



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE OSCE
REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA,**

MS. DUNJA MIJATOVIĆ

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
29th of March, 2012

Mr Chairman,

As always, it is a great pleasure to listen to the interesting and detailed presentations by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Her field of responsibility is a top priority for my delegation, and I share the warm words of appreciation already voiced by previous speakers for the good work conducted by her and her able staff.

I can align myself with the many concerns raised by Denmark on behalf of the European Union, as well as by others, over issues in the report distributed to us for this PC meeting. Instead of repeating the same concerns I will limit myself to a few remarks on the two main points in today's presentation.

Mr. Chairman,

We are indeed worried about the many attempts to regulate the use of the Internet. The same freedoms must apply to digital media as to traditional ones. The Internet is becoming the main source of information and the primary channel for communication for the young generation. The Internet helps foster informed and politically active young people. Our societies will stagnate without.

It is true that the Internet is an important arena for extremists and groups working to destabilize our societies and even overturn our democracies. But the challenge these groups represent cannot be met by limiting freedoms that our democracies rest upon.

This is why the Norwegian Prime Minister after the terror in Oslo and at Utøya in July last year said that we will meet terrorists with more openness and more democracy.

Mr. Chairman,

We are equally concerned about the many reports we receive on journalists being put in jail due to their profession. Political leaders must not only tolerate critical journalism, they must support and encourage it. Critical journalism is important in our struggle to prevent misuse of power, bad governance and corruption and therefore crucial to progress, also in the economic field.

Critical journalists risk more than being restricted in the exercise of their profession. Every year journalists are intimidated, some even killed because of articles they have written or information they have collected.

All governments in the OSCE area have committed themselves to protect freedom of expression and thereby to protect journalists in the exercise of their profession. We regret that we so far have not been able to agree on measures to protect journalists and we appeal to the Chair and to all delegations to work towards a substantive decision on this important topic.

Mr. Chairman,

We all benefit from a strong and vocal Representative of Freedom of the Media. My delegation is indeed concerned about the limited resources we make available over the Unified Budget for Dunja Mijatović's office. Too many of the annual seminars and conferences arranged by the Representative of Freedom of the Media have to be financed by extrabudgetary means.

The EU has called for contributions to the 14th Central Asian Media Conference and for the 9th South Caucasus Media Conference. We are confident that such conferences have a positive impact on the development of the free media in the concerned countries. We have therefore donated 30.000 Euros to these two events.

Mr. Chairman,

We share the priorities outlined by Ms Mijatović and we will continue to support her and her dedicated staff. We wish the Representative of Freedom of the Media every success in her future endeavors.

Thank you.