



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TACAN İLDEM,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**

***IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY DUNJA MIJATOVIC
REPRESENTATIVE ON THE FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA***

**907th PERMANENT COUNCIL
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Mr. Chairperson,

I join the previous speakers in warmly welcoming Representative Mijatovic back to the Permanent Council and in thanking her for the comprehensive overview of the developments she has shared with us in relation to freedom of the media in the OSCE area. Her presentation as well as the content of her regular report will be subject of a thorough examination by the Turkish authorities.

The report reiterates the challenges and outlines positive developments vis-à-vis freedom of expression and free media. The interventions of the Representative on a wide spectrum of areas in various participating States portray the complexity of the issues at hand and the importance of establishing a meaningful dialogue with her Office in addressing them.

We are pleased to recognize the fact that the tireless efforts of the Representative in fulfilling her mandate have progressively resulted in a much desired reporting exercise in terms of its objectivity and inclusiveness.

In this context, we welcome the attention she pays, among other OSCE participating States, to the developments in Turkey as they pertain to freedom of the media. The willingness and preparedness of the Turkish Government to further develop our cooperation and mutual understanding with her Office has been conveyed by my Minister to the Representative together with an invitation last year.

Her visit last December, in our view, was successful in contributing to better comprehend the existing challenges and the steps that are planned to be taken. On that note, let me underline once again our determination to keep this line of communication as open and as mutually useful.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to briefly comment on some of the points that were raised in the report. The question of individuals that are referred to as `imprisoned journalists` was also among the topics which were discussed during the Representative's visit to Turkey.

Besides the fact that great majority of them are charged with the terrorism offences rather for their professional activities, it is evident that Turkey, like many other participating States, is not immune to the so-called dilemma between the freedom of expression and the fight against terrorism. We are equally confronted with the difficulty of striking the correct balance among legitimate rights such as combating terrorism on the one hand, and freedom of expression. Turkey is in close cooperation and consultation with relevant international structures, such as the Representative's Office and the Council of Europe.

In line with the aim of meeting international standards and OSCE commitments and in search of widening the boundaries of the freedom of expression and the media, Turkish authorities for some time have been working hard to introduce changes in certain parts of the legislation. As recently announced by the Minister of Justice, those legal amendments are planned to be made in various laws, such as Anti-Terror Law, Press Law and Penal Code. New changes will improve media freedom, particularly in relation to suspensions of publications, offences when committed via press and detentions.

In concluding, we wish every success to Representative Mijatovic and her able team in their valuable endeavors across the OSCE area.

Thank you.