

STATEMENT BY TURKEY**(Opening Plenary Session of the Human Dimension Seminar)**

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing our gratitude to ODIHR and to you, Ms. Mijatovic, with your able team, as well as to the Ukrainian Chairmanship for organizing this year's Human Dimension Seminar. We are confident that this important event, which has brought together various stakeholders from governments, civil society and academia, will contribute to strengthening our commitments on media freedom, also through the sharing of best practices concerning national legislation.

Turkey fully upholds the principles of freedom of the media and freedom of expression, which are safeguarded by our Constitution, other relevant legislation and international conventions to which we are a party. We are working tirelessly in order to further the scope of these fundamental freedoms in Turkey, in line with our OSCE commitments

As one token of our stance, we are among the co-sponsors of the draft declaration on Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age, which we hope will find even broader support among the OSCE participating States this year.

At the same time, we believe a balance must necessarily be struck between legitimate security concerns and freedom of expression, online as well as offline. This is a difficult challenge which the OSCE should also find a way to address, naturally without aiming at restricting fundamental rights and freedoms.

Let me also stress that Turkey highly appreciates the work done by yourself, Madam Chairperson, in your capacity as Representative on Freedom of the Media. We believe that this is one of the areas where the OSCE has an added value and does cutting-edge work when compared to other international institutions. We attach importance to maintaining a robust cooperation and constructive dialogue with the Office of the Representative. We invite all participating States to foster such cooperation with the Representative and to make use of her experience and expertise in tackling the problems relating to freedom of the media, from which none of us are immune.

Thank you.