

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation meeting 2013**  
**Canadian Statement for Working Session 2:**  
**Tolerance and non-discrimination II:**  
**Review of the implementation of commitments on promotion of mutual respect and**  
**understanding**  
**Tuesday, 24 September 2013**

Madam Moderator,

For Canada, enhancing human dignity in all corners of the OSCE region, regardless of race, belief, sex or sexual orientation, should remain our collective goal, and Canada will continue to speak up to oppose violence and ensure that the rights and fundamental freedoms of all are recognized and promoted. We therefore fully support the efforts of the OSCE in this regard.

We welcome the opportunity for dialogue offered by the OSCE High Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination that took place on May 20-21 of this year in Tirana, Albania. We were pleased that the 2013-14 Canadian Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Dr. Mario Silva, was able to attend and remind us all that we must ensure that our societies, and especially younger generations, remember the lessons of the Holocaust.

As it was made clear by participants to the conference, however, serious challenges remain to be tackled in the OSCE region when it comes to the implementation of our OSCE commitments on the promotion of mutual respect and understanding.

While there appears to be a strong consensus among participating States for the need to speak out and respond to acts of intimidation and violence against individuals and communities on the basis of race, religion or sex, it is regrettable that the same does not hold true when it comes to sexual orientation.

Canada remains deeply concerned that there are individuals in the OSCE region who experience high levels of violence for their perceived or actual sexual orientation. These levels of violence severely undermine the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law. Those who perpetrate such acts of violence must be held accountable.

Canada is also concerned by laws such as the so-called "law on propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors" adopted in Russia earlier this year. This legislation violates the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, as well as the right to non-discrimination and equality before the law. Furthermore, as the new offenses created by the draft law are vaguely defined and potentially applicable to a large number of individuals, there is a substantial risk for them to be arbitrarily used.

Canada remains committed to working with other participating States to promote and protect the human rights of all individuals regardless of sexual orientation.

Our recommendations for plenary session 2 are:

-For participating States to further increase their efforts to implement their OSCE commitments on tolerance and non-discrimination, including by combating discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

-For participating States to make and support efforts to confront violence towards persons based on their sexual orientation by providing meaningful responses to such violations.