



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

20 September 2001

--CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY--

Statement Under Review of Current Issues

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is my first appearance at the Permanent Council after the tragic events in the United States of America. Just over a week has passed and millions of Americans are now returning back to their daily lives. I will follow their example and focus today on Ukraine.

A year ago Georgiy Gongadze, a Ukrainian reporter and editor, who often wrote very critical articles regarding some of the policies of the government, went missing in Kiev. My Office was one of the first to raise his case with the authorities. Ever since numerous OSCE participating States, most international media NGOs have been demanding a thorough investigation into this case of what I refer to as “censorship by killing.”

My Office conducted its own investigation into the circumstances surrounding the murder of Gongadze. On several occasions, I spoke about this unsolved crime here, at the Permanent Council. Many statements had been made by international organisations and media asking the Ukrainian authorities to be more vigilant in pursuing the perpetrators.

Last week *Reporters sans frontieres (RSF)* called for the creation of an international commission of inquiry into the journalist’s disappearance and murder, which is in line with what I had proposed in February in my report on our investigation. Only an independent commission will be able to identify the responsible parties. This commission should include experts from different international and Ukrainian communities including governmental and non-governmental organisations.

I believe that this is an opportunity for Ukraine, if it supports this initiative, to show its commitment to freedom of expression. I stress: my Institution is fully behind *RSF* and the family of Gongadze in their endeavour to solve this crime and to lay to rest all those numerous rumours that are still circulating in Kiev and beyond. I also plan to discuss with *RSF* ways in which my Office can be of help to this independent commission.

Thank you.