

**Statement of the Delegation of Ukraine**  
**at the Working Session 1: “Fundamental freedoms I, including: – Freedom of**  
**expression, free media and information” of**  
**2019 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**  
**delivered by Valentyn Koval, member of National Council of Ukraine of**  
**Television and Radio Broadcasting**  
*(16 September 2019)*

Mr. Moderator, dear colleagues,

Just a couple of days ago in Kyiv, at the 16th annual meeting of the Yalta European Strategy, we talked about the crisis of the democratic model. One of the brightest minds of our time, philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, noted that previous crises of liberal democratic institutions occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, and both led to world wars.

At the same time, we talked about the fact that after 1945 - that is, over 75 years - in Europe and in the world there were no major protracted bloody wars, and we saw the victory of world diplomacy in this.

I work in the field of information, and, unfortunately, I must note that the information war never ended, it only intensified with the development of technologies. In addition, I am a citizen of Ukraine and I should admit that protracted and bloody wars are taking place. One is happening right now in Ukraine, during 5 years we have lost 13,000 lives. I want to express my thanks to minister Jacek Czaputowicz, who mentioned this right on the very first minutes of this meeting.

And it's easy to understand who opposes Ukraine in this war: 35 captured earlier Ukrainian citizens returned 10 days ago to Kiev by flight from Vnukovo Airport, near Moscow.

But back to the information. Almost immediately after the seizure of power departments' buildings in Donetsk in April 2014, TV-signal transmitters were retuned. And another signal appeared on the frequency of the local state television company... no, not Euronews, not the BBC, not CNN. Channel Russia-24 appeared on the air. In a few days, all Ukrainian TV channels that were broadcasting from the highest TV tower in the Donetsk region were replaced by channels from Russian Federation. This occurred in the same manner as in the Crimea just two months earlier, in February - March 2014.

In figures, 503 frequency assignments, that belonged to Ukraine, were captured and illegally used by an aggressor country, which directly contradicted the Statute of the International Telecommunication Union and violated the requirements of resolution 68/262 of the UN General Assembly. Moreover, those 503 frequency assignments – not just radio frequencies, they are 503 transmitters and hundreds of antennas, which were the property of Ukrainian public and private broadcasters.

Around 40 television and 20 radio transmitters were captured and retuned at the eastern part of Ukraine.

As far as these territories now covered by broadcasters, which are not under the control of the National Council of Ukraine of Television and Radio Broadcasting, we can not talk about their compliance with the fundamental freedoms. Cable networks switched off Ukrainian channels as well during the same 2 weeks in April-May 2014.

While the level of the freedom of speech and expression is on a highest level ever in Ukraine we can only state that Ukrainian citizens who live in the territory of annexed Crimea and in the east of Ukraine have been deprived of the right to free access to information and cannot get acquainted with the position of Ukrainian state and the opinions of their fellow citizens in an unprepared form for 5 years now.

I thank you.