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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND
AT THE 933rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 November 2012

**In response to the statement by Ms. Dunja Mijatović,
Representative on Freedom of the Media**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome the Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ms. Dunja Mijatović, to the Permanent Council and thank her for the balanced report on her activities and for her work in general.

Journalists who are threatened and attacked, newspaper publishers who are imprisoned on questionable charges, websites that are blocked – the many examples listed in Ms. Mijatović's report show that her tireless commitment is more necessary than ever. We are pleased to note that the report also mentions some successes and that journalists have apparently been released partly thanks to the involvement of Ms. Mijatović and her team.

The report once again demonstrates that many OSCE participating States still have shortcomings as regards media freedom and that journalists even in so-called Western countries have to gauge their words very carefully in order to avert a charge of defamation. At a panel discussion with Ms. Mijatović, a representative of the non-governmental organization Article 19 and an Egyptian journalist in the Human Dimension Committee this July, it was made very clear how journalistic work is negatively influenced by an uncertain environment and how important pluralism of information without self-censorship on the part of journalists is for a democratic society. States must acknowledge their responsibility to protect journalists and take specific measures to avoid and effectively prosecute abuses.

It is therefore high time that the participating States reaffirm their commitments to freedom of the media and to the protection of journalists and confirm the validity of these commitments expressly for the new media in cyberspace as well. For this reason, Switzerland supports the Irish Chairmanship's draft decision on strengthening media freedom. Switzerland is also a co-sponsor of the declaration on fundamental freedoms in the digital age. We hope that these decisions can be adopted at the Ministerial Council meeting in Dublin.

We are encouraged by the participating States' constructive exchange with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and by the various activities undertaken by the

Office, which do more than simply attributing blame. Switzerland was very happy to support the media conference in the South Caucasus this October. Such conferences help to increase the level of professionalism among media representatives and to raise the authorities' awareness of current issues with respect to the media. The fact that over the past year several States have decriminalized defamation also is attributable not least to the commitment of the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The OSCE can consider itself lucky to have such a committed Representative on Freedom of the Media, who is direct and forthright in expressing her opinion. We thank her for her continuing involvement and assure her here of our continued support for her important activities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.