

Note to Media

Prishtinë/ Prishtina 2 May 2010

Statement by OSCE Head of Mission Werner Almhofer on World Press Freedom Day

Since it was established by the UN General Assembly in 1993, World Press Freedom Day on 3 May reminds the public and the authorities that free media and freedom of expression are intrinsically tied to functioning democratic structures and prosperity.

The OSCE Mission is mandated to support and promote the principles of freedom of the media and freedom of speech in Kosovo. It encourages all people in Kosovo, its residents, decision-makers and civil society, to support, strengthen and defend principles of editorial independence, freedom of expression and free media. Only by respecting these core democratic values will real progress be achieved.

It is for this reason, and on this particular date, that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo wishes to express its concern over recent and disturbing developments in the field of media, including an increase in the reported number of threats directed at investigative journalists and challenges to the editorial independence of the public broadcaster. As indicated recently in an OSCE report¹, media can also be influenced by government spending on advertisement.

Reports by international democracy and media watchdogs, including Freedom House and Reporters Sans Frontières, have also noted the mounting pressure on media outlets and journalists in Kosovo.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo is therefore calling on the authorities to prevent undue influence on media while ensuring a safe environment for journalists to operate in.

¹ Report Circulation and Politicization of the Print Media in Kosovo is available at http://www.osce.org/documents/mik/2010/04/43627_en.pdf