



Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia to the UN, OSCE
and other International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by Ambassador Andrej Benedejčič, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia, at the Working Session 1 on "Freedom of Expression, Free Media and Information" of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw, 21 September 2015

Mr. Moderator,

Slovenia fully subscribes to the statement by the European Union. Nonetheless, I would like to mention an issue, which is of interest to my country.

Slovenia highly values the work of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and her team, especially their efforts to encourage all participating States to live up to their commitments. In this connection, I would like to recall the correspondence initiated by Mrs. Dunja Mijatović with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia on the issue of judicial proceedings that were started in the past two years against journalists in Slovenia because of disclosure of classified information.

Let me, therefore, inform the participants of this Working Session about recent developments in my country regarding this issue. The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia passed, on July 9th, a bill amending the Criminal Code that provides for the defense of public interest in the cases of disclosure of classified information. The amended Article 260 of the Criminal Code introduces exclusion from criminal liability for the act of disclosing classified information in cases when such information "reveals unlawful encroachment on human rights and fundamental freedom, other constitutional or legal rights, serious abuse of authority or powers, or other serious irregularities in the exercise of power, public authority or public service, if the offence has not been committed for material gain, does not threaten human life and has no serious or irreversible damaging effects on the security or legally protected interests of the Republic of Slovenia."

Furthermore, the exclusion from criminal liability for the disclosure of classified information applies if public interest in disclosing the information outweighs that of maintaining its secrecy and if such an act poses no direct threat to the life of one or several persons. The act amending the Criminal Code will enter into force on October 20th.

Let me also point out that the procedure of amending this legislation included extensive public consultation with civil society, in particular with journalists' associations of Slovenia. There was therefore a broad political consensus in the Slovenian Parliament for the proposed amendments.

Mr. Moderator,

I believe that the adopted legislative amendment speaks clearly of the commitment of my Government to strengthening the standards of media freedom in Slovenia in accordance with international norms. I also believe that his move amply demonstrates our awareness of the fact that freedom of opinion and expression is a fundamental right and is, as such, essential for the fulfillment and enjoyment of a wide range of other human rights. Finally, let me assure you that my country looks forward to continued excellent cooperation with the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Thank you.