

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw, September 25, Session 3, Humanitarian issues and other commitments

Statement of the Delegation of Armenia

As delivered by

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Madam Chairperson,

We are pleased to share our practice and views on various humanitarian issues including migration, refugees and other displaced population.

Armenia continued to make consistent efforts in managing migration through better internal planning and cooperation with the international partners. In 2011 Armenia adopted Migration concept paper and an action plan aimed the implementation of that paper. The Action plan puts forward 147 concrete measures and will be implemented from 2012 to 2016.

Last year Armenia concluded the mobility partnership with the European Union and ten of its member countries. Currently, local platform of cooperation is being set up which should identify and implement concrete projects within the mobility partnership.

The issues of refugees continue to be high on the agenda of the Government. Under not favorable economic conditions the Government has to address the issues of protracted displacement as well new emerging problems due to unrest in the Middle East.

The housing of the 1172 families experiencing two decades years of the protracted displacement remains to be key issue here.

In trying to follow up the last year donor conference organized with the UNHCR, the Armenian Government is working with different stakeholders to ensure the continuation of the program of providing the refugees and IDPs with housing which would enormously help in finding durable solution for them. It is clear that only feasible option for these refugees is the local integration and the Government is committed to promote this choice of the refugees.

We do understand that it is difficult to keep attention to unresolved yet protracted situations when there are so many emerging refugee crisis in the world and some of them in immediate neighborhood of the OSCE.

Though Armenia is also being gradually affected by these new developments, however, we think that human rights of the refugees need to be addressed in all situations.

Now let me briefly elaborate on the new refugee situations that Armenia is coping with. In recent months 5000 Syrian Armenians arrived to Armenia and 260 persons sought and found temporary

shelter from the Government in Yerevan. At this stage when we are still amid of the process and it is difficult to assess the future scales of this refugee situation. The Government will make every effort to provide necessary protection.

Now let me turn to the role of the OSCE in addressing issues of the displacement. It is clear that the OSCE is not a humanitarian but political and security organization. Unlike UNHCR and other UN actors, it would not be able to provide depoliticized global framework for addressing human rights of refugees and other displaced population.

The displacement issues are part of the conflict related activities of the OSCE including the agreed formats. The Vilnius Ministerial decision establishes that the rights of persons affected by displacement need to be addressed in all phases of the conflict cycle. This differentiation is important since every single phase of the conflict cycle requires different sets of action and they should be done within general framework of conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation.

It is true that the OSCE has been involved in addressing the issues of refugees in the post conflict rehabilitation but it had done so through specific mandate in a specific situation. It is particular true for field missions. In our view this practice should be maintained and the field missions should deal with the refugee situation only if they have clear specific mandate in order to not to be trapped in the conflict related situations without required expertise and mediation capacity.

At the same time, it should be mentioned that the OSCE and its participating states can provide necessary political support to the UNHCR and the relevant UN special procedure or at least do not impede their access to the certain territories with the displaced population. Unfortunately there are particular cases such as Nagorno-Karabakh where the tens of thousand displaced persons are deprived of the international protection due to restrictions imposed on the activities of the international organizations by one participating state. This certainly does not help in developing displacement related cooperation in the OSCE region. The principle of the universality of the protection of the human and humanitarian rights should apply under all circumstances.

Thank you.