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Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2012  
Republic of Cyprus  
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Tolerance and Non-discrimination II  
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The delegation of Cyprus would like to remind that the HDIM is neither a political forum nor a platform for channeling political positions and/or historical revisionism through non-governmental organisations. Neither the aggression against and partial occupation of Cyprus nor the unilateral withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots from state institutions of the Republic of Cyprus in the 1960s affect the constitutional order of Cyprus in any way or the fact that the Republic of Cyprus is the only subject of international law, which represents all its citizens, and is recognized internationally as such.

I wish to stress that the Republic of Cyprus strongly condemns hate speech by public figures and opinion leaders. At the same time, the Cyprus Government can neither control the views expressed by high profile citizens nor can it restrict anyone's freedom of expression. Any such remarks can only be countered and challenged by more speech, and I would urge civil society to do just that and do so where it can be most effective.

Like in all OSCE States, racist and xenophobic incidents occur also in Cyprus but neither the perpetrators nor the victims predominantly belong to any one ethnic community. The Republic of Cyprus takes very seriously the protection of the human rights of all its citizens. In case of any incidents, effective law enforcement relies heavily on the co-operation of citizens, including for prevention and reporting of crime, as opposed to keeping silent and politicizing incidents *a posteriori*. Avoiding politicization is also needed when assessing whether particular segments of the population are targeted in incidents of broader violence, e.g. as a result of sport-related fanaticism. Lastly, one may not conclude from the activities of small-scale extremist groups that their views reflect broader sentiment or that an entire society is xenophobic.

Cyprus has a comprehensive legal framework for safeguarding equality and combatting discrimination and has this year

reinforced its legislation for combatting hate crimes. The Government of Cyprus enforces a number of implementing measures for this legislation, including police and teacher training, independent oversight for law enforcement officers' conduct, data collection and observation of racially motivated crime. The Cyprus Government welcomes the increased reporting of such incidents, which cannot be construed as a factual increase thereof, as an indication of a heightened degree of trust regarding law enforcement.

The Republic of Cyprus attaches the highest importance to the enjoyment of the highest level of human rights by all its citizens. Unfortunately, the Government of Cyprus is unable to guarantee the human rights of most Turkish Cypriots, because most of them reside in the occupied area of Cyprus, where the occupying power and not the legitimate Cyprus Government exercises effective control (see relevant ECHR judgments). We look forward to the day when the Republic of Cyprus will again exercise control over its entire territory and thus be in a position to protect the human rights of all its citizens.