

OSCE Media Freedom Representative reiterates her concern about sanctions against media in Ukraine

VIENNA, 17 February 2022 – OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Teresa Ribeiro reiterated today her concern regarding Ukraine's practice of applying sanctions against media outlets.

Ribeiro's comments follow the decision made on 11 February 2022 by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine to impose five-year sanctions against several legal entities, resulting in the effective banning of access to the television channel *Nash*. The country's President Volodymyr Zelensky has enacted the decision the same day.

"I want to underline once more that media freedom is dependent on a healthy, vibrant and competitive landscape, including voices that provide a variety of views," Ribeiro said. "Any sanctions on media should be applied with restraint and should be subject to careful scrutiny, accompanied by effective procedural safeguards to prevent undue interference."

The Representative drew attention to the participating States' longstanding commitments regarding the OSCE's human dimension as well as their international obligations.

"Freedom of expression and media freedom should never serve as a *carte blanche* for propaganda for war and illegal 'hate speech': it is universally recognized that it is not an absolute right," Ribeiro stated. "At the same time, it cannot be overemphasized that these freedoms constitute one of the essential foundations of any democratic society. To be justified, restrictions must always meet a high barrier, and should always be under the scrutiny of a functioning, independent court system."

Ribeiro also added that "authorities should strive to promote more debate and an open, diverse and dynamic media environment, also on issues that they deem 'foreign' or 'not correct'." Finally, the Representative pointed out [a similar issue](#) she addressed in August 2021.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media observes media developments in all 57 OSCE participating States. She provides early warning on violations of freedom of expression and media freedom and promotes full compliance with OSCE media freedom commitments. Learn more at www.osce.org/fom, Twitter: [@OSCE_RFoM](https://twitter.com/OSCE_RFoM) and on www.facebook.com/osce.rfom.

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit: <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/512476>

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