



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANTS:
CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES
IN LINE WITH OSCE COMMITMENTS AND
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

**Expert Roundtable Meeting
Brussels, Belgium
14-15 November 2017**

OSCE/ODIHR Meeting Report



November 2017

This report should not be interpreted as comprising official OSCE recommendations based on a consensus decision, an opinion of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights or of any particular OSCE participating State. The content of this report reflects opinions expressed by participants which took place in Brussels on 14-15 November 2017.

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CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANTS: CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES IN LINE WITH OSCE COMMITMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

**Regional Expert Roundtable
Brussels, Belgium
14-15 November 2017**

MEETING SUMMARY

The roundtable meeting on *Civic and political participation of migrants: challenges and good practices in line with OSCE commitments and international standards* was organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) on 14-15 November 2017 in Brussels, Belgium, to review good practices and develop recommendations on the civic and political participation of migrants. The event brought together 41 participants (23 women and 18 men) from national authorities, civil society and academia working on political participation of migrants from 13 OSCE participating States (the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and United States) as well as representatives of the European Commission, EU Fundamental Rights Agency, Council of Europe, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the independent think-tank Migration Policy Group. (Annex II provides a full list of participants.)

Participation of all members of society, including migrants, in the political decision-making process, is crucial to the legitimacy of democratic political systems. Across the OSCE region, public participation in political and civic affairs varies and is facing numerous challenges. In general, people are increasingly more involved in alternative forms of political participation and more detached from traditional democratic institutions such as political parties.¹ Participation in political life through freedom of association and freedom of expression or the formation of political parties should be based on the principle of non-discrimination in accordance with OSCE commitments². However, certain groups in society, in particular migrants, face obstacles to their political engagement both of a legal nature and as a result of societies' attitudes towards these groups.³

The roundtable started with an introductory session, followed by an opening panel discussion and four working sessions (please see Annex I for the agenda) covering different aspects of the issue, and a concluding session.

The meeting began with opening remarks from Ms. **Christine Hirst**, Deputy Head of the Democratization Department of ODIHR, who welcomed participants, noting the range of

¹ *Migrant Political Participation: A review of policies and integration results in the OSCE region*, ODIHR December 2017, p5.

² As also outlined in the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Political Party Regulation paras 53-60.

³ *Migrant Political Participation: A review of policies and integration results in the OSCE region*, ODIHR December 2017, p6, pp.30-31; *Frameworks for Democracy: an overview of legal and political provisions for migrant political participation in the OSCE region*, ODIHR, December 2017, p25.

countries attending and underlining the significance of migrants' civic and political rights. She noted that civic and political participation forms a core element of OSCE commitments from the perspective of fundamental human rights such as the right to freedom of association and expression, and the right to non-discrimination, as well as access of migrants to decision-making processes within political movements, and civic organizations. Ms. Hirst welcomed Mr. **Thomas Huddleston** of the think-tank Migration Policy Group, who delivered the introductory session presentation. Mr. Huddleston presented the main points of two ODIHR-commissioned policy papers, providing a brief overview of the legal standards, political commitments and national policies on the civic and political participation of migrants in the OSCE region. He noted that very few countries grant voting rights to non-citizen residents, there are few migrant consultative bodies and those which do exist are rarely strong and independent, and the funding and support for migrant non-governmental organizations is uneven and insufficient. He also noted the importance of naturalization, which improves migrants' socio-economic political participation and ensures better protection from discrimination.

The Opening Panel Discussion was an opportunity for practitioners, politicians, and researchers to reflect on the political rights of migrants. The Session Chair, Ms. Hirst, highlighted ODIHR's efforts to promote closer co-operation and synergy with the work of other relevant international organizations, civil society actors, and other stakeholders. The first speaker, Ms. **Zrinka Bralo** discussed the work of the London-based "Migrants Organise" civil society organization that offers support, mentoring and training for migrant leaders and their communities. She emphasized the importance of capitalizing on the positive contribution of migrants to society as well as the need for organized action to protect their rights and create conditions for exercising their full potential as active citizens. She underlined the need to raise awareness among people of migrant background of the various opportunities to make a difference in their new societies. Mr. **Guglielmo Picchi**, Vice Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly discussed how migration has become a shared experience of many societies across the OSCE region, including Italy, which has a long history of emigration but has also become a country of immigration. He underlined the importance of naturalization, which guarantees full access to political rights. Mr. Picchi argued that citizenship, and the voting rights associated with it, should not be automatically granted to any person born in a country, but be the result of a migrant's conscious choice and expressed wish after reaching the legal age. At the same time, he emphasized the need to otherwise ensure full access to rights and services for all residents without discrimination.

Representing the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) based in Vienna, Mr. **Miltos Pavlou** discussed the recent FRA research into the political rights of migrants in the OSCE participating States that belong to the EU. He noted that currently migration is seen more as a crisis than an opportunity for OSCE participating States' societies, while successful integration requires overcoming the climate of discrimination, violence and fear and empowering migrants. He emphasized the need for increasing the participation of migrants and their descendants in decision-making processes that affect their lives. One of the key ways to achieve that is by ensuring that migrants participate actively and in a meaningful way in relevant public consultation processes and relevant consultation bodies. He also discussed the voting rights of migrants at regional or local elections. Dr. **Mischa Thompson**, Policy Advisor to the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, emphasized that in OSCE participating States including the US, some political views and interests are not represented, while inclusive participation is needed at all levels of government. She discussed

various barriers to the political participation of diverse candidates, including the lack of recognition of the potential of diverse populations to engage meaningfully in civic and political life, and highlighted a number of barriers to inclusion, such as the pigeonholing of minority elected politicians by either assigning them to ‘appropriate’ issues (e.g. migration or counter-terrorism) or offering them positions of lesser political significance. She also discussed various successful examples from the US of overcoming these barriers and ensuring diverse political representation.

Working Session I addressed the challenges to civic and political participation that migrants encounter in the process of actively engaging in the public life of their host OSCE participating States. The Session Chair, Prof. **Bogdan Voicu** of the Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy of Sciences pointed out that migrants, in particular, migrant women and youth, face a number of challenges to their full engagement in the civic and political life of their host countries. Speakers identified a range of possible challenges to migrant political participation, including language barriers and lack of knowledge regarding the existing rights and opportunities, uncertainty regarding the length of stay, precarious legal status, lack of sense of belonging to the host society, lack of networks, traditional gender roles limiting the engagement of women from some countries, xenophobia, discrimination and limited access to services and institutions, as well as preferences and beliefs shaped by the country of origin regarding trust in public institutions and democracy.

