

OSCE Regrets Tajik, Kazakh Decisions On Media Freedom

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has expressed regret over a decision by a Tajik court that requires a journalist to pay damages for defaming the country's intelligentsia.

In a statement issued on February 26, Dunja Mijatovic, the OSCE's representative on freedom of the media, said "a democratic society must allow for public debate without triggering financial penalties."

A court in Dushanbe ruled on February 25 that Olga Tutubalina, deputy chief editor of the Asia Plus website, must pay \$6,000 to three plaintiffs who claimed they were damaged by an article written by Tutubalina titled "Unintelligent About Intelligentsia," even though they were not named.

Mijatovic also expressed concern over the closure of the Kazakh newspaper "Pravdivaya Gazeta," saying "it is worrying that minor offenses like stating incorrect publishing data and petty irregularities...can limit freedom of the media and restrict access to information."

<http://www.rferl.org/content/osce-kazakh-tajik-media/25279269.html>