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Intervention by OLOF KLEBERG, the Swedish OSCE Network

Free media are a cornerstone of a pluralistic society. But free media are under pressure.

Most urgent are the ambitions of many governments to restrict information and to control media.

National security interests are allowed to prevail over fundamental principles of freedom, as established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Charter of Paris.

In the World Press Freedom Index 2014 even stable democracies as the United Kingdom, France and the United States are trailing. Especially the United States is performing badly. Witch-hunt of whistleblowers has been more essential than to rein in abusive surveillance.

Among the EU countries Hungary and Greece have fallen heavily. By the way, they are sitting next to one another in this room!

In the rest of Europe the situation is alarming in Ukraine, even more so in Russia and especially in Turkey, the country where the highest number of journalists in the OSCE area are imprisoned.

Azerbaijan is the most urgent example today, having sentenced several outstanding journalists to jail, most recently Khadyia Ismaylova. And also social activists as Rasul Jafarov, whose picture I proudly wear on my t-shirt.

Safety of journalists has grown a paramount issue in public debate – not the least thanks to our strong Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms Mijatovic.

A very clear commitment was made by the UN Security Council in May this year. It adopted, unanimously, a Resolution on Safety of Journalists. Now it is time for many states to take action!

We also need much better protection of sources of journalists.

To sum up: In the OSCE we must have a strong new Representative when Ms Mijatovic unfortunately will step down next year.