Representing the European Commission, Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs, Ms. **Nuria Diez-Guardia**, noted the general under-representation of women in politics and business and underlined that women with migrant backgrounds find it even harder to fully engage in the economic, civic and political life of their host societies. Since women and men often have different policy preferences, giving women the right to vote can change policy decisions. She also discussed the Urban Agenda for the EU - Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees that brings together cities, Member States and European institutions as well as a special project within it: the Migrant Advisory Board, a body uniting people of migrant experience that is tasked to give advice to European cities and the European Commission on policy areas crucial for successful integration, including housing, reception, work and education. Ms. **Salome Mbugua** represented the European Network of Migrant Women, a platform of NGOs that range from grass-roots service providers to NGOs working on advocacy and research with a focus on the rights of migrant women in Europe. She discussed the barriers to civic and political participation faced by migrant women, including the lack of knowledge and information about existing opportunities and access to them, lack of knowledge about the political system, institutions and power structures of the host country, lack of confidence and struggle for acceptance in the host community, lack of support networks, in particular among the host community. She emphasized the role of civil society organizations in helping to raise awareness and building migrant women’s capacities to help them engage in the civic and political life of their new countries.

Ms. **Catarina Reis Oliveira**, Director of the Observatory for Migration of the High Commission for Migrations of Portugal, discussed the impact of the political opportunity structure, domestic political dynamics, historical paths and the contemporary international environment, on migrants’ political participation. She emphasized that while political opportunity structures provide the context in which mobilizing groups operate, they do not determine whether immigrants will actually participate or not. Political opportunity structures must be considered in interplay with other factors, including migrants’ countries of origin, migrants’ individual characteristics, and their own sense of agency. Speaking on behalf of the

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Ms. **Marilyn Neven** presented the results of IDEA's recent research on democracy's resilience in a global perspective with a focus on the migration and democracy nexus. She emphasized that the countries that are well-functioning democracies also have inclusive policies on migration, noting the important role of migrants as agents of democratic change in their countries of origin. As a result of migration, people may gain valuable democratic skills that they can use in order to increase the quality of democracy at home through external voting as well as diffusing democratic norms through their networks. Returning migrants may also increase demands for government accountability, help enhance a country's electoral and political participation, and form new political parties. Ms. Neven also underlined that political parties in host countries need to consider inclusive measures to promote effective migrant political participation.

Working Session II saw discussion of migrants' opportunities to vote and be elected in the OSCE countries that grant non-citizens active and/or passive electoral rights, as well as the ways of making the democratic process more inclusive and reflective of the interests and needs of various social groups. The Chair, Dr. **Richard Lappin**, Deputy Head of the Election Department of ODIHR, noted that the right to vote is the most important political right in international human rights law. Framed within the broader right of political participation, it is the only right in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights not guaranteed as a universal human right but rather as a citizen's right. Dr. Lappin noted two trends in OSCE participating States' responses to the challenges related to political participation in the context of migration: the extension of voting rights to resident non-citizens and granting voting rights to expatriates. One of ODIHR's recommendations to participating States has been to consider providing foreign citizens with the right to vote after a certain period of residence provided that they fulfill the same legal requirements that apply to nationals.

Dr. **Jean-Thomas Arrighi** of the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, discussed the electoral rights of non-citizen residents as well as external voting rights in OSCE participating States. He underlined that in the OSCE participating States that are EU members, non-citizen residents' electoral rights are an increasingly widespread practice. He also underlined the threats associated with migrants' under-inclusion in political life, such as arbitrary discrimination in residents' access to local institutions and services based on citizenship status and the 'democratic deficit' resulting from migrants' exclusion from the franchise and decision-making processes that affect them. He pointed out that a wider franchise that includes migrants encourages political parties to compete for their votes and limits the scope of anti-immigrant positions, while over-inclusion of emigrants may dilute the preferences of domestic voters as well as create diplomatic tensions with countries of residence. These risks may be mitigated through carefully crafted laws and procedures. Mr. **Hosam Abu Meri** reflected on his own path to becoming an elected politician, Member of the Saeima (the Latvian Parliament), as a person of migrant background. He mentioned his work as a member of the Social and Employment Affairs commission, as well as the Citizenship, Migration Affairs and Social Solidarity Commission working on migrant and minority integration issues. Mr. Abu Meri also discussed his experience of establishing and running his own non-governmental organization with a focus on social integration of the Arab minority community in Latvia and fighting negative stereotypes of Arabs and Islam. He also emphasized how important it is for a politician with a migrant background to gain the host society's respect and trust by learning the national language, history and culture.

Ms. **Melis Arı-Gürhanlı** presented the work of the Helsinki-based Network of Multicultural Associations “Moniheli”, a network of more than 100 member organizations focused on improving dialogue between immigrant residents, authorities and political parties. She discussed how the network has been raising awareness on the Finnish political and decision-making system among the migrant and host communities, and enhancing immigrants’ participation in decision-making process as part of the integration programme. She also mentioned the nation-wide “Our Election” campaign implemented during the run-up to the 2015 parliamentary elections and 2017 municipal elections aimed at mobilizing the migrant community. Mr. **Joe O’Brien** of the Immigrant Council of Ireland discussed migrants’ voting rights in Ireland, where there is no nationality or immigration status restriction on voting or running in local elections. He also underlined that local elections are the main gateway to national politics, and that the local level is one of the most important vectors of integration. He emphasized that despite Ireland’s relatively liberal approach to migrants’ political rights, there are important challenges to migrants’ political participation in Ireland that need to be addressed, including low awareness of the rights migrant population enjoy as well as cumbersome registration forms and procedures.

Working Session III was devoted to discussing various forms of civic participation of migrants across the OSCE region as well as factors that contribute to their civic engagement. Dr. **Magdalena Lesińska** underlined the increasingly transnational character of migrants’ civic and political participation. Migrants may be active simultaneously in the civic and political life of their original home countries as citizens and of their host countries as residents. Mr. **Joshua Hoyt**, of the National Partnership for New Americans from the US, discussed migrants’ paths towards democratic equality. He emphasized the importance of co-operation between migrant and majority populations on the empowerment and political mobilization of migrants, presenting numerous examples from the US of forms of civic and political participation available also to migrants who do not yet enjoy full political rights, including community organizing, issue campaigns, rallies, marches, and acts of civil disobedience as well as voter registration and mobilization and engaging in political candidates’ electoral campaigns. Prof. **Laura Morales** of the Sciences Po, Paris, underlined that political inclusion is a complex and multifaceted concept that involves more than just voting rights and electoral participation. Important indicators of political inclusion, in addition to electoral participation and electoral availability (inclination to vote), also include interest in politics, confidence in political institutions, non-electoral political participation and engagement in associations. In order to promote the political inclusion of migrants, national, regional and local governments may consider designing migrant integration policies in dialogue with migrant communities as well as allocating extra resources for typically excluded groups. She also noted that all-encompassing civic and political participation policies usually also benefit migrant communities.

