



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

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**Statement under Current Issues**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The last time I took the floor to address this Council, I drew attention to the abuse of the TV mass media in Turkmenistan to humiliate and destroy those individuals who were accused of taking part in an alleged murder attempt. This practice utilising propaganda methods from the Stalin years is continuing. Live shows are staged on television that broadcast the confessions of the accused, numerous condemnations are reported, all of them demanding the death penalty for the accused as had happened during the show trials in the 30s in the Soviet Union. For your additional information, I am distributing today excerpts from the broadcast on Turkmenistan television of the Session of the People's Council (similar to an upper house of a Parliament) that consisted basically of two events mixed into one: a "debate" on the murder attempt and of taped confessions made by the accused.

The rhetoric used is often obscene and in most countries would be unprintable. Racist speech is also present: here is a quote from the President of an OSCE participating State, Turkmenistan, with reference to one of the leaders of the opposition Boris Shikhmuradov: "His blood is diluted with the blood of a different nationality. Previously, to make Turkmen weaker their blood was diluted. Where the true blood of our ancestors is mixed with other blood their national spirit is low."

In Kazakhstan, I am following the trial of Sergei Duvanov (he participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Central Asian Media Conference in Tashkent last year.) I have intervened on Mr. Duvanov's behalf before. This time he is accused of having a sexual relationship with a minor. I will follow this case very closely and expect that the rule of law will be upheld and that the trial will be fair. I also reserve the right to send an observer from my Office if I deem necessary to monitor the case and I expect this person to receive full access to the court proceedings.

In Kyrgyzstan, I once again raise the situation around *Moya Stolitsta*. I understand that several senior officials have accused this newspaper of "presenting a distorted picture of the political situation in the country" and of "an anti-Kyrgyz bias." Similar views were expressed in the pro-government newspaper *Vecherniy Bishkek*. In addition, I was informed that over a dozen lawsuits had been filed against *Moya Stolitsta* in 2002, many of them by state officials.

I have raised the dire situation around *Moya Stolitsta* on several occasions, both in letters to the Foreign Minister and in statements to the OSCE Permanent Council. In early 2002, the state-owned publishing house *Uchkun* had refused to print *Moya Stolitsta*, a matter also raised by my Office. I will continue following the plight of *Moya Stolitsta* closely and expect the government to put an end to a campaign of harassment of this newspaper.

Thank you.