

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe **ENGLISH only**

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT BY THE
REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA,
MR. MIKLOS HARASZTI
719TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
3 JULY 2008**

It is with pleasure that Canada welcomes the Representative on the Freedom of the Media, Mr. Miklos Haraszti, back to the Permanent Council. We thank him for his timely and comprehensive report of his activities.

Canada strongly supports the Representative's mandate and the work and activities he has performed so far within that mandate. He has continued to keep under constant observation the situation of the freedom of the media in all parts of the OSCE region. He has identified cases in OSCE Participating states where actions or laws do not correspond to OSCE commitments; offered his assistance to the authorities concerned to redress the situation; and, where warranted, alerted a broader audience to particularly serious problems.

As we have said earlier, we believe the RFOM makes good use of the tools with which we have provided him.

Canada shares the Representative's concerns regarding the cases of violence being used by government representatives against journalists, in essence to silence criticism and dissent. Unfortunately, these cases are not isolated.

As pointed out in the report, there also continue to be cases where legislative and administrative measures are used to constrain freedom of the media, making it very difficult for independent voices or those voices critical of the authorities to be heard.

We have on a number of occasions, in this forum, stated our views on individual situations involving participating States, to which the Representative had brought our attention.

We again urge the States concerned to study carefully the recommendations provided by the RFOM, which are aimed at assisting them to implement the commitments they have undertaken.

We also wish to thank the RFOM for the Guidebook on Media Self-Regulation, prepared by his office. We think it will be a useful tool, provided that we do not lose sight that self-regulation must not amount to self-censorship. In this we support the view, expressed by the RFOM himself, that self-regulation or quality of journalism should not be a pre-requisite for freedom of the media, and that, as he said, “only a fully free press can be fully responsible”.

We appreciate the Representative’s very active schedule of visits, and the full programme of training activities, projects and legal reviews which he has undertaken.

OSCE missions also work with participating States, and public and private media operators, in modernizing and strengthening professional journalism in line with international standards, including those related to freedom of the media. We believe that the OSCE, through increased cooperation between missions in the fields and the RFOM, can make a positive contribution to the development of professional media and the respect of freedom of media.

We believe that the commitment and dedication that the RFOM has shown to the performance of his mandate are a credit to the OSCE, and he and his team can count on Canada’s full support.