



Meeting of High Representatives on Information and Media

Belgrade, 23 May 2002

Statement of Common Purpose

We,

The High Representatives of the CEI Member States in charge of the relations with the media have gathered in Belgrade to share our national experience and to endorse certain standards with regard to the relations between governments and media in the 21st century society.

We are aware of the intrinsic value of the media in the functioning of democratic societies. We believe that the free access of our citizens to information is an essential ingredient for their ability to make independent and responsible decisions of their own. We should like to stress the following principles by which we are guided in our relationship to the media:

- To keep under review our legislation with regard to the media in order to make sure that international standards, such as those of the Council of Europe or the OSCE commitments, are applied to the area of journalism and the media;
- To protect the freedom of the press and to avoid the arbitrary use of restrictions to the freedom of expression in the form of censorship or the prohibitions of certain print or electronic media;
- To support the creation of regulatory bodies for broadcasting bodies to ensure accountability of private broadcasting companies and to regulate Public Broadcasting services in such a manner as to ensure their independence from government influence;
- To encourage high standards of professionalism among journalists: reporting should be accurate, not distorting the facts and respectful of human dignity and human rights, in particular it should be free from instigation to hatred and violence against individuals or groups of people on racial, ethnic, religious, gender and political grounds;
- To make use of the potential of the CEI to work towards the realisation of these goals and to improve co-operation of CEI Member States in the area of information and media through helping to organise seminars, workshops, training courses and assure a maximum of media coverage to these events;
- To facilitate the free flow of information, people and ideas across national borders; to allow the free circulation of all printed media and publications; and to allow the free movement of journalists in executing their professional duty;
- To encourage the use of Internet as a means to increased access to information.