensure that the jailed journalists would be released soon.

I repeated that I recognize the legitimate right of governments to fight terrorism and protect national security and their citizens; at the same time I added that objective reporting about all issues, including sensitive issues such as terrorism, is a fundamental part of democratic societies, and journalists cannot provide information to the public if they constantly face the threat of intimidation and imprisonment.

The research on imprisoned journalists, which is available on our website, is now regularly updated. I am grateful to the authorities for their continued co-operation and assistance in providing my Office with updated information about these cases.

In the two and a half months since the publication of the table, 12 journalists have been released pending trial. This shows that pre-trial release is possible under the current legal regime. I hope, however, that the reforms will go further by eliminating the many ways that can curb free expression and free media in the country.

My Office stands ready to assist Turkey to carry out these important reforms.

Ukraine

On **27 April** I wrote to Minister of Foreign Affairs Kostyantyn Gryshchenko expressing concern over several cases of violence against journalists.

On 20 April six assailants attacked Andriy Movchan, a reporter for Krayina magazine and Gazeta po-ukrainski. The journalist suffered a concussion and other wounds and had to be hospitalized. Movchan was attacked shortly before he was expected to appear on Inter TV channel.

On 21 April unidentified persons set fire to the car of Mykola Feldman, chief editor of Visnyk Kremenchuga. On 23 April freelance journalist Yuri Gukov from the town of Alchevsk was attacked. This independent reporter was investigating cases of employment of people with tuberculosis by educational institutions in Alchevsk. I expressed hope that these cases would be thoroughly and quickly investigated. I also requested updates on the investigations.

On **18 May** I wrote to authorities about the assault of Nataliya Rozynska, a television moderator for the TSN channel, who was attacked on 16 May in the hallway of her apartment building. The journalist was hospitalized with head and chest injuries and multiple bruises.

On 23 May I received a response from the authorities on the above cases. In the Movchan matter, the victim told investigators that he was not a practicing journalist. A criminal investigation has been opened in the Feldman case and the investigation is ongoing in the Gukov case.

The authorities also forwarded to me a note from the Office of the General Prosecutor of Ukraine titled “As for the unsolved crimes against journalists, disappearance of journalists, preventing them from fulfilling their duties” which is a statistical update on efforts of investigations regarding crimes against journalists.

On 4 June I received from the authorities an update on the professional status of Movchan confirming that he has continued working as freelance reporter after his dismissal on 9 April from the magazine Krayina and Gazeta po-ukrainski.

On 13 June I received a response from the authorities regarding the case of Nataliya Rozynska. I was informed that criminal proceedings were launched in accordance with part 2 of Article 296 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

United Kingdom

On **9 May** I issued a public statement welcoming the Queen's announcement in her annual speech that a new defamation bill will soon be considered by Parliament. The bill would address the issue of "libel tourism" which entices powerful and wealthy individuals from abroad to use the UK's plaintiff-friendly courts to stifle criticism at home. The bill would also provide a defence for media in cases of "responsible publication on matters of public interest" and give greater protection to websites hosting user-generated content. While stressing that reform of the libel law will increase media freedom in the UK, I also expressed hope that the text will address the additional concerns of civil society organizations.

The bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 10 May.

I am also monitoring the discussions about a new communication bill, also mentioned in the Queen's speech. According to information available to me, the bill would allow surveillance of electronic communications of UK citizens by authorizing intelligence services to access, in real time and without prior authorization, details of telephone calls, text messages, emails, private messages exchanged through social networks and websites visited.

Although I understand that the bill aims strengthen the fight against terrorism and organized crime, I am concerned that the law could retard free expression by discouraging people from visiting controversial websites or by making it possible to identify journalists' confidential sources.

Uzbekistan

On 4 April I received a letter from the authorities indicating that BBC Correspondent Natalia Antelava had been denied entry into the country because she had failed to inform authorities about her planned visit and to state its purpose. I had raised her case in a letter to the authorities on 2 March.

On **2 May** I wrote to Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov regarding independent journalist Yelena Bondar. On 25 April the Tashkent City Court upheld a lower court's decision to fine Bondar 6.3 million som (approximately €2,600) for inciting interethnic hatred, calling for mass unrest, change of government and criticizing the authorities in comments she allegedly contributed to the fergana.ru blog.

In response, the authorities wrote on 15 May to explain the legal proceedings initiated and the court decisions reached in this matter. I will continue to monitor the case.

On 15 June I received a letter from Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, Ulugbek Mukhammadiev, expressing appreciation for providing legal analyses of the draft laws "On transparency of activities of bodies of state power and governance" and "On television and radio broadcasting" (See Regular Report to the Permanent Council of 29

March 2012 for details). I was also told that, taking into consideration the recommendations offered in the legal analyses, extensive discussions on the draft laws are taking place.

Projects and activities since the last report

Co-operation with international organizations

Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner

On **14 May** I met in **Vienna** with Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks. We have discussed recent developments in the field of media freedom and free expression, and the continuation of the existing close co-operation between the two offices in all issues of mutual interest.

