

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 March 2011

In response to the report by Ms. Dunja Mijatović

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome Ms. Dunja Mijatović, the distinguished OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and thank her for her informative report on the activities of her Office and its plans for the future.

We note that the Representative is listening to recommendations made by OSCE participating States. In monitoring the situation with respect to freedom of the media, ever greater attention is being paid to ensuring a geographical balance, and the thematic scope of the Office's activities is improving.

It is fundamentally important for Ms. Mijatović to further develop constructive co-operation with participating States and to take their wishes into account, moreover, in both the political and the budgetary planning of her Office's work. In particular, dissemination within the OSCE of the positive experience of countries in resolving issues falling within the Representative's competence would be very welcome.

The challenges connected with ensuring freedom of speech and activity for journalists are vital for all OSCE participating States. The fact that nearly half the participating States from different regions are mentioned in this context in the Representative's report is highly revealing.

The problems with regard to ensuring freedom of the media are of a different nature. This includes ensuring journalists' safety, improving legislation and law enforcement practice, protecting sources of information and guaranteeing free access to it. In this connection, we note the multifaceted work of the Representative's Office, including the project activities, such as holding seminars and training events, which will lead to greater professionalism both on the part of representatives of State authority and of journalists, as well as encourage exchanges of positive experience.

We share Ms. Mijatović's approach, namely, that her Office's task is not only to protect freedom of the press, but also to promote self-regulation of the media. We should like

to recall the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Article 10), which emphasizes that the exercise of freedom of expression carries with it duties and responsibilities. This also applies in full measure to journalists' responsibility to their audience.

We think that the Office of the Representative should also contribute to one of the OSCE's priority areas of work – combating intolerance and promoting tolerance. Unfortunately, the media are increasingly becoming a vehicle for the dissemination of racism and xenophobia. We expect the Representative to step up efforts to counter such a trend in connection with the media.

The Internet – the modern global means of communication and information that is open to the public – deserves separate attention. Unfortunately, the World Wide Web is being used not only for good, but also for incitement to extremism and terrorism, dissemination of child pornography, and so on.

In conclusion, we should like to wish Ms. Dunja Mijatović and the staff of her Office every success in their future work.

Thank you for your attention.