

## OSCE ADVISORY GROUP OF EMINENT EXPERTS ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

### ABOUT

The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RFOM mandate is a timely occasion to underline the ability of media in strengthening resilience and contributing to ensure security and sustained peace.

The ability of journalists to report freely on matters of public interest is a crucial indicator of democracy, with media freedom serving the shared effort to build peace, free media can inform citizens of their leaders' successes or failures, convey citizens' needs and desires to decision makers, provide a platform for the open exchange of information and ideas, and hold power to account. When media freedom is restricted, these vital functions break down. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law become endangered, and societies are unable to build confidence and resilience against threats to their common security.

The mandate of the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) was established in November 1997 by the OSCE Permanent Council, following the Lisbon Summit of Heads of State in December 1996, in which they recognized the unique and crucial role of the media for lasting peace and security.

25 years on, the media still play a central role, but its environment has drastically changed. Political, social, economic, environmental, technological, and human development have profoundly shifted our world.

It is with this backdrop that the OSCE RFOM established an Advisory Group of Eminent Experts on Freedom of the Media (AGEEFOM) to provide guidance on current and emerging trends and challenges for media freedom; and on the media's ability to perform its duties to report freely on matters of public interest and build resilience, contributing to ensure security and lasting peace across the OSCE region.

## **Purpose and Role**

The AGEFOM is appointed and commissioned by the OSCE RFOM Office in 2022, during the RFOM's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Its purpose is to assess current challenges, anticipate key developments in years to come, and how these will affect media freedom. The AGEFOM would ultimately propose ways to address the impact of these challenges, in order to safeguard the right to the right to seek, receive and impart information as a core concept of comprehensive security.

## **Membership**

The Advisory Group is composed of 9 independent experts and eminent personalities from across the OSCE region, appointed by the OSCE RFOM.

## **Output**

With OSCE RFOM advisors acting as rapporteurs and facilitating the expert meetings throughout the year, the AGEFOM will discuss three overarching themes: (1.) Is media freedom relevant for human security today and tomorrow? (2.) What is the current understanding of the “media” element of the “freedom of the media” concept? and (3.) How can media freedom be safeguarded by intergovernmental organizations, particularly the OSCE?

Ultimately, the AGEFOM shall provide recommendations on ways to address the impact of emerging challenges, in order to safeguard the right to the right to seek, receive and impart information as a core concept of comprehensive security.

## **Working Methods**

General guidance is provided by the OSCE RFOM.

The OSCE RFOM Office provides operational and logistical support in convening meetings as well as substantive support in drafting the final outcome report.

## Timeframe

Throughout 2022, the AGEFOM would meet several times (online or in person, depending on circumstances) in various constellations.

The Advisory Group will meet four times in 2022, in addition to further ad hoc consultations throughout the year:

- 21 April 2022 – first meeting
- 16 May 2022 – second meeting
- 27 June – third meeting
- 2 November – fourth meeting

A final report is to be finalized ahead of the OSCE RFOM's second annual report to the OSCE Permanent Council in November 2022.