On **5 June** Muižnieks published the latest of his Human Rights Comments, urging governments to "treat violence against journalists with the utmost seriousness, as such attacks aim at the core of our democracies." The Commissioner, quoting the Guidebook on Safety of Journalists published by the OSCE Lithuanian Chairmanship and my Office last December, emphasized that governments can be involved in censorship if they do not take sufficient steps to combat violence against journalists.

Regional Cooperation Council

My Office participated financially in the first Media Law Academy event which took place on 4-8 June in Zagreb from **4-8 June**. The academy brought together practicing media lawyers, legislators, media representatives, members of media regulators and self-regulatory bodies, and academics from all of the South East European countries, as well as international experts. The academy was held under the auspices of the Regional Cooperation Council. Participants shared professional experience in the area of public service media remit, media pluralism and media law. They made recommendations in those fields based on the best media law and policy practices in the region.

UNESCO

On **22-23 March** my Office participated as an observer to the 28th session of the Intergovernmental Council of IPDC at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Among others, discussions focused on a UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which the UN Chief Executives Board endorsed on 13 April.

United Nations Human Rights Council

On **20 June** I participated in a side event sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs at a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission on safety of journalists in **Geneva**.

Legal reviews

Spain

On **10 April** I forwarded to the authorities a legal analysis of a “Draft Law on Transparency, Access to Information and Good Governance of Spain” commissioned by my Office and carried out by Eduardo Bertoni, Director of the Center for Studies on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information at the Palermo University School of Law in Argentina.

Recommendations of the legal analysis include:

- The draft law should include a paragraph clarifying that access to information is a fundamental right.
- Article 2 should widen the scope of the right to access information to include all public bodies, in particular, the judicial branch of power.
- Article 9 should be redrafted following the principle of maximum disclosure.
- Articles 10 to 13 should clarify the exceptions where access can be legitimately denied to prevent overbroad interpretation and incorporate a “public interest test”.
- Article 14 should not oblige requesters to identify themselves and should not include the need to justify a request to access some information.
- Article 21 should be complemented by provisions that ensure the independence of the oversight body.
- Articles 22 and 27 should include specific sanctions for obstructing the right to access information.

The legal review of the draft is available in English at www.osce.org/fom/89577 and in Spanish at <http://www.osce.org/es/fom/90791>

After a modified draft was published by the authorities in April, my Office commissioned another legal review from the same expert, which I sent to the authorities in Madrid on 13 June.

The second review noted that while positive changes were introduced into the new draft, some provisions remain problematic.

The review focused on these norms to be improved:

- Access to information should be recognized as a fundamental right;
- The scope of the right of access should be further expanded;
- The definition of information and rules on exceptions should be improved in accordance with international standards;
- Anonymous requests should be allowed and the requirement to present reasons for requesting information should be deleted;
- Guarantees of the independence of the oversight and appeals mechanisms should be included.

I reiterate my continued support for this important legislation and hope that a strong law reflecting the most advanced international standards on access to official information eventually will be adopted.

The legal review of the modified draft is available in English at <http://www.osce.org/fom/91311> and in Spanish at <http://www.osce.org/es/fom/91312>

Publications

In the reporting period my Office published books on Internet Governance and Media Pluralism reflecting the work of the 13th Central Asia Media Conference which took place in Dushanbe on 29-30 November and the 8th South Caucasus Media Conference which took place in Tbilisi on 20-21 October 2011. The Central Asia book is available at www.osce.org/fom/91044 in English and www.osce.org/ru/fom/91047 in Russian. The South Caucasus publication is available at www.osce.org/fom/90788 in English and www.osce.org/ru/fom/90789 in Russian.

Visits and participation in events

On **2-3 April** my Office joined the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), on a visit to **Bulgaria**. The Delegation met with Minister of the Interior Tzvetan Tzvetanov and more than 25 media representatives including owners, directors, editors-in chief, journalists, media experts and NGO representatives.

On **6 April** I attended the conference “Media in War and Peace: Can We Do Better?” in **Sarajevo** organized by the AFP Foundation and the Association of Journalists of Bosnia and Herzegovina where I gave opening remarks at a conference that discussed the role of the media during and since the Bosnian war.

On **18-19 April** I participated in the first Stockholm Internet Forum on “Internet Freedom for Global Development” organized by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Internet Infrastructure Foundation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency in **Stockholm**. Together with representatives from NATO and the business sector I spoke on managing the balance of freedom and security in a digital world. For more information see <http://www.stockholminternetforum.se/>.

On **25 April** I participated in a discussion at a meeting on “Freedom of expression, media pluralism and public debate in the Western Balkans” in **Brussels**.

On **3-5 May** I participated in the World Press Freedom Day 2012 celebration organized by UNESCO in **Tunis**, Tunisia. The event was titled “New Voices: Media Freedom Helping to Transform Societies.” I took part in the following events:

On 3 May I participated in the award ceremony at the Presidential Palace where Eynulla Fatullayev, a prominent Azerbaijani journalist, received the 2012 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize.

On 4 May I spoke at the conference session on regulation and self-regulation of the media space, supported by the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).

