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Delegation of Switzerland

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND  
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 March 2011

**In response to the report by Ms. Dunja Mijatović,  
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media**

Madam Representative,

Switzerland would like first of all to thank you for your report and the activities which you have carried out during this first year of your mandate.

The long list of countries to which you refer in your report indicates the seriousness of your work and the quality of your commitment to protecting freedom of the press. Nevertheless, the length of this list and the diversity of the States mentioned also remind us how common restrictions in this field are throughout the OSCE area, both to the east and to the west of Vienna.

Switzerland keenly regrets that freedom of expression continues to be threatened, on the European continent as elsewhere, and wishes to remind each of us of the commitments we have made with regard to freedom of expression, freedom of the media and a free press.

We wish to mention in this regard that some of the commitments involve journalists' working conditions. In our view, respect for the right to freedom of opinion and expression are merely empty words if States are unable to give journalists a basic guarantee, i.e., that they will be able to freely practise their profession without being subjected to or fearing violence. For this reason, Switzerland welcomes the fact that freedom of the press in general and the safety of journalists in particular are among the key priorities of the Lithuanian Chairmanship. The conference on journalists' safety to be held in June 2011 therefore seems to us to be of the utmost relevance.

The restrictions and violations of freedom of the media, which exist to varying degrees, are of concern to all of us. The developments of the last few weeks in the Middle East and North Africa remind us that neither limiting or controlling access to the Internet nor arbitrary restrictions on freedom of expression can suppress the population's need to participate in political life.