



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

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentleman,

This week, amid growing tensions in Asia, a regional security summit has taken place in Almaty. We all appreciate the leading role Kazakhstan is playing in these very tense moments regarding peace in Asia. In this regard, the more important the international role of our participating States becomes, the more necessary it is that basic human rights, in particular freedom of expression, should continue being in the centre of democratic development and must not be pushed aside by any Government. Here the OSCE institutions have very clear concepts in line with their mandates.

Two weeks ago, when I presented the report on the media situation in Turkmenistan, I announced my intention of issuing media reports of all the five Central Asian states in the near future. On Kyrgyzstan, I have taken note of the recent Presidential Decree repealing Decree #20 of January 2002. This could be a positive step towards improving the freedom of the media situation in Kyrgyzstan and we will be following the developments closely. Today I am presenting to you the seventh country report by my Office, focusing on media in Kazakhstan.

The report before you highlights the main concerns of my Office with regard to media in Kazakhstan. The situation has consistently deteriorated in the near past. The last months have seen a series of attacks on media, including closures of a number of media outlets. The latest incidents include the raiding of the offices and the assault of two journalists of the *SolDat* newspaper and the fire-bombing of the office of *Delovoye Obozreniye Respublika*. Since then, the latter newspaper has been closed down by court ruling for failing to correctly provide publication data such as the print house address and circulation. *Tan TV* is still off the air after its technical equipment has been damaged several times in the last months. The authorities in Kazakhstan must thoroughly investigate these and other incidents presented in the report and do more to ensure a safe environment for the media.

I would urge the Government of Kazakhstan to look into the recommendations of the report and request the assistance of the OSCE and other international actors in addressing the problems. A range of media projects can be developed and implemented from these recommendations by my Office as well as the OSCE Centre in Almaty.

Last year in December my Office organized the Third Central Asia Media Conference in Almaty. We are grateful for the co-operation of the Kazakh authorities in this endeavour. We also hope for active participation by the Kazakh journalists, as well as other journalists in the region, in the Fourth Conference which will be organized in Tashkent in September 2002. My Office is also currently looking for funding by the participating States for this important project.

Thank you.