On 5 May I spoke at a session on decriminalization of speech together with the three other international rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression, focusing on the progress and challenges of decriminalizing defamation in the OSCE region.

On **10-11 May** I delivered the keynote speech at the Nordic Forum for Security Policy 2012 event in **Vilnius**. I spoke about the challenges to media freedom in the OSCE area with the emphasis on the Nordic states, the Baltic countries and Belarus.

On **22-24 May** together with representatives from governments, academia, businesses and NGOs I participated in a conference on "Internet at Liberty 2012: Promoting Progress and Freedom", organized by Google in **Washington D.C.** Information on the conference is available at <http://www.google.com/events/internetatliberty2012/index.html>.

During my visit I also had a series of high-level meetings with U.S. State Department officials, including Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Tara Sonenshein and Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Michael Posner, to discuss media freedom developments in the OSCE region.

On **31 May** my Office participated in a seminar of chief judges of the South of Russia on Topical Issues of Case Law on Extremism and Terrorism Crimes in **Maykop**, Russia. My address is available at www.osce.org/fom/90939 in Russian only.

On **31 May-1 June** I attended the European Platform of Regulatory Agencies annual meeting in **Portoroz**, Slovenia. Information on the event is available at <http://www.epra.org/meetings/portoroz-35th-epra-meeting>.

On **4-6 June** my Office took part in a familiarization visit to **Mongolia** organized by the Chairmanship.

On **4-7 June** I visited **Tirana** and met with the authorities and civil society representatives to discuss the media freedom situation in the country.

(See Issues Raised with participating States)

On **7-8 June** my Office participated in the meeting of the Advisory Board of the European Audiovisual Observatory, a European public service body with 37 member States and the European Union in **Strasbourg**. The meeting focused on the European landscape of on-demand services and the protection of minors.

On **8-9 June** my Office spoke at the Conference on Internet Governance, Policy and Regulation organized by USAID and Internews in **Sarajevo**. Topics of the conference included privacy in the digital age, online security and internet governance, policy and regulation. The presentation of the office addressed principles of media freedom and pluralism in Internet regulation.

On **10-11 June** my Office attended the annual festival of the Russian Union of Journalists in **Veliky Novgorod** and a panel discussion on international solidarity against impunity to violence against journalists.

On **12 June** I spoke to students at the Centre for Southeast European Studies of the University of Graz in **Graz**. I held a class on Freedom of the Media and Democracy in South East Europe to the university class Kultur und Gesellschaft in Südosteuropa and gave a public lecture entitled "Freedom of Expression: Old and New Challenges in the Digital Era."

On **18-19 June** I spoke at the High Level Panel of the Conference on Internet Freedom organized by the Irish Chairmanship in **Dublin**. The conference centred on a clearer understanding of existing OSCE commitments regarding the rights to free expression and free media and their application to the Internet and other connective technologies.

Planned activities for the next reporting period

Speaking engagements and visits

On 23-26 June in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, while attending the IPI World Congress, together with rapporteurs on media freedom from the United Nations, the African Commission for Human and People's Rights and the Organization of American States, I will launch the 2012 "Joint Declaration on Crimes Against Freedom of Expression." I also will participate in a roundtable discussion with the three rapporteurs on freedom of expression trends worldwide.

Publications

My Office will publish the 2nd edition of "Freedom of expression, Free flow of information and Freedom of Media, CSCE/OSCE Main Provisions 1975-2011" in English and Russian.

Media Conferences

Central Asia Media Conference

The 14th Central Asia Media Conference is scheduled to take place on 5-6 July for the first time in Ashgabat. The focus of the conference this year is "From traditional to online media: best practices and perspectives." Conference participants will explore issues related to international standards and national practice regarding freedom of the media in social media and online broadcasting regulation. The participants of the two-day conference will include media professionals, government officials, international experts, representatives of the civil society and academia. The agenda includes well-known experts with global expertise in media and communications and will address legal challenges and issues relating to the online and social media, existing and potential policy and other responses to social media and the challenges and prospects for online media outlets.

I highly appreciate the assistance of the authorities of Turkmenistan during preparatory activities for the conference.

My Office is also arranging for participants from Afghanistan to attend the conference.

South Caucasus Media Conference

The 10th South Caucasus Media Conference will take place on 11-12 October in Baku and is also on “From traditional to online media: best practices and perspectives.”

South East Europe Media Conference

The 2nd South East Europe Media Conference is scheduled to take place in September in Belgrade. In co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Serbia, my Office will bring together journalists and media from across South East Europe to discuss current challenges to media freedom in the region.

Online Media Regulation Master Class

On **26-28 November** as a follow-up to the 14th Central Asia Media Conference on social and online media, my Office plans to organize the three-day Online Media Regulation Master Class for approximately 20 representatives of state regulatory authorities, staff of government ministries, as well as legislators and lawyers dealing with Internet policies and regulation. The Master Class will be led by well-known international consultants with significant expertise in communications, regulation and law in the field of online media.

Extra-budgetary donors

I would like to thank the governments of **France, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom** and the **United States** for their generous financial contributions to the 2012 Central Asia and South Caucasus Media Conferences.