



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by Ambassador Hans Fredrik Lehne
to the OSCE Review Conference,
Warsaw, 7 October 2010
Session 1: Freedom of Media

Mr. Moderator,

Violence or intimidation against journalists and human rights defenders are among the most worrisome, due to their effects on the freedom of expression and democracy in our societies. In some areas, developments have gone in the wrong direction during the last few years.

Freedom of expression needs to be constantly restated. Democratic societies depend on free media and on freedom of expression. The very test of democracy is freedom of criticism, unpleasant though it may be to be criticised. Freedom of expression and freedom of opinion are cornerstones in a democracy.

Freedom of expression and freedom of the media is an area central to human right defenders and journalists. Human rights defenders and journalists face serious harassments, death threats, violence and arrests. They are deliberately targeted because of their work. At the same time, impunity is still being practiced when it comes to harassments or killing of journalists and human rights defenders.

Journalists, who criticise politicians, write about corruption, violence by the police against ordinary citizens or kidnapping of opposition members will never be popular in non-democratic societies. They even risk their lives or could be locked up in psychiatric hospitals. That is why safety of journalists is a main concern.

Journalists and human right defenders often report on behalf of the voiceless. Without their reports there could never be knowledge about what is really happening and as a consequence no opinion against lawlessness, crimes or wars.

Norway is a strong supporter of the representative for Freedom of the Media and her work. We also share her commitment to the freedom of the Internet as an important source for information.

At the Astana summit, our heads of state and government must make a resounding reaffirmation of all our already undertaken commitments. Furthermore, the existing Freedom of Media commitments need to be updated and their implementation needs to be strengthened in the form of an action plan for further discussion and follow-up.