

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/537/24
2 May 2024

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

**JOINT STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE
REPUBLIC OF BELARUS TO THE OSCE AT THE 1471st MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 May 2024

**On the need for respect for the basic principles of freedom of expression
and access to information**

Bearing in mind that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, notably Article 19 thereof, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in particular Article 19 thereof, everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and that this right includes, *inter alia*, freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers,

Emphasizing the importance of a free flow of information, and also of free access to information for the public,

Underscoring the important role played by journalism in democratic societies by providing pluralist information and thereby facilitating freedom of expression,

Noting that international obligations regarding freedom of expression, equal access to information, respect for journalists' rights and the promotion of media pluralism continue to be violated for the sake of advancing the bloc-based military and political interests of certain countries, and that journalists are subjected to persecution, intimidation, arrest, physical attacks and even assassination on account of their professional activities,

Recognizing that attempts to segregate an information society through the establishment of media enclaves that are impervious to sources of alternative points of view risk having long-term negative consequences for the entire global community and are leading to a fragmentation of the information space,

We intend to undertake further efforts to promote the free flow of information, encourage co-operation in the field of information and improve working conditions for journalists;

We emphasize the need to refrain from restricting freedom of expression and freedom of the media by means of prohibitions and the deliberate discrediting of alternative points of view through the pinning of such labels as "propaganda", among others;

We call for abandonment of the practice of suppressing dissent, including through the imposition of various restrictive measures in relation to sources of information and media workers;

We express our condemnation of the use of the sanctions toolbox and other illegitimate restrictive measures against journalists fulfilling their professional duty;

We call for further steps to be taken to develop universal regulatory frameworks governing the activities of Internet service providers, first and foremost global digital platforms;

We call upon specialized international bodies whose duties include the protection of freedom of expression and media pluralism to strictly adhere to their mandate and unconditionally respect the principles of impartiality and even-handedness when assessing the situation in the field of information and when responding to media-related incidents;

In view of the rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies in the contemporary world, we emphasize the importance of joint efforts to promote the development of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems in a spirit of co-operation and mutual consideration of the interests of all States without exception;

We urge the need to restore an atmosphere of mutually beneficial and professional dialogue between all members of the international community and to abandon the practice of artificial politicization of the information agenda.