Providing an example of an initiative aimed at empowering and connecting migrant communities in Europe, Mr. **Yonous Muhammadi** discussed the activities of the Refugee Ideas and Solutions for Europe (RISE), a network of refugee and migrant organizations from 14 OSCE participating States, founded and co-ordinated by the Greek Council of Refugees based in Athens. He highlighted the Network’s joint actions aimed at empowering migrant and refugee communities (information dissemination, supporting refugee communities in self-organization by sharing good examples from other countries); raising awareness (preparing research reports, collecting testimonials from refugees and sharing them on social media, running national campaigns, establishing dialogues with EU and national stakeholders, visits to schools and other institutions); inclusion and integration (co-operating with stakeholders,

facilitating contact between refugees and stakeholders, national and local authorities and local population, promoting active participation of refugees in social, political cultural events, mediating between newly arrived refugees and representatives of host societies), and pointed out a recent campaign “One Europe - different policies - unequal rights for refugees” that raised awareness of refugees’ situation in various countries.

Working Session IV focussed on migrant consultative bodies. Mr. **Juris Gromovs**, Migration/Freedom of Movement Adviser at ODIHR, noted that migrant consultative bodies are an important form of migrants’ democratic participation and engagement in the policy-making process in their host countries. Participants discussed different types of migrant consultative bodies at national and local levels across the OSCE region, their powers and impact on the situation of migrants in different countries, existing limitations to their full potential, and recommendations on how to strengthen them. Mr. **Tomasz Chrapek** presented the work of the Multicultural Council of Reykjavik, Iceland, a consultation platform for foreign citizens of Reykjavik, immigrant organizations, the labour market, and city representatives. The Council functions an advisory body for the City of Reykjavik on immigrant issues and supports social activism and the promotion of city institutions to citizens of foreign origin. The Council organizes events and meetings for immigrant communities and can communicate immigrants’ needs to the City Council directly and influence issues most immigrants are struggling with (schooling, access to municipal services). There are however certain limitations to the way the Council functions, including no fixed budget and no operation guidelines from the municipality, as well as limited decision-making capacities with only a few official meetings a year. Representing the Migrants’ Platform co-ordinated by the Prague Integration Centre, Ms. **Anca Covrigová** discussed opportunities and challenges associated with a migrant consultative body. On one hand, it provides the migrant population with a sense of agency and gives an opportunity to discuss issues of concern. On the other, such a body may appear not to have any real power, since it is dependent on other actors’ active involvement. The lack of guaranteed funding and voluntary-based nature of the participation in the body may further limit its potential.

Ms. **Fizza Qureshi** of the London-based Migrants’ Rights Network discussed various opportunities for consultation at the national level, including parliamentary bodies and committees, independent inquiries, all-party parliamentary groups as well as bodies commissioned on behalf of the government (e.g. Migration Advisory Committee). She focussed on various ways of ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of a consultation process, including the formulation of the right consultation questions, transparency of the process, allocating sufficient time, as well as making sure that the participants of the consultation processes see the results of their engagement. Ms. **Sonia Gsir** of the Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies at the University of Liège, Belgium, referred to the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (Council of Europe, 5 February 1992) that postulates encouragement and facilitation of consultative bodies that represent foreign nationals at the local level. She discussed various types of consultative bodies and noted that such bodies may be involved in a range of issues such as culture, language learning, education, and employment. The typical limitations of such bodies are, first, that participation is limited to consultation and second, that participation is limited to “foreigners’ issues”.

At the Closing Session, Ms. Christine Hirst from ODIHR provided a summary of the key conclusions and recommendations⁴ identified by the conference speakers and participants during the meeting.

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Experience and good practices for engaging migrant communities in political processes should be shared and drawn on to inform work elsewhere in the region.**

Experience and good practices for engaging migrant communities in political processes have been generated and built up by organizations in a number of the participating States. This includes outreach to encourage political engagement, voting and candidacy, as well as a range of actions to help feed migrant perspectives into the political debate in contexts where migrant communities do not have voting rights to help ensure “participation in the conversation”. These experiences should be shared and drawn on to inform work elsewhere in the region.

- **The participating States should work to streamline registration processes and disseminate information packaged in accessible language/s and formats to encourage greater political participation.**

Electoral processes are often cumbersome and confusing, with a range of bureaucratic barriers to voter registration. The participating States should work to streamline registration processes and disseminate information packaged in accessible language/s and formats to encourage greater political participation. NGOs and migrant associations regularly play important roles in supporting migrants to navigate the bureaucracy and this role should be acknowledged and supported.

- **Political party structures and political and government institutions should provide opportunities for migrant engagement.**

While guarding against ‘pigeon-holing’, migrant advisor roles on migration-related topics within political parties can offer opportunities for greater engagement, as can party membership itself. Quotas may be helpful in some contexts but restrictive in others, and measures to promote greater migrant engagement should be tailored to particular contexts. Local elections are often a gateway into national level politics and can be more accessible for migrants. Creative initiatives such as internships in political institutions or parties can bring knowledge and networking benefits for migrant professionals and for the institution to which they bring skills and new perspectives. Specialised NGOs and associations can again play important roles as organizers and intermediaries for such initiatives.

- **Recognizing the reality of diverse perspectives and opinions on migration and related issues and engaging in constructive political dialogue on these topics is essential for inclusive politics.**

Migration is an increasingly sensitive topic in many participating States, yet this very sensitivity underlines the need for informed debate. Controversial issues such as resource allocation to migrant communities should be addressed, and informed and respectful

⁴ These good practices and recommendations have no official status and are not based on consensus of OSCE participating States. Their inclusion in this report does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the OSCE/ODIHR.

discussions promoted – including with stakeholders holding negative views on migration and with parties from across the political spectrum.

- **Longer-term strategic perspectives in the political discussion of migration should be promoted.**

Promoting longer-term strategic perspectives in the political discussion of migration is increasingly important. With demographic change, particularly in Western Europe and North America, re-aligning ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ communities, it is essential that political leaders are equipped with the knowledge, capacities and perspectives to support effective leadership and policy-making appropriate to the needs of their future societies. Trends towards the under inclusion of non-citizen residents and over inclusion of non-resident citizens deserve careful consideration by policy-makers, and extending voting rights to migrants, even at the local and regional level, would bring positive integration benefits.

- **Work to promote migrant participation should take an inclusive approach, yet be balanced with targeted measures for different groups.**

When undertaking work to support migrant civic and political participation, institutions and NGOs should include host societies alongside migrant communities to encourage exchange and integration, framing integration as a ‘two-way process’. Recognizing the needs and capacities of particular groups, and of men and women, and adapting measures accordingly, will be important in designing future initiatives in this field. There is a strategic need to focus on youth and migrant youth and encourage their engagement and capacity development. Recognizing the inter-linkages between citizenship acquisition, local voting and volunteering can support intervention design.

- **Participating States must take firm and effective action to address discrimination, hate crime and hate speech, including in political life.**

Research indicates the persistent reality of hate crime and harassment of migrants and minorities in a number of participating States, and the increase in anti-migrant political rhetoric in recent years is cause for grave concern. Migrant politicians, alongside those from diverse backgrounds, face many additional barriers and prejudice: this must be recognized and tackled if democratic processes are to be inclusive and rights-based.

