



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Right of Reply to the Russian Federation on Media Freedom**

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
February 11, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair, I would like to exercise our right of reply.

As the U.S. Delegation has explained at this Permanent Council on at least two recent occasions, some social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, have begun more clearly labeling when a source is a government source, or government-controlled, removing content or closing accounts when government actors have been posing as something other than what they are and when account holders violate the site's terms of service, especially when they contained blatant misinformation.

These commercial platforms made these moves completely independently of the U.S. government and not as a result of any U.S. law. We note governments do not have rights to *Freedom of Expression*, which is an individual right. And removal of material from **social media platforms** by a private company in no way impacts the ability of individuals to express themselves in other fora or through a variety of media.

With respect to references to Ukraine and Latvia: I know the governments of Ukraine and Latvia understand well the threats of disinformation, and the U.S. remains committed to working with our Allies and partners to counter the spread of disinformation, which is an essential tool of authoritarian governments to destabilize free societies and expand their malign influence.

We urge all governments to ensure that as they seek to counter malign influence—be it from Russia, China, or elsewhere—they do so in a manner that respects and ensures human rights and fundamental freedoms, which undergird democracies—including freedom of expression, both online and offline.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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