



STATEMENT BY TURKEY

2013 OSCE Human Dimension Seminar

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(Working Group II: National frameworks for media freedom - best practices)

Thank you Mr. Moderator.

Today we would like to share with the participants some considerations in our national legislation concerning the media.

At the outset, we would like to briefly give you an impression of the Turkish media landscape, which indicates the pluralistic and diverse character of Turkey's media. At present there are around 7.000 newspapers and magazines in circulation in Turkey. The majority of these printed publications, namely around 4.000, are local and about 350 are regional, while some 2.500 enjoy nationwide distribution. Turkey also has over 250 television channels, the majority of which broadcast locally. Furthermore, over 1.000 radio stations are active across Turkey. Needless to say, such diversity would not have been possible without very liberal legislation.

As we underlined in our statement during the opening session of the seminar, media freedom in Turkey is safeguarded by our Constitution and the relevant laws. It can only be restricted in certain specific conditions prescribed in our Press Law, which are also foreseen by international instruments in this field and in line with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

In Turkish law there is no penalty other than fines foreseen for offenses or misdemeanors emerging from the press or its administration. Imprisonment, on the other hand, is envisaged for those found guilty of impeding free press or publication, the distribution or sale of published works. In order to safeguard the intellectual property rights of journalists, the law foresees heavy fines for those who breach them.

Another aspect of our relevant legislation worth mentioning here is the provision that investigations regarding the media must be completed within six months of the statute of limitations.

In order to continue enhancing the depth of our legislation and within a general policy of comprehensive measures that are accompanying successes in the fight against terrorism, several judicial reform packages have been implemented, with the most recent one being accepted in the Turkish Grand National Assembly last month. The Turkish anti-terror law and various other laws in

the criminal code have thus been amended with the aim of more clearly defining terrorist propaganda and furthering freedom of expression.

However, no legislation is perfect, and there is always room for improvement given the dynamic nature of society and the rapid advances of modern technologies. In this context we would like to underline our firm belief that each person who is deprived of his or her liberty due to the expression of opinions is one too many, no matter what his or her profession is. It is with this understanding that we have been implementing numerous reforms which encompass, *inter alia*, legal amendments, improvements of institutional capacity and training for legal professionals. We are determined to continue our policy to further freedom of the media and freedom of expression, in line with our OSCE commitments. To this end our relevant authorities continue to comprehensively study legal and practical avenues, with a view to making improvements wherever possible.

Thank you.