



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
The Representative on Freedom of the Media  
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**Closing remarks**

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*Internet 2013: Shaping policies to advance media freedom*

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Thank you all for your words of support and words of criticism. I am really delighted to see so many delegations present and so many views presented in relation to the topic we have discussed during the past two days. It is an honor and a pleasure for me and my team to be able to talk to all of you; to address these issues. It is wonderful that so many people travelled from far and near to hear the views of 57 participating States regarding the topic my Office is covering.

As is the task of my Office, we have focused on aspects of the Internet which touch the world of media and its new forms of news aggregation, dissemination and consumption – which we all know is a fundamental requirement for democracies.

All the sessions have resulted in a broad range of recommendations from experts, civil society, and academia and, of course, participating States. We are still collecting your views and we are still collecting your ideas.

As is usual at the OSCE, such conferences are meant to help with implementation of media-freedom commitments and to assist all of you to develop the best solutions for honoring these commitments. Hence, we will carefully assess all these ideas that we have collected and group them in a user-friendly way for the benefit of all of you.

You can expect the final version of the conference recommendations to be uploaded and distributed in a few days.

Let me recall briefly the broad range of topic this conference has touched upon. It has been the most comprehensive event on the Internet I have ever hosted. Just to give you few highlights.

We have touched upon the issues of copyright, hate speech, freedom of speech for minorities in the digital age, the protection of minors, how to tackle illegal content, self-regulation, rights

and responsibilities of Internet services and netizens and even such seemingly marginal issues as editor-to-editor problems and problematic language in news commentaries.

The very fact that all three OSCE Institutions actively presented their views and involvement with human rights on the Internet shows the abundance of opportunities this global infrastructure offers and which therefore need to be protected. It is inter-institutional and it is inter-disciplinary.

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank my dear colleagues, Janez Lenarčič and Knut Vollebeck, for coming and sharing the views of the other two Institutions in this related issue and topic.

This conference, as I mentioned in the opening, is following up on what began in Amsterdam 2003 – and was initiated by my predecessors, Freimut Duve and Miklós Haraszti, and funded by the Netherlands.

It established basic principles and initiated the discussion of this topic by the OSCE. There are several issues that these recommendations touched upon, and they are still relevant now – the upload rule, limited liability of intermediaries, non-discriminatory access to the Internet, the importance of Internet literacy and, last but not least, the underlying fundamental principle that offline and online content are subject to the same protection under freedom of expression and freedom of the media standards. And this is something that we heard from so many of you today.

Despite the fact that the Internet is present in our everyday lives and in almost every household in the OSCE, this conference was only made possible by the generous contributions of eight OSCE participating States. It is therefore more than justified to name them again.

These are the governments of Austria, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States.

But I would also like to thank all participating States for being actively engaged and for sending wonderful speakers and government officials as well as civil society representatives and academia. All these people gathered here in Vienna in order to see how we can move forward in a constructive way and by using a dialogue on an issue that is bringing all of us closer. And I think the Internet is trying to bring us closer together. We should just not be so afraid of it.

Yesterday and today we again covered new ground by addressing new forms of media-like content and New Media products online.

Although we have not come to and did not expect to find common definitions on forms of journalistic content and citizen journalism, we cannot deny that such production has a journalistic component which interacts with and feeds into traditional media.

We had the opportunity to listen to Paul Lewis from the Guardian, and he really demonstrated all of this during his presentation at the side event two days ago.

When it comes to regulation, I would like to recall what Professor Dawn Nunciato said yesterday at the opening session. And I think we are going to quote her quite a lot on this. We need to operate with a scalpel and not with a sledgehammer. I think as with so many issues here in the OSCE region, we can use this advice.

This means that, before regulating aspects of the Internet, the question must be asked: Which is the least intrusive way to do it and whether there are alternatives to regulation to accomplish the objective?

Equally important is the question of whom we want to protect by regulating certain aspects and all considered under the paramount guiding rule that human rights must be our yardstick – as was convincingly pointed out by our second excellent keynote speaker, Professor Yaroslav Skvortsov from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

It is also important to note that we can clearly say that Internet is not *per se* media, but equally we must recognize that media without the Internet in the year 2013 is simply unthinkable.

Thank you to all moderators, speakers and to all participants. We hope to see many of you soon when we have different events that the OSCE organizes. I would also like to thank PPIS, our public relations office. It would be impossible to do this without their help. And also to Conference Services and the Secretariat in general for helping organize this event for you.

It goes without saying that we need to thank our professional and hardworking interpreters. But I would also like to thank my staff. I am really grateful that most of you already have mentioned the importance of the team that is trying, together with me, to do this job. As you know, it is a very small team, but a team of very dedicated, energetic people that really made it possible to organize Internet 2013 conference.

And of course, to the chair-in-office, the chairmanship, for helping us and supporting us in this very important endeavor. Thank you so much.