



**ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՊԱՏՎԻՐԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ**  
**DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

ENGLISH only

**Statement**  
**In response to the Report by the OSCE Representative**  
**On Freedom of the Media, Mr. Miklós Haraszti**  
**Delivered by Ambassador Jivan Tabibian**  
**At the 706<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**  
**March 13, 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome Mr. Miklós Haraszti. His reports are interesting. He covers an issue that we all care about, and I must say that typically, unlike some other delegations, while I have very few problems with the facts described, though sometimes our interpretations can be different. But we are more uncomfortable with the framework within which certain observations are thought through, formulated, advocated and asserted.

Let me say that if it were not for this State of Emergency in Armenia, which incidentally is not an accurate translation from the Armenian which calls it “exceptional conditions”, we would have had a quite ride with the Freedom of the Media’s last reports.

Actually one can say that in the period before the declaration of the decree of “exceptional conditions”, especially from the elections, 19<sup>th</sup> February to the first of March, the Armenian media were free. We do not know and are not familiar with- I do not read just the Armenian press, anywhere else where the freedom of the written press was more complete, more unconditional, more unrestrained and ultimately in many ways more problematic because it had nothing to do with what it was expected to do, that is to inform.

All this is very interesting. We have another word that I cannot translate, this one into Armenian: “disinformation”. I remember some years ago when we were just getting out of the situation in Kosovo which was 8-9 years ago, there were issues with the press’ responsibility about reporting and naming names of people and somewhat jeopardizing their security. We faced a dilemma, just like last year when we faced other dilemmas with the question of “cartoons”. There are dilemmas. These dilemmas mean that what one does and how one chooses between two competing values, two competing interests and two competing principles, force us to choose.

Incitement is not what I would call a matter of freedom of the press and the best example in our case is the case of the Editor in Chief of one of the newspapers called “Haykakan Jamanak”. Mr. Pashinian, if one chooses to know, is and was an open, active, blatant,

rabble-rousing and inciting leader. He was the one who was taunting the authorities for 10 days consistently, and challenging them as cowards.

There are 3 or 4 newspapers that were not observers and describers of the events but were very much part of the confrontation, its spread, its propagation, its articulation, in short they were active participants.

Therefore, what bothers me in this approach, and I think I will take the trouble of sending a private communication not about Armenia but about the overall framework to Mr. Haraszti, is the notion that I found on the front page of Mr. Haraszti's reports, the notion of "mistake". When doctors or lawyers make a "mistake" it is called malpractice, and they are liable. Here, it is proposed that mistakes are much more so to speak forgivable; they are not badly intentioned, neither a failure of judgment nor a deliberate manipulation.

I could continue, but my opinion of the Tenth Anniversary of Freedom of Media was that office of the Freedom of Media is often worth applauding, as others repeated. There has been progress, and the office's omnidirectionality has improved, but its ideology remains axiomatic. That ideology made some speakers in the second half of the proceedings appear to me like crusading true believers. Of course they appeal to anyone who likes crusades, while it bothers and is unsettling to those like me, who believe in more shaded opinions about reality and the world. Truth is not self-evident.

To conclude, let us say that the freedom of a journalist, the fact that a journalist functions freely does not guarantee his or her telling the truth and the whole truth. They can through innuendo and tendentious statements color truth beyond recognition.

And finally to paraphrase and plagiarize something I heard 34 years ago during a Presidential campaign in the USA, I will turn it around: "excess of zeal in pursuing a single value single-mindedly is not always a virtue; defending only one value in the context of many values is not a vice."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Mr. Haraszti.