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**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW REPRESENTATIVE
ON THE FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA**

11 March 2004

I am pleased to inform you officially that, following a continuous and difficult course of action on selection and appointment of a new Representative on the Freedom of the Media by two successive Chairmanships, we have finally arrived at a consensual decision. The silence procedure on the appointment by the Ministerial Council of Mr. Miklos Haraszti of Hungary as our Representative on the Freedom of the Media has expired on 7 March, 6 p.m. On March 10th he has been appointed to the post by the Chairman-in-Office.

The appointment procedure has brought up important questions, pertaining to the relevance of the position of the Representative and to the philosophy of his mandate. The vacancy of the position for more than two months has reaffirmed the fact that the issues of the freedom of the media in the OSCE area could and should not stay unattended. This is the reason why we have created the position seven years ago. And this is also the reason why we have to live up to the importance of the tasks we have assigned to the Representative on the Freedom of the Media in his mandate.

The Chair recalls the main objective set up in the mandate of the Representative on the Freedom of the Media to observe the media development in all participating States, to work on strengthening the implementation of relevant OSCE principles and commitments as well as to assist the participating States, in a spirit of co-operation, in their continuing commitment to the furthering of free, independent and pluralistic media. The Chair is convinced that the successful achievement of this goal requires impartial, objective and balanced approach to the media developments in the whole OSCE area - east and west, but also south and north of Vienna.

The experience and the qualification of Mr. Haraszti make us believe that he will take up his duties as an OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media with professionalism and dedication that are deserved by his post and his mandate. We wish him success in his new assignment!