

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1049th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

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On World Press Freedom Day

Mr. Chairperson,

We fully share the view that pluralism and freedom of the media are a most important condition for the development of democracy. No less important is the fact that the human right to freedom of expression is exercised most actively through the media.

The Russian Federation is committed to meeting its OSCE obligations as well as other international commitments concerning freedom of the media and freedom of expression. The Russian media landscape consists of almost 70,000 print media and 20,000 electronic publications, along with some 1,500 news agencies. Furthermore, there is State or municipal involvement in only 9 per cent of the registered media. Simplified registration procedures have led to an increase in the number of licences issued, with maximum growth seen among electronic media. Our country is regarded as one of the European leaders when it comes to the number of Internet users.

In the twenty-first century, it is difficult to overestimate the influence of the mass media in shaping public opinion. This is precisely why there is a growing need to ensure the reliability of information, the responsible exercise of rights and freedoms, respect for the right to privacy, and the enhancement of the professionalism and objectivity of the media and of journalists.

Unfortunately, virtually all of the OSCE participating States have problems in implementing a considered policy making it possible to ensure freedom of expression, on the one hand, and to defend the rights of other persons, including from interference in their private life, on the other. The search for a balance between freedom of expression and the boundaries of its permissible restrictions is no easy task. Extremes are very worrying. In some cases, there is evidence of a campaign being waged against dissidents, including against editors and journalists. Criminal proceedings are being instituted and the work of television stations hampered. One need only recall the campaign to eradicate opinions that differ from the official position, the suspension of the broadcasting of Russian television stations in a number of countries, including Ukraine, the pressure on the channel Russia Today and the

recent incident involving the journalist Graham Phillips, who was literally thrown out of the Stepan Bandera museum in London and not allowed to film there. In other countries, absolute freedom of expression has produced racist, extremist and even neo-Nazi propaganda and affronts to the honour, dignity and religious sentiments of citizens.

World Press Freedom Day is an excellent opportunity to reconsider the media's role in ensuring the stability and security of society. Freedom of the media does not mean freedom from responsibility. It is the task of the authorities in the OSCE States to create such conditions and to establish such a dialogue with the media as would ensure freedom of expression and, at the same time, respect for the rights, honour and dignity of every human being regardless of their nationality, faith, gender, convictions and origin.

We trust that the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media will pay due attention to this matter and promote the development of a constructive dialogue on this topic.

Thank you for your attention.