



**PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF PORTUGAL
TO THE OSCE**

1374th meeting of the Permanent Council

19 May 2022

Statement by Portugal and Right of Reply

Mr. Chair,

The EU has already spoken on behalf of Portugal, but please allow me to make a statement in our national capacity.

We would like to thank the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Madam Teresa Ribeiro, and her team for the report. It shows once again, unfortunately, the deepening of the harmful trends the OSCE faces in the fields of media freedom and freedom of expression.

Madam Representative,

Since your last regular report to this Permanent Council, the overwhelming negative development is, of course, the invasion and war of aggression waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The consequences could not be bleaker: journalists being targeted and even losing their lives; the Ukrainian media infrastructure attacked; the Russian authorities' internal crackdown on independent news outlets and dissident voices leaving a vacuum filled with propaganda, disinformation and warmongering.

We call on Russia to cease the military hostilities and return to compliance of International Law and OSCE commitments.

Against this backdrop of large scale and systematic violation of international principles and norms, we believe RFoM has reacted as required: promptly and in line with our shared commitments. In the same vein, it is the responsibility of the participating States to stick to our values and to respond to the current security threats in accordance with them.



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Even without this war the environment for media freedom in the OSCE area was already facing a multitude of challenges, from both state and non-state actors, ranging from the safety of journalists to the impact of artificial intelligence. The hacking of a leading Portuguese media group (Impresa), which you mention in your report, is an example of such challenges and highlights the need for close cooperation between public and private entities.

In your report, Madam Representative, you mention several meritorious initiatives your Office is undertaking. We would like to underscore, in particular, the project on the development of media literacy. In increasingly digitised societies, media literacy coupled with digital skills are of high relevance for an active and informed citizenship. Article 11 of the “Portuguese Charter of Human Rights in the Digital Age”, approved by our Parliament last year, foresees the right to develop digital skills.

The mandate of RFoM was given by the participating States 25 years ago. In the current grim context as you, Madam Representative, rightly point out, any kind of celebration is rather difficult. Nonetheless, we would like to underline the invaluable assistance and guidance to the participating States in addressing issues related to the freedom of the media, freedom of expression and safety of journalists. Your mandate and your work have never been so important.

You can count on our support and we look forward to welcome you to Portugal in an official visit to discuss all these matters.

Mr Chair,

In reply to the statement of the Russian Federation, I would like to assure the Russian delegation our full commitment to media freedom and freedom of expression. The position number seven my country holds in the World Press Freedom Index clearly testifies this. Moreover, any issue that might arise from the implementation of sanctions can be addressed through the proper channels including the judicial system.

Thank you!