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## 2009 OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

Tuesday, 6 October 2009

### Working Session 13: Freedom of Expression, Free Media and Information

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The role of the free media in a democratic society cannot be understated. Suffice it to say, there cannot be a truly functioning democracy without free media. Freedom House commends the OSCE Representative for the Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, for his clear voice on the issue of media freedom. In speaking up whenever media freedom is threatened and focusing on those participating States where media freedom and independent journalists are most at risk, the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media sets an example to other parts of the organization on how scarce resources can be effectively used for the promotion of OSCE values.

In its annual study of 28 OSCE participating States, *Nations in Transit*, Freedom House tracks the developments in the field of media freedom. Regrettably, our research suggests that media freedom is on the decline in the OSCE region. In 2008, the study found that over the last 5 years media freedom has suffered setback in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Slovakia. Turkmenistan's and Uzbekistan's ratings are at the lowest possible point. We call on all

of these countries to work closely with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media on improving conditions for the free media.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year that has passed since the last Human Dimension Implementation meeting has again seen violence against journalists. Not only those working for the electronic or printed media are at risk, but also those who use the internet to express their views and to convey information that may not be always to the liking of the authorities , or, in other words, for doing their jobs. We again call on the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic and of those participating States that are in a position to provide relevant information to bring to justice those who took the life of the *ferghana.ru* journalist Alisher Saipov. And we call on the Russian authorities to bring to justice those who perpetrated and carried out a murder of Magomed Evloev, the owner of the *ingushetiya.ru* website. In addition, we call on the authorities of Azerbaijan to end the continued imprisonment on what the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, called "trumped-up charges" of two bloggers: Emin Abdullayev (Milli) and Adnan Hajizade.

Thank you for your attention.