- **Resources and inclusion are key factors in supporting migrant communities’ involvement in political decision-making via consultation processes and consultative bodies.**

Consultation processes and consultative bodies play a crucial role in supporting migrant communities’ involvement in political decision-making, yet often face inherent limitations in their structures. Varying greatly in structure and function, consultative bodies can play an important role in channelling migrant perspectives and concerns to decision-makers, however stakeholders often express frustrations with their structural limitations. Consultation processes, organized to gather information and migrant views on particular topics, can also be valuable channels but also face challenges in restrictive (or prescriptive) remits and insufficient resources to ensure wide inclusion. Resources and inclusion are key factors for participating States to consider when engaging in consultation, and ensuring transparent processes that provide feedback on input received and decisions made is vital to build trust for future dialogue and consultation and prevent co-option of consultation processes and bodies.

- **More research and more effective channelling of data to policy- and decision-makers is required.**

In multiple areas, participants expressed frustration with the lack of data, particularly disaggregated data, on migrant civic and political participation. Equally, the importance of ensuring that policies, decisions and political debate are properly informed was underlined.

- **The participating States should provide more subsidized language courses as a key element to encourage greater civic and political participation of migrants, as well as to support their integration more broadly.**

One of the main barriers to migrants' active participation in political life of their host countries is lacking national language proficiency and lack of knowledge about the political system and institutions of their host country. More and subsidised opportunities to acquire these skills and knowledge are needed.

- **The participating States should consider the benefits of longer-term integration when making decisions on resources and public funding for migrant associations.**

NGOs and associations play a very important role in supporting migrant civic and political participation and channelling and empowering migrant voices. The importance of 'service delivery' organizations involved in a range of social integration activities in supporting civic and political participation should not be underestimated in relation to traditional political organizations such as parties and trade unions. Participating States should consider the benefits to longer-term integration when making decisions on resources and public funding for migrant associations. NGOs and associations should share and draw on their experience and strategies developed for working "with, not for" migrant communities and facilitating migrant participation in civic and political life.

I. ANNEX 1: AGENDA


**CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANTS: CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICES
IN LINE WITH OSCE COMMITMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**
EXPERT ROUNDTABLE MEETING
14-15 November October 2017
**Renaissance Brussels Hotel
Rue du Parnasse 19 Brussels 1050 Belgium**

The political participation of migrants forms a core element of OSCE commitments from the perspective of fundamental human rights such as the right to freedom of association and expression, and the right to non-discrimination; access of migrants to decision making processes within political movements, civic organizations and trade unions; as well as the overall integration process. Participation in political life through freedom of expression, freedom of association, or the formation of political parties should be based on the principle of non-discrimination in accordance with OSCE commitments. Despite the increasing diversity of societies across the OSCE region, OSCE participating States continue to face challenges in facilitating migrants' political participation, including participation in electoral and political parties. The respect of these rights, as well as their ability to advocate as members of civil society and the media, can serve to increase their integration in host societies and contribute to political stability in OSCE participating States. The scope of rights regulating political participation of migrants under OSCE commitments is different across the region, however, these differences as well as the common obstacles these groups face with regard to engaging in political life merit discussion and exchange of good practices.

14 November 2017	
Registration of participants. Welcome coffee.	08:45-09:00
Opening Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Christine Hirst, Deputy Head of Democratization Department, ODIHR Introductory Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Thomas Huddleston, Programme Director on Migration and Integration, Migration Policy Group, Brussels, Belgium <p><i>The Introductory Session will be an opportunity to present the main points of the two ODIHR policy papers and provide a brief overview of the legal standards, political commitments and national policies on political participation of migrants in the OSCE region as well as discuss the practice of civic and political integration of immigrants and the key channels and actors active in this process.</i></p>	09:00-10:00 1h
Opening Panel Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Zrinka Bralo, CEO of "Migrants Organise" platform, United Kingdom - Mr. Guglielmo Picchi, Vice Chair of Ad Hoc Committee On Migration, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly - Mr. Miltos Pavlou, Senior Programme Manager, Fundamental Rights Agency, Vienna - Dr. Mischa Thompson, Policy Advisor to the U.S. Commission on Security 	10:00-11:30 90mins

and Cooperation in Europe	
Chair: Ms. Christine Hirst, Deputy Head of Democratization Department, ODIHR	
Coffee Break	11:30-11:45
<p>Working Session I: Challenges to the political participation of migrants: perspectives from the OSCE region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Nuria Diez-Guardia, Policy Officer, Legal Migration and Integration Unit, DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission - Ms. Salome Mbugua, Chair of the Board, European Network of Migrant Women - Dr. Catarina Reis Oliveira, Director of the Observatory for Migration, High Commission for Migrations, Portugal - Ms. Marilyn Neven, Programme Manager, International IDEA <p>Chair: Prof. Bogdan Voicu, Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy of Sciences</p> <p><i>Working Session I will provide a platform for participants to discuss the challenges to civic and political participation that migrants encounter in the process of actively engaging in the public life of their host OSCE participating States. Special attention will be paid to challenges faced by migrant women and youth.</i></p>	<p>11:45-13:15</p> <p>90mins</p>
Lunch	13:15-14:15
<p>Working Session II: Electoral participation of migrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Jean-Thomas Arrighi, 'NCCR on the move', the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland - Mr. Hosam Abu Meri, Member of Parliament, Latvia - Ms. Melis Arı-Gürhanlı, Project coordinator, Network of Multicultural Associations "Moniheli", Finland - Mr. Joe O'Brien, Integration Outreach Officer, Immigrant Council of Ireland <p>Chair: Dr. Richard Lappin, Deputy Head of Election Department, ODIHR</p> <p><i>Working Session II will see the participants discuss migrants' opportunities to vote and be elected in the OSCE countries that grant non-citizens active and/or passive electoral rights. The session will give an opportunity to exchange good practices aimed at encouraging migrants to take an active part in the political life of their host countries as well as making the democratic process more inclusive and reflective of the interests and needs of various social groups.</i></p>	<p>14:15-15:45</p> <p>90mins</p>
Coffee Break	15:45-16:00
<p>Working Session III: Civic participation of migrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Joshua Hoyt, National Partnership for New Americans, US - Prof. Laura Morales, European Studies Centre, Sciences Po, Paris, France - Mr. Yonous Muhammadi, President of the Greek Council for Refugees, Athens, Greece <p>Chair: Dr. Magdalena Lesińska, Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw, Poland</p>	<p>16:00-17:30</p> <p>90 min</p>

