

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Statement by Ambassador Päivi Laivola de Rosière,
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Working Session 2: Freedom of expression, free media and information

Finland fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered by Sweden and the recommendations made in it. In addition to that, I would like to highlight a few issues in my national capacity.

Freedom of the media is directly linked to the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which includes a right to seek and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media plays a crucial role in defending the freedom of expression.

In Europe, as in many other places around the world, we witness harshening attitudes and restrictions concerning freedom of speech, information and assembly. Journalists and other media workers are being detained under false pretences. Human rights defenders, bloggers and others who speak up are being harassed. Harassment is often disproportionately targeted to women and other individuals who face multiple forms of discrimination. Freedom of expression, assembly and association are key building blocks of democracy. Every government has a duty to ensure a safe environment for journalists and the civil society. Finland is an unwavering member of the informal OSCE Group of Friends on the Safety of Journalists.

Pluralist Media and investigating journalism are more important than ever in today's world, where disinformation spreads quickly, and can be orchestrated to fragment society. However, situation tends to be worse in contexts of more media control: censored or controlled media is already by definition manipulation of information. Pluralist, free media context in turn allows wider scale of viewpoints, and, especially combined with adequate media literacy, provides better resilience to disinformation. Finland, together with Romania, RFOM and ODIHR is organizing a side event about this very topic right after this session in this very hall. I would like to warmly welcome you to the side event.

Media and digital literacy is the literacy of today. Media literacy and fact-checking services can help us independently appraise the world we live in.



Media education in Finland has made headway in recent years. Awareness of media and digital literacy has spread. Media education cuts across different areas of society, including culture, education, social welfare and health care and consumer rights. Our common aim is to make sure that every child and adolescent has the prerequisites for participating and accessing the information society. Good skills in digital literacy for all are an important element for democracy and inclusion in society.

In order to further promote freedom of expression, free media and information:

- Finland calls on all participants, governments and civil society alike, to actively promote provision of media and digital literacy training for youth, both through formal and informal education, in order to build resilience to disinformation and foster active citizenship and democracy.
- Finland calls on all participating States to support the work of the OSCE independent institutions and their strong and independent mandates.

I hope that the discussion in the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting will be fruitful and useful.

