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OSCE (28.11.2012) – The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, welcomed today the rejection by the Senate in Rome of the proposal to retain imprisonment for defamation in the Italian Criminal Code.

"I am pleased that the majority of Senators voted yesterday against the proposal to preserve the outdated criminal libel law," said Mijatović.

"The Italian authorities should use the momentum to introduce new amendments that would completely decriminalize libel," she added.

Italy maintains criminal defamation on its legal books, as do many countries in Western Europe. In recent years these provisions, previously largely perceived as dormant, have been applied against Italian journalists.

"I hope that Il Giornale editor Alessandro Sallusti, whose recent prison sentence sparked a vibrant debate about the need for reform, will be released from house arrest and will be able to continue his work," said Mijatović.

"I will continue to work closely with the Italian authorities to promote decriminalization of defamation, which should be done soon to avoid further imprisonment sentences and to stimulate active investigative reporting".

The OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media also urged all other participating States with criminal libel laws to repeal them.