<p><i>Working Session III will be devoted to discussing various forms of civic participation of migrants across the OSCE region as well as factors that contribute to their civic engagement. The session participants will review policy tools and good practices promoting active civic participation of migrants.</i></p>	
RECEPTION	18:00
15 November 2017	
<p>Session IV: Use of consultative mechanisms across the OSCE, and examples of good practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Tomasz Chrapek, Chair of the Multicultural Council of Reykjavik, Iceland - Ms. Anca Covrigová, Migrants' Platform, Prague Integration Centre, Czech Republic - Ms. Fizza Qureshi, Director of the Migrants' Rights Network, London, UK <p>Chair: Mr. Juris Gromovs, Migration/Freedom of Movement Advisor, ODIHR</p> <p><i>This session will focus on one form of migrant democratic participation and involvement in the policy-making process – consultative bodies. The participants will discuss different types of migrant consultative bodies at national and local levels across the OSCE region, their powers and impact on the situation of migrants in respective countries, existing limitations to their full potential and recommendations on how to strengthen them.</i></p>	<p>09:30-11:00</p> <p>90min</p>
Coffee Break	11:00-11:15
<p>Closing Session: Presentation of roundtable conclusions and recommendations for ways forward</p> <p>Final discussion points and observations from participants.</p> <p>Final remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Christine Hirst, Deputy Head of Democratization Department, ODIHR <p><i>The Closing Session will review the main conclusions and recommendations of the conference developed by participants during the previous Working Sessions</i></p>	<p>11:15-12:00</p> <p>45 min</p>

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Belgium

Ms. Karen Kaneza
Equal Rights Program for the City of Brussels

Czech Republic

Ms. Anca Covrigová
Head of Methodology, Migrants' Platform, Prague Integration Centre

Finland

Ms. Melis Ali
Project coordinator, Network of Multicultural Associations "Moniheli"

France

Ms. Laura Morales
European Studies Centre, Sciences Po, Paris

Greece

Mr. Yonous Muhammadi
President of the Greek Council for Refugees, Athens

Iceland

Mr. Tomasz Chrapek
Chair of Multicultural Council of the City of Reykjavik

Ireland

Mr. Joe O'Brien
Integration Outreach Officer, the Immigrant Council of Ireland

Latvia

Mr. Hosam Abu Meri
Member of Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

Mr. Edgars Ikstens, Parliamentary assistant to Mr. Hosams Abu Meri, Member of Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

Poland

Ms. Magdalena Lesińska
Centre for Migration Research, the University of Warsaw

Portugal

Ms. Catarina Reis Oliveira
Director of the Observatory for Migration, High Commission for Migrations

Romania

Mr. Bogdan Voicu
Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy of Sciences

Switzerland

Mr. Jean-Thomas Arrighi
NCCR on the move, University of Neuchâtel

United Kingdom

Ms. Zrinka Bralo
CEO of “Migrants Organise” Platform

Ms. Fizza Qureshi
Director of the Migrants’ Rights Network

United States of America

Ms. Mischa Thompson
Policy Advisor to the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission)

Mr. Joshua Hoyt
National Partnership for New Americans

Ms. Maria Meier
Chief Strategist and Founder, Mterprise Inclusion Strategies, Washington D.C.

Ms. Amy Wilson
U.S. Mission to the European Union

European Union

Ms. Nuria Diez-Guardia
Policy Officer, Legal migration and integration Unit, DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

Mr. Alfiaz Vaiya
European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup (ARDI)

Mr. Miltos Pavlou
Senior Programme Manager, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

Council of Europe

Mr. Humbert de Biolley
Deputy Head of Office, Council of Europe Office in Brussels in charge of liaison with the European Union

International Organization for Migration (IOM),

Ms. Geertrui Lanneau
Senior Regional Specialist on Labour Mobility and Human Development, Regional IOM Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland

AfriDev Exchange

Mr. Jipe Kelly
Co-founder & Consultant

Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

Mr. Torsten Moritz
Executive Secretary

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

Ms. Juliana Wahlgren
Networking Officer

Ms. Giulia Di Vita
Advocacy and Networking Department Intern

European Network of Migrant Women

Ms. Salome Mbugua

Chair of the Board, European Network of Migrant Women

Ms. Sinem Yilmaz

Brussels Officer

European Programme for Integration and Migration

Ms. Sofie Ngo-Diep

Programme Manager

International IDEA

Ms. Marilyn Neven

Program Manager, the International IDEA

Migration Policy Group (MPG)

Mr. Thomas Huddleston

Programme Director on Migration and Integration, Migration Policy Group, Brussels, Belgium

Social Platform

Ms. Annica Ryngbeck

Policy and Advocacy Adviser

Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

Mr. Vít Novotný

Senior Research Officer

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Mr. Guglielmo Picchi

Vice Chair of *Ad Hoc* Committee on Migration, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR)

Ms. Christine Hirst

Deputy Head of Democratization Department

Mr. Richard Lappin

Deputy Head of Elections Department

Mr. Juris Gromovs

Migration and Freedom of Movement Adviser, Democratization Department

Ms. Joanna Fomina

Migration Expert

Ms. Rita Stafejeva

Administrative Assistant, Democratization Department

ANNEX 3: SELECTED OSCE COMMITMENTS IN THE AREA OF MIGRANT INTEGRATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROCESSES

Since the 1975 Helsinki process OSCE participating States realized that increasing legal migration in the OSCE region has not only been beneficial both for host countries and migrants themselves, but has also given rise to a number of economic, social, human and other challenges⁵. Gradually the OSCE participating States acknowledged that some of those challenges should be addressed by means of special migrant integration policies. Moreover, decades, the OSCE participating States have agreed to a large number of commitments in the field of political participation in democratic governance processes, including those related to the participation of migrants.

Therefore, over more than 40 years,, the OSCE participating States have agreed to a number of commitments in the field of migrant integration. These commitments relating to the so-called human dimension of the OSCE are contained in an ever-growing set of documents adopted by CSCE/ OSCE Summits and other political forums.

The OSCE commitments form the basis of the work of the Organization and were developed jointly and adopted unanimously by all participating States. They establish clear standards for the participating States in their treatment of each other and of all individuals within their territories.

Helsinki 1975 (Co-operation in the Field of Economics, of Science and Technology and of the Environment)

The participating States,

Considering that the movements of migrant workers in Europe have reached substantial proportions, and that they constitute an important economic, social and human factor for host countries as well as for countries of origin,

Recognizing that workers' migrations have also given rise to a number of economic, social, human and other problems in both the receiving countries and the countries of origin,

Taking due account of the activities of the competent international organizations, more particularly the International Labour Organisation, in this area, are of the opinion that the problems arising bilaterally from the migration of workers in Europe as well as between the participating States should be dealt with by the parties directly concerned, in order to resolve these problems in their mutual interest, in the light of the concern of each State involved to take due account of the requirements resulting from its socio-economic situation, having regard to the obligation of each State to comply with the bilateral and multilateral agreements to which it is party, and with the following aims in view:

- to encourage the efforts of the countries of origin directed towards increasing the possibilities of employment for their nationals in their own territories, in particular by developing economic co-operation appropriate for this purpose and suitable for the host countries and the countries of origin concerned;
- to ensure, through collaboration between the host country and the country of origin, the conditions under which the orderly movement of workers might take place, while at the same time protecting their personal and social welfare and, if appropriate, to organize the recruitment of migrant workers and the provision of elementary language and vocational training;
- to ensure equality of rights between migrant workers and nationals of the host countries with regard to conditions of employment and work and to social security, and to endeavour to ensure that migrant workers may enjoy satisfactory living conditions, especially housing conditions;
- to endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, that migrant workers may enjoy the same opportunities as nationals of the host countries of finding other suitable employment in the event of unemployment;
- to regard with favour the provision of vocational training to migrant workers and, as far as possible, free instruction in the language of the host country, in the framework of their employment;
- to confirm the right of migrant workers to receive, as far as possible, regular information in their own language, covering both their country of origin and the host country;
- to ensure that the children of migrant workers established in the host country have access to the education usually given there, under the same conditions as the children of that country and, furthermore, to permit them to receive supplementary education in their own language, national culture, history and geography;
- to bear in mind that migrant workers, particularly those who have acquired qualifications, can by returning to their countries after a certain period of time help to remedy any deficiency of skilled labour in their country of origin;
- to facilitate, as far as possible, the reuniting of migrant workers with their families.

