



**Permanent Representation of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands to
the Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands in response to the
address of Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the
Media
As delivered by Ambassador Christophe Kamp
1452th Meeting of the Permanent Council
23 November 2023**

Thank you, Chair

The Netherlands aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union and I would like to offer a few remarks in my national capacity.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity first and foremost to reiterate its strong and ongoing support to the Representative on Freedom of the Media. Dear Madame Ribeiro, we appreciate the principled and therefore impartial approach with which you implement your mandate, regardless of the participating State concerned or issue at hand.

We have read the bi-annual report with great interest, and there are two issues which I would like to highlight.

First, the observation that the growing insecurity in the OSCE region is being misused to curb individual freedoms, free press and human rights. As the report rightly mentions, free press and respect for human rights are not contrary but instrumental to security and democracy.

Second, the downward trend in safety for journalists. Increasingly, legal regulations, laws and courts are being misused to clamp down on media freedom and independent journalism, and impunity for crimes against journalists remains. This leads to fear and a shrinking space for dissent. Journalists supply the oxygen of free, inclusive, informed societies. They must be safe at all times to do their work.

The Netherlands considers media freedom of utmost importance. In particular I wish to highlight the importance of the safety of journalists, including female

journalists, that plays an indispensable role in democratic societies, and countering disinformation.

The Netherlands promotes efforts towards increasing the safety of journalists. Through the Dutch Shelter City Programme, for example, we provide temporary relocation opportunities for threatened journalists from all parts of the world. Twenty-two cities are currently taking part in this initiative, thirteen Dutch cities and nine cities in a range of other countries. The Netherlands has also established national protection mechanisms such as the Press Safe (PersVeilig) Protocol. This is a partnership between journalists' associations, the national police and the public prosecution service that is geared towards protecting journalists against aggression and violence.

In light of these efforts, we thank the Representative on Freedom of the Media for her work on the Safety of Female Journalists Online including the recently published guidelines.

Mr. Chair, we are also pleased to announce a new extrabudgetary contribution of 250.000 EUR to the RFoM Repository Fund for the coming two years. We wish Representative Ribeiro and her dedicated and excellent team all the best in their important work.

Thank you, Chair