

**Statement of the Italian Federation for Human Rights on the Working session 2/3:
Freedom of the media of the 2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting OSCE**

The Italian Federation for Human Rights (FIDU) organizes international human rights monitoring missions to the Republic of Kazakhstan. Since 13 of June 2018, 11 observers were sent to Kazakhstan by the FIDU. I was one of them. I would like to draw your attention to the serious problems with media freedom in Kazakhstan.

For the last 27 years Kazakhstan has been ruling by Nursultan Nazarbayev. During these years almost all the independent media outlets, such as Respublika or Tribuna, were eliminated from the Kazakhstani information space. Many criminal cases were initiated against independent journalists and bloggers. Some of them were arrested due to doing their professional duties. Blogger and human rights defender Maks Bokayev was sentenced to 5 years in prison, blogger Sanat Dosov to 3 years in prison, blogger Ardak Ashym was detained in psychiatric facility, journalist and blogger Murat Tungishbayev was illegally extradite from Kyrgyzstan, detained and tortured by refusal to provide medical assistance, due to that he lost one eye.

Recently, many politically motivated persecutions of social media users in Kazakhstan were recorded. After 13 March 2018, when the biggest opposition movement of Kazakhstan the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DCK) was recognized as extremist organization and banned, hundreds of people were arrested due to connections with DCK. The latest example is a case of Ablovos Dzhumayev, who was detained for discussing politics in the Telegram messenger application in a group called "Activist of the DCK". Now he could face up to 7 years in prison. His wife, Aigul Akberdiyeva, could face up to 10 years in prison for messaging in the same chat.

The Italian Federation for Human Rights regrets that the OSCE did not condemn such violations of human rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan. We appeal to all OSCE member states to make a constant monitoring of the situation with the restriction of media freedom in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Thank you for your attention,

Maksym Sytnikov

Member of the FIDU human rights monitoring mission to Kazakhstan