Madrid 2007 (Decisions: Decision No. 10/07 on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination: Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding)

The Ministerial Council,

(...)

⁵ Section "Economic and social aspects of migrant legal" of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (Helsinki 1975).

Recognizing that manifestations of intolerance and discrimination can undermine the efforts to protect the rights of individuals, including migrants, refugees and persons belonging to national minorities and stateless persons,
(...)

7. Calls on participating States to protect migrants legally residing in host countries and persons belonging to national minorities, stateless persons and refugees from racism, xenophobia, discrimination and violent acts of intolerance and to elaborate or strengthen national strategies and programmes for the integration of regular migrants, which also requires active engagement of the latter;
(...)

Vienna 1989 (Co-operation in the Field of Economics, of Science and Technology and of the Environment)

(40) The participating States emphasize the need for effective implementation of the provisions of the Final Act and the Madrid Concluding Document relating to migrant workers and their families in Europe. They invite host countries and countries of origin to make efforts to improve further the economic, social, cultural and other conditions of life for migrant workers and their families legally residing in the host countries. They recommend that host countries and countries of origin should promote their bilateral co-operation in relevant fields with a view to facilitating the reintegration of migrant workers and their families returning to their country of origin.

(41) The participating States will (...) consider favourably applications for family reunification as well as family contacts and visits involving migrant workers from other participating States legally residing in the host countries.

(42) The participating States will ensure that migrant workers from other participating States, and their families, can freely enjoy and maintain their national culture and have access to the culture of the host country.

(43) Aiming at ensuring effective equality of opportunity between the children of migrant workers and the children of their own nationals regarding access to all forms and levels of education, the participating States affirm their readiness to take measures needed for the better use and improvement of educational opportunities. Furthermore, they will encourage or facilitate, where reasonable demand exists, supplementary teaching in their mother tongue for the children of migrant workers.

(44) The participating States recognize that issues of migrant workers have their human dimension.

Copenhagen 1990

(22) The participating States reaffirm that the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers have their human dimension. In this context, they

(22.1) - agree that the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers are the concern of all participating States and that as such they should be addressed within the CSCE process;

(22.2) - reaffirm their commitment to implement fully in their domestic legislation the rights of migrant workers provided for in international agreements to which they are parties;

(22.3) - consider that, in future international instruments concerning the rights of migrant workers, they should take into account the fact that this issue is of importance for all of them;

(...)

Paris 1990 (A New Era of Democracy, Peace and Unity)

We recognize that the issues of migrant workers and their families legally residing in host countries have economic, cultural and social aspects as well as their human dimension. We reaffirm that the protection and promotion of their rights, as well as the implementation of relevant international obligations, is our common concern.

Moscow 1991

(38) The participating States recognize the need to ensure that the rights of migrant workers and their families lawfully residing in the participating States are respected and underline their right to express freely their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics. The exercise of such rights may be subject to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and are consistent with international standards.

(38.1) They condemn all acts of discrimination on the ground of race, colour and ethnic origin, intolerance and xenophobia against migrant workers. They will, in conformity with domestic law and international obligations, take effective measures to promote tolerance, understanding, equality of opportunity and respect for the fundamental human rights of migrant workers and adopt, if they have not already done so, measures that would prohibit acts that constitute incitement to violence based on national, racial, ethnic or religious discrimination, hostility or hatred.

(38.2) They will adopt appropriate measures that would enable migrant workers to participate in the life of the society of the participating States.

(38.3) They note that issues which concern the human dimension of migrant workers residing on their territory could, as any other issue of the human dimension, be raised under the human dimension mechanism.

Helsinki 1992 (Decisions: VI. The Human Dimension)

The participating States:

(...)

(36) Restate that human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, that they are also enjoyed by migrant workers wherever they live and stress the importance of implementing all CSCE commitments on migrant workers and their families lawfully residing in the participating States;

(37) Will encourage the creation of conditions to foster greater harmony in relations between migrant workers and the rest of the society of the participating State in which they lawfully reside. To this end, they will seek to offer, *inter alia*, measures to facilitate the familiarization of migrant workers and their families with the languages and social life of the respective participating State in which they lawfully reside so as to enable them to participate in the life of the society of the host country;

(38) Will, in accordance with their domestic policies, laws and international obligations seek, as appropriate, to create the conditions for promoting equality of opportunity in respect of working conditions, education, social security and health services, housing, access to trade unions as well as cultural rights for lawfully residing and working migrant workers.

Budapest 1994 (Decisions: VIII. The Human Dimension)

31. They [*OSCE participating States*] will continue to promote the integration of migrant workers in the societies in which they are lawfully residing. They recognize that a successful process of integration also depends on its active pursuit by the migrants themselves and decided therefore to encourage them in this regard.

Maastricht 2003 (Decisions: Decision No. 4/03 on Tolerance and Non-discrimination)

The Ministerial Council

(...)

11. Undertakes to combat discrimination against migrant workers. Further undertakes to facilitate the integration of migrant workers into the societies in which they are legally residing

(...)

Sofia 2004 (Decisions: Annex to Decision No. 12/04 on Tolerance and Non-discrimination;

Permanent Council Decision No. 621: Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination)

The participating States commit to:

(...)

- Take steps, in conformity with their domestic law and international obligations, against discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia against migrants and migrant workers;

- Consider undertaking activities to raise public awareness of the enriching contribution of migrants and migrant workers to society;

(...)

Ljubljana 2005 (Decisions: Decision No. 2/05 on Migration)

The Ministerial Council,

Reaffirming the commitments related to migration, and in particular regarding migrant workers, and other relevant commitments (...),

Recognizing the increasing importance of migration, as well as the challenges and opportunities that it presents to participating States,

Further recognizing that migration is becoming a more diverse and complex phenomenon, which needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner and therefore requires a cross-dimensional approach at the national, regional and international levels,

Recognizing that all States should adopt effective national frameworks in order to manage migration,

Underlining that migration is inherently a transnational issue requiring co-operation between States,

Acknowledging that migration constitutes an important economic, social and human factor for host countries as well as for countries of origin,

Acknowledging also that successful integration policies that include respect for cultural and religious diversity and promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are a factor in promoting stability and cohesion within our societies,

(...)

