



**Statement by Temporary Officer, Eva Dröfn Hassell Guðmundsdóttir. 1397th  
Permanent Council, 3 November 2022. Iceland in response to the report by Ms. Teresa  
Ribeiro, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Iceland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union but please allow me to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, first let me reiterate Iceland's full support to your work and extend our appreciation for your comprehensive report.

Iceland shares your concerns over the systematic crackdown on media freedom and freedom of opinion and expression our region is facing, in the context of Russia's unjustified and brutal war against Ukraine.

Your report importantly highlights that the situation within the Russian Federation is the most serious deterioration of media freedom in our region for 25 years, or from the beginning of your mandate. We reiterate our concerns about steps Russia has taken to further restrict fundamental freedoms.

Representative,

Iceland also shares concerns about the systematic repression of independent journalism in Belarus and worrying situation of freedom of expression and media freedom. Your report demonstrates that external aggression, as seen by Russia's aggression against Ukraine and Belarus' illegal involvement in it, coincides with internal repression.

Journalists and media workers have an incredibly important role to play in ensuring public debate, facilitating dialogue, and holding governments accountable. Their bravery and resilience under often dangerous circumstances

deserves our respect. We must ensure that media workers are able to do their work safely and securely.

Within the context of Russia's war against Ukraine, journalists and media workers are our window into the situation on the ground while also serving to ensure accountability by collecting, documenting, and reporting on human rights violations and abuses.

Representative,

We are worried about how media workers and journalists are facing imprisonment, intimidation and even threats to their own lives, where women journalists often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and gender-based violence.

All journalists and media workers must be able to work without fear of violence and reprisals, online as well as offline.

Media freedom and the right to freedom of opinion and expression is at the heart of democratic societies, a fundamental right enshrined in international human rights instruments and expressed in OSCE commitments.

It is our duty and our commitment to protect and continue to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, to stay alert and take actions to counteract the progressive decline in media freedom and security in the OSCE region.

In conclusion, I would like to express my Mission's gratitude to you and your mandate's proactive and invaluable work during these challenging times for security on all fronts in the OSCE region.

I thank you Mr. Chair.