



ԵԱՀԿ-ՈՒՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**In Response to the Address of Mr. Harlem Désir, OSCE Representative on
Freedom of the Media
as delivered by Ms. Lilit Grigoryan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Armenia
at the 1234th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

July 4, 2019

Mr. Chair,

We would like to warmly welcome Mr. Harlem Désir, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, back to the Permanent Council and thank him for his comprehensive report.

The close cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media contributes to further strengthening of pluralistic and free media in Armenia. Armenia strongly supports the activities of the Representative on Freedom of the Media whose critical voice plays a key role in promoting and advocating full implementation of the freedom of expression and free media commitments.

The freedom of expression is essential in dismantling hate narratives and propaganda of war and raising awareness on violent actions, which may lead to serious security threats. Any attempt to deny access of journalists and other media representatives to conflict areas should be recognized as early warning sign, which requires immediate reaction and early action.

Promotion of freedom of the media and freedom of expression should encompass the entire OSCE region including conflict areas. We believe that independent and free media can play a positive role in times of conflict through providing objective information, advocating peace, confidence and reconciliation.

The focus of the RFOM Office on such challenges as silencing critical voices of free media, including under the pretext of “extremism”, “justification of terrorism” or “hate

speech” is important as ever. In this regard, we encourage the RFOM Office to put a strong emphasis on combatting impunity for crimes committed against journalists and outline measures for protection of journalists in line with Milan MC decision on Safety of Journalists.

The independence of the media is an absolute priority for the Armenian Government. To this end, the commitment of the Government to refrain from controlling the media outlets is essential in creating conducive framework for media independence.

After one year of democratic transition, Armenia achieved irreversible progress in upholding freedom of expression and the media. Thus, according to the 2019 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders Armenia has improved by 19 points its press freedom score and moved up to the 61st place out of 180 countries in the world.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that freedom of the media and expression remain priority for the Government of Armenia and the authorities of Armenia are looking forward to welcome you Mr. Desir, in Yerevan on the occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the establishment of the Human Rights Defender’s institution.

It will serve yet another opportunity to address all the outstanding issues and challenges related to free media.

Thank you.