Considering that the OSCE, within its comprehensive approach to security, could contribute, *inter alia*, by:

- Working in synergy and developing a stronger partnership with international bodies having a specific focus on migration,

- Facilitating dialogue and co-operation between participating States, including countries of origin, transit and destination in the OSCE area, as well as the OSCE Partners for Cooperation and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation,

- Assisting the participating States, upon their request, to develop effective migration policies and to implement their relevant OSCE commitments,

- Inviting participating States to consider becoming parties to relevant international Instruments.

Athens 2009 (Decisions: Decision No. 5/09 on Migration Management)

The Ministerial Council,

Acknowledging the increasing importance of and the benefits stemming from effective migration management for the socio-economic development, social cohesion, security and stability in all countries including those of origin, transit and destination, and fully recognizing the human rights of migrants and their family members,

Underscoring the importance of mainstreaming migration policies into economic, social, environmental, development and security strategies and addressing migration management through co-operative, comprehensive and cross-dimensional approaches,

Underlining the need to facilitate legal migration and fight illegal migration,

Bearing in mind the different approaches to migration issues by the OSCE participating States, and drawing on their experiences and best practices,

Stressing the need to deepen dialogue and co-operation at all levels within and between all States, as well as with all relevant stakeholders, including social partners, business community, civil society and academia, to effectively address the opportunities and challenges related to comprehensive migration management,

Confirming that co-operation, dialogue and exchange of good practices and information on migration management issues remain an important component of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, supported as appropriate and within the respective mandates, capacities

and resources in all three dimensions,

1. Encourages the participating States to continue to work on migration management by:

- Paying particular attention to addressing the root causes of migration;
- Ensuring that their national migration practices comply with their respective international obligations and OSCE commitments;
- Further elaborating and enhancing implementation of comprehensive and effective national migration policies and action plans as appropriate;
- Improving the collection of comparable data on migration, in order to facilitate dialogue and exchange of best practices at the OSCE level;

(...)

- Respecting the human rights of migrants and increasing efforts to combat discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia towards migrants and their families;

(...)

5. Tasks the Permanent Council, its informal subsidiary bodies and the OSCE executive structures, in accordance with their respective mandates across all dimensions, within the Organization's comprehensive concept of security and within existing resources to *inter alia*:

- Provide a broad regional platform for dialogue on migration and security issues, both among OSCE participating States and between participating States and Partners for Cooperation, with the involvement of other relevant stakeholders in full conformity with the OSCE Rules of Procedure;
- Continue working on gender aspects of migration;
- Assist participating States, upon their request, to improve migration legislation and to elaborate and implement effective national policy frameworks, by providing advice and training, in co-operation with relevant international and regional organizations;

(...)

- Continue to assist the participating States, upon their request, to promote effective migration management, including exchange of best practices, and to facilitate legal migration and fight illegal migration, while paying particular attention to bilateral and multilateral co-operation in this field.

Hamburg 2016 (Decisions: Decision No. 3/16 on OSCE's role in the governance of large movements of migrants and refugees)

The Ministerial Council,

Recognizing that the benefits and opportunities of safe, orderly and regular migration are substantial and often underestimated, whilst noting that irregular migration in large movements often presents complex challenges, and recognizing the substantial economic and social contribution that migrants and refugees can make for inclusive growth and sustainable development,

Recognizing the leading role of the United Nations, Commending efforts made since 2015 by the Serbian and German OSCE Chairmanships to address issues related to the governance of these movements more effectively in the OSCE, Acknowledging the many specific activities linked to migration and refugees already undertaken by OSCE executive structures, within existing mandates, as well as by participating States, based on existing OSCE commitments, relevant United Nations documents and national policies,

Building on in-depth discussions conducted at the OSCE, especially during the hearings of the Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows in spring 2016 and during a special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council held on 20 July 2016,

1. Acknowledges the work of the Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows and the output discussed at the special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council of 20 July 2016;
2. Encourages the OSCE executive structures, within existing mandates and available resources, to continue their work on the issue of migration, including by reinforcing activities leading to the exchange of best practices and enhancing

dialogue and co-operation with Partners for Co-operation, in a manner that complements the activities undertaken by other relevant international organizations and agencies;

3. Encourages participating States also to use the OSCE platform, including appropriate OSCE working bodies, to continue addressing migration-related issues where the OSCE has developed its expertise, and improve dialogue on migration-related matters with regard to developing possible effective measures and common approaches to address them.

Copenhagen 1990

Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Copenhagen, 29 June 1990

(...)

(7) To ensure that the will of the people serves as the basis of the authority of government, the participating States will

(7.1) — hold free elections at reasonable intervals, as established by law;

(7.2) — permit all seats in at least one chamber of the national legislature to be freely contested in a popular vote;

(7.3) — guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens;

(7.4) — ensure that votes are cast by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure, and that they are counted and reported honestly with the official results made public;

(7.5) — respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination;

(7.6) — respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities;

(7.7) — ensure that law and public policy work to permit political campaigning to be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution;

(7.8) — provide that no legal or administrative obstacle stands in the way of unimpeded access to the media on a non-discriminatory basis for all political groupings and individuals wishing to participate in the electoral process;

(7.9) — ensure that candidates who obtain the necessary number of votes required by law are duly installed in office and are permitted to remain in office until their term expires or is otherwise brought to an end in a manner that is regulated by law in conformity with democratic parliamentary and constitutional procedures.

(...)

(9) The participating States reaffirm that

(9.1) — everyone will have the right to freedom of expression including the right to communication. This right will include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. The exercise of this right may be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and are consistent with international standards. In particular, no limitation will be imposed on access to, and use of, means of reproducing documents of any kind, while respecting, however, rights relating to intellectual property, including copyright;

(9.2) — everyone will have the right of peaceful assembly and demonstration. Any restrictions which may be placed on the exercise of these rights will be prescribed by law and consistent with international standards;

(9.3) — the right of association will be guaranteed. The right to form and — subject to the general right of a trade union to determine its own membership — freely to join a trade union will be guaranteed. These rights will exclude any prior control. Freedom of association for workers, including the freedom to strike, will be guaranteed, subject to limitations prescribed by law and consistent with international standards;

(9.4) — everyone will have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change one's religion or belief and freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, in public or in private, through worship, teaching, practice and observance. The exercise of these rights may be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and are consistent with international standards;

(9.5) — they will respect the right of everyone to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country, consistent with a State's international obligations and CSCE commitments. Restrictions on this right will have the character of very rare exceptions, will be considered necessary only if they respond to a specific public need, pursue a legitimate aim and are proportionate to that aim, and will not be abused or applied in an arbitrary manner;

(9.6) — everyone has the right peacefully to enjoy his property either on his own or in common with others. No one may be deprived of his property except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and consistent with international commitments and obligations.

