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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**in response to the address of Ms. Teresa Ribeiro,
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
as delivered by Arman Hovhannisyan,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Armenia
at the 1374th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

19 May 2022

Mr Chairman,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes Ms. Teresa Ribeiro back to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the detailed report on her activities and the overall situation of media freedom in the OSCE area.

Madame Representative,

As you rightly pointed out in your report, freedom of the media is not only an integral part of truly democratic and resilient societies, but it is also indispensable in ensuring security and stability, and the creation of your mandate 25 years ago by the OSCE participating States is a recognition of this reality.

Throughout these years, Armenia has consistently promoted freedom of expression and freedom of the media, which is an inherent feature of any democratic society. Ensuring freedom of expression and media freedom is among the key priorities of the Armenian Government.

As a result, Armenia has been constantly improving its performance in various international ratings and indices on media freedom. According to the 2022 World Press Freedom index, Armenia has further improved its ranking, rising from 63rd to 51st position among 180 countries.

In this respect, along with many other partners, the office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has been instrumental in assisting and supporting our efforts through its recommendations and expert opinions. We continue to enjoy an effective co-operation with the RFOM, and her recent visit to Armenia, where she was received at the highest political level, was a good opportunity to exchange views on the achievements and the specific challenges, including in connection with the erosion of the security environment and the era of digital technologies.

We also would like to thank you, Madam Representatives, for your contribution as a guest speaker to the recently held in Yerevan conference entitled "National Consultation on Media and Information Literacy Policies and Strategies". The conference was an important initiative aimed at increasing media literacy and raising awareness of information disorder, and effectively combating disinformation and misinformation through the mobilisation of local media and target groups.

Dear colleagues,

Ensuring and safeguarding the conditions for journalists to freely perform their professional duties without any limitation, restrictions, fear of reprisal, blacklisting or punishment, is a *sine qua non* for genuine media freedom and freedom of expression.

The OSCE participating States through the relevant mandate tasked the Representative on Freedom of the Media to monitor the situation in this respect. However, and we would like to specifically highlight this, Madam Representative, this mandate covers the entire OSCE region, including the conflict zones, which specifically warrant your attention.

Furthermore, we believe that the RFOM should be doubly vigilant and principled when interacting with [participating States ruled by] authoritarian regimes, whose track record of suppressing free and independent media and freedom of expression is well known. There is a potential risk that any engagement would be abused by such regimes to whitewash their reputation, which in turn would damage and undermine the credibility of the RFOM and its mandate.

In closing, Madame Ribeiro, allow me to once again express our satisfaction with the high level of dialogue and effective co-operation between your Office and relevant Armenian institutions and assure you of Armenia`s continued support for your mandated activities.

I thank you.