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**HDIM WORKING SESSION 1 – FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREE MEDIA – UK  
STATEMENT**

We align ourselves with the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union and would like to make a few national remarks.

We would first like to pay tribute to the work of Ms Mijatovic and her team. By creating the position of the Representative nearly twenty years ago, participating States expressed shared commitment to uphold freedom of expression as a fundamentally recognised human right and an essential pillar of democratic societies. We entrusted the Representative with a mandate to draw on their experience and judgement to perform their duties objectively. Ms Mijatovic does precisely that by applying her judgement in an impartial and professional manner.

Mr Moderator,

The principles of free expression and free media have had particular resonance this year. The public and political reaction to the Charlie Hebdo shootings in Paris demonstrated deep rooted support for these freedoms and reinforced our common resolve to protect the safety of those exercising freedom of expression. The UK therefore wishes to commend Serbia for the attention it has given to freedom of expression and journalist safety during its OSCE Chairmanship.

Neither UN Resolutions nor OSCE Ministerial Decisions can prevent attacks against freedom of expression. But they can provide important affirmation of the value of protecting freedom of expression and promoting a zero-tolerance approach towards violence, harassment and intimidation against those exercising that right.

Mr Moderator,

There is no logical or principled reason why participating States should be unable to agree language on this important issue at the OSCE when they have already done so at the United Nations. We therefore call on participating States to reflect seriously and to come to the Belgrade Ministerial Council ready to show resolve and adopt a Ministerial decision that brings OSCE commitments in line with those already agreed in other international fora.

Thank you

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