Maastricht 2003

DECISION No. 4/03

TOLERANCE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Ministerial Council,

Recognizing that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are at the core of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security,

Recalling its commitments in the field of the human dimension, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Charter for European Security (Istanbul Summit, 1999) and all other relevant OSCE documents and decisions,

Recalling Decision No. 6 on Tolerance and Non-discrimination, adopted at the Tenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Porto on 7 December 2002,

Reaffirming its commitment to promote tolerance and combat discrimination, and its concern about all manifestations of aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violent extremism in all participating States, as well as discrimination based, inter alia, on race, color, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, Urging the relevant authorities in all participating States to continue to condemn publicly, at the appropriate level and in the appropriate manner, violent acts motivated by discrimination and intolerance,

Affirming its commitment to increase its efforts for the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination in all fields,

Welcoming the work done by the OSCE during 2003,

1. Commits itself to promote the implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area;

2. Decides to enhance the efforts being made to increase women's participation and the role of women in furthering democratization and economic development, and to consider integrating the provisions of the OSCE Action Plan on Gender Issues where applicable into national policies. Further decides to enhance its efforts to achieve gender balance at all levels within the OSCE, taking full account also in this respect of the principle of recruiting staff from all participating States on a fair basis. Reiterates that the OSCE encourages female candidates to apply for OSCE positions;

3. Decides to follow up the work started at the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism, held in Vienna on 19 and 20 June 2003 and welcomes the offer by Germany to host a second OSCE conference on this subject in Berlin on 28 and 29 April 2004;

4. Decides to follow up the work started at the OSCE Conference on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, held in Vienna on 4 and 5 September 2003 and welcomes the offer by Belgium to host a second OSCE conference on this subject in Brussels in autumn 2004;

5. Tasks the Permanent Council to further discuss, in addition to the two above-mentioned conferences, ways and means of increasing the efforts of the OSCE and the participating States for the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination in all fields;

6. Encourages all participating States to collect and keep records on reliable information and statistics on hate crimes, including on forms of violent manifestations of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and anti-Semitism, as discussed and recommended in the above-mentioned conferences. Recognizing the importance of legislation to combat hate crimes, participating States will inform the ODIHR about existing legislation regarding crimes fuelled by intolerance and discrimination, and, where appropriate, seek the ODIHR's assistance in the drafting and review of such legislation;

7. Tasks the ODIHR, in full co-operation, inter alia, with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), as well as relevant NGOs, with serving as a collection point for information and statistics collected by participating States, and with reporting regularly on these issues, including in the format of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, as a basis for deciding on priorities for future work. The ODIHR will, inter alia, promote best practices and disseminate lessons learned in the fight against intolerance and discrimination;

8. Recognizes the need to combat hate crimes, which can be fuelled by racist, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic propaganda on the internet. We welcome the offer by France to host in Paris in 2004 a forward-looking event, fully respecting the rights to freedom of information and expression, on the relationship between propaganda on the internet and hate crimes;

9. Affirms the importance of freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and condemns all discrimination and violence, including against any religious group or individual believer. Commits to ensure and facilitate the freedom of the individual to profess and practice a religion or belief, alone or in community with others, where necessary through transparent and non-discriminatory laws, regulations, practices and policies. Encourages the participating States to seek the assistance of the ODIHR and its Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Emphasizes the importance of a continued and strengthened interfaith and intercultural dialogue to promote greater tolerance, respect and mutual understanding;

10. Ensures the advancement of the implementation of the OSCE commitments on national minorities, and recognizes the importance of the recommendations of the High Commissioner on National Minorities on education, public participation, and language, including on its use in broadcast media, and the relevant recommendations of the Representative on Freedom of the Media in this regard;

11. Undertakes to combat discrimination against migrant workers. Further undertakes to facilitate the integration of migrant workers into the societies in which they are legally residing. Calls on the ODIHR to reinforce its activities in this respect;

12. Undertakes, in this context, to combat, subject to national legislation and international commitments, discrimination, where existing, against asylum seekers and refugees, and calls on the ODIHR to reinforce its activities in this respect;

13. Takes into account the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a useful framework for the work of the OSCE and the endeavors of participating States in dealing with internal displacement;

14. Decides that the OSCE in addressing the issues contained in this document will increase its efforts towards the younger generation in order to build up their understanding of the need for tolerance. Human rights education merits particular attention;

15. Decides to intensify the co-operation of the OSCE with relevant international organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as with civil society and relevant non-governmental organizations to promote tolerance and non-discrimination;

16. Tasks the Permanent Council, the ODIHR, the HCNM and the RFoM, in close co-operation with the Chairmanship-in-Office, with ensuring an effective follow-up to the relevant provisions of the present decision, and requests the Permanent Council to address the operational and funding modalities for the implementation of this decision.

ABOUT THE OSCE/ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) is the OSCE's principal institution to assist participating States "to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to abide by the rule of law, to promote principles of democracy and (...) to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, as well as promote tolerance throughout society" (1992 Helsinki Summit Document). This is referred to as the OSCE human dimension.

The OSCE/ODIHR, based in Warsaw (Poland) was created as the Office for Free Elections at the 1990 Paris Summit and started operating in May 1991. One year later, the name of the Office was changed to reflect an expanded mandate to include human rights and democratization. Today it employs over 130 staff.

The OSCE/ODIHR is the lead agency in Europe in the field of **election observation**. Every year, it co-ordinates and organizes the deployment of thousands of observers to assess whether elections in the OSCE region are conducted in line with OSCE Commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into the electoral process in its entirety. Through assistance projects, the OSCE/ODIHR helps participating States to improve their electoral framework.

The Office's **democratization** activities include: rule of law, legislative support, democratic governance, migration and freedom of movement, and gender equality. The OSCE/ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programs annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

The OSCE/ODIHR also assists participating States' in fulfilling their obligations to promote and protect **human rights** and fundamental freedoms consistent with OSCE human dimension commitments. This is achieved by working with a variety of partners to foster collaboration, build capacity and provide expertise in thematic areas including human rights in the fight against terrorism, enhancing the human rights protection of trafficked persons, human rights education and training, human rights monitoring and reporting, and women's human rights and security.

Within the field of **tolerance** and **non-discrimination**, the OSCE/ODIHR provides support to the participating States in strengthening their response to hate crimes and incidents of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. The OSCE/ODIHR's activities related to tolerance and non-discrimination are focused on the following areas: legislation; law enforcement training; monitoring, reporting on, and following up on responses to hate-motivated crimes and incidents; as well as educational activities to promote tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding.

The OSCE/ODIHR provides advice to participating States on their policies on **Roma and Sinti**. It promotes capacity-building and networking among Roma and Sinti communities, and encourages the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in policy-making bodies.

All ODIHR activities are carried out in close co-ordination and co-operation with OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as with other international organizations.

More information is available on the ODIHR website (www.osce.org/odihhr).