



**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan
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Freedom of media in Azerbaijan

Mr. Moderator,

Today free, pluralistic press with reference to the leading world standards has been developed in Azerbaijan. The State has created all the necessary conditions for free development of Mass Media.

Azerbaijan has all the guarantees of freedom. 100% guaranteed is freedom of speech. In Azerbaijan, there is no limit to the Internet, there is no censorship. The number of users is close to 75%,

Recent years the serious actions have been taken on strengthening material and technical basis of Mass Media, ensuring freedom of speech, press and convictions. The appropriate legislative base have been created, the necessary political conditions have been formed for pluralism of opinions and tolerance, the artificial obstacles, impeding development of free press have been eliminated on Azerbaijan. In this connection the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed a number of decrees. Certainly, Mass Media organizations are considered main actors on raising awareness of people. Azerbaijan takes one of the leading stands among CIS countries and Eastern Europe according to quantity of Mass Media. More than 5 000 Mass Media organizations registered in Azerbaijan. State registration process of media was extremely simplified. Nowadays only submission of documents to the Ministry of Justice is required for publications of newspaper, magazines, foundations and news agencies. After the following 7 days it is possible to start printing liberal and democratic laws regarding to Mass Media. In 2009 there was created Mass Media State Support in order to strengthen civil society, especially media organizations in Azerbaijan.

With the purpose of improvement of Mass Media material and technical basis in the end of 1998 newspaper editorial offices were exempted from value added taxes. It ought to be remarked that amount of annual discounts for Mass Media much more exceeds the taxes amount which they paid.

The law of Azerbaijani republic "About Mass Media" was adopted in 1999 providing freedom of speech and thought, independence of press and journalists, prohibiting application of measures, which limit freedom of Media. His application of censorship, breach of professional independence, illegal suspension or halt production and distribution of Mass Media, illegal circulation seizure as well as violation of other rights invoke civil, administrative, criminal and other liabilities in accord with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In the close cooperation with the Council of Europe in accord with international standards there was worked out and adopted a bill "about TV and radio broadcasting". In 2000 The Ministry of Press and Information was abolished, in 2003 there was established the National TV and Radio Council as an independent body, regulating the work in this area. Since 2005 the Public Television has started its activity. Press Council, which is called to eliminate the problems, dealing with ensuring the freedom of speech and information, regulate relations between the State bodies and Mass Media, functions in Azerbaijan. It should be noted that the Press Council of Azerbaijan was not established by the State bodies, but the newspaper and magazines' editorials and journalists' organizations.

For full implementation of journalist's rights to obtain any information decree of the President of Azerbaijan republic dated September 30, 2005 approved "Law on Freedom of information". Experts of leading media organizations were involved into preparations of this draft law, appropriate expertise were carried out by the experts of the Council of Europe. Eventually, the law was greatly endorsed both by local and European experts.

The Freedom of speech and press is a real democratic achievement of the Azerbaijani society. There are favorable means for realization of Constitutional Law on getting the objective information.

Thank you for the attention!