



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**  
***1136<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,***  
***9 March 2017***

*in response to the OSCE Representative on  
Freedom of the Media, Mrs. DunjaMijatovic*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mrs. DunjaMijatovic to the Permanent Council and thanks her for presenting a comprehensive report on the activities of RFoM. We also thank Ms. Herbst and Ms. Havlicek for their presentations on the safety of female journalists online.

We have carefully studied the report and took note of a number of cases of non-compliance with the relevant OSCE commitments in many participating States. We stress the need for continuing inclusive approach while observing media-related developments in all OSCE participating States in a comprehensive, objective and impartial manner.

OSCE institutions must act strictly in line with their mandate and tasking given by the participating States. In this regard, we recall Brussels (2006) and Madrid (2007) Ministerial Council decisions that specifically call to ensure professionalism, accuracy and adherence to ethical standards among journalists. The importance of this aspect is even more acute in the context of reporting on conflict situations, as their sensitive nature requires highest level of professionalism and ethics of journalists.

As for the case of Mr. Lapshin, which was referred to by representative of Armenia, this is not an issue for the OSCE. This criminal case was addressed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Belarus on bilateral basis. Mr. Lapshin is citizen of several states and they as a third party in this case follow legal developments. Armenia has no relevance to this legal case, except for Lapshin's case once again indicated that Armenia fraudulently attracts foreign nationals to illegal visits to Azerbaijan's occupied territories and then tries to turn them into a tool for its political propaganda. Taking this opportunity, we once again call on journalists and foreign citizens to refrain from illegal visits to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan without prior consent.

Coming back to the topic of discussion, our Delegation has repeatedly called for more active engagement of the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in area conflict reporting and to consider adoption of the OSCE Guidelines on objective and impartial journalist reporting on conflict situations. We expect that RFoM Office will keep this important issue high on the agenda.

I wish to stress that although dynamics of our cooperation with the Office of the RFoM has been different, the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan always valued constructive and objective approach demonstrated to the issues of freedom of the media and freedom of expression, and extended its support to activities of the Office.

We once again thank you, Mrs. Mijatovic, for your work as the Representative on Freedom of the Media and wish you every success in your future endeavors.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.