



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

**Statement in Response to the report of the
Representative on the Freedom of the Media**

Delivered by Ambassador Anne- Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 11 May 2023

Thank you,

We thank the Representative for her highly valuable report to this Council, and for her clear messages to the participating States.

Mr. Chair,

The right to freedom of expression, including free access to information, is fundamental to the realization of other human rights. Freedom of expression is essential to enabling people to acquire knowledge and form their own opinions. Freedom of expression is also a cornerstone of a vibrant democracy where all members of society can take part in a free exchange of views and ideas and influence social development.

An independent, critical press is one of the most important institutions in any democratic society. It is the role of the media to report on matters of public interest, expose issues of concern and abuses of power, and to facilitate an open and informed debate in which differing views and ideas can be aired. A wide range of independent media channels is of great importance in ensuring that all groups in society have the possibility to gain insight into and influence matters that affect them. This is nothing to be afraid of. In most cases it contributes to long term legitimacy of political institutions and decisions.

At the Second Summit for Democracy, in March of this year, Norway renewed its commitments to media freedom and the safety of journalists under the Media Freedom Cohort. Norway pledged to contribute to coordinated and effective efforts by governments, the media and civil society organizations in supporting media development and the safety of journalists. We are committed to ensure that all

Norwegian support to media development and safety of journalists involves women's meaningful participation and protects their safety online and offline.

Protecting human rights in the digital sphere is a priority for Norway, and an area where targeted measures are needed. We therefore want to particularly commend the Representative's work with the Safety of Female Journalists Online (SOFJO) project, which will result in concrete guidelines for the States. We believe this will be a great contribution to better protection of media freedom and human rights in the digital sphere.

Mr. Chair,

Norway strongly supports the mandate of the Representative on the Freedom of the Media. It is imperative that the autonomy of the office is preserved and respected, for the Representative and her staff to be able to fulfill the mandate which – and I would like to stress this - has been decided by all participating States.

The institution can only fulfill its mandate if there is a Representative in place, and we, the participating States, have an obligation to find consensus on this.

To ensure the institutions continued function, we also have a duty to provide a sufficient budget. I will once again call on us all to join forces in deciding on a robust unified budget.

Let me reiterate Norway's strong support for the work of the Representative in the past year and ensure her of our continued cooperation. We look forward to receiving Ms. Ribeiro in Oslo in June for meetings with national media actors, researchers, and policy makers.

Thank you.