



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2012 Warsaw, 3 October 2012

EU statement – Session 14

TOLERANCE AND NON –DISCRIMINATION II

The promotion and protection of the universality of human rights is central to the EU's fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination. All members of our societies, irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, must be treated equally, including LGBT persons.

The EU supports ODIHR's work in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination and believes that our shared values and principles are integral to the OSCE's objective of building more stable, pluralistic and democratic societies.

Nevertheless, we regret that discrimination is still widespread in the OSCE area including in EU Member States. We therefore call on OSCE participating States actively to cooperate with ODIHR in implementing our shared commitments to promote mutual respect and understanding. One such example of the highly valuable work carried out by ODIHR is the training of police prosecutors on preventing hate crime across the OSCE region.

The EU's absolute commitment to combating racism and antisemitism is at the forefront of our tolerance and non-discrimination endeavours. The EU High Representative has condemned unreservedly anti-Semitic hate speech as both unacceptable and intolerable. Rabbi Andrew Baker, one of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office to promote greater tolerance and combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination, has also spoken out about the corrosive effect that antisemitic public discourse has on communities throughout the OSCE region.

The EU believes that education plays a very important role in promoting mutual understanding, integration and respect for diversity. In this regard, it recalls the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (Res 66/137), adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in December 2011. The EU also notes that Senator Adil Akhmetov, another of the Personal Representatives, has praised the work of ODIHR and other international organisations in producing a guidebook for educators on countering intolerance against Muslims.

We also welcome the work of Judge Catherine McGuinness focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions. The persecution of individuals and religious communities or groups of all faiths anywhere in the world is of profound concern to us. We believe that the freedom of individuals or groups to worship or practice their own religion or belief without discrimination or persecution is a valuable indicator of wider democratic principles. The EU welcomes the opportunity provided by the HDIM to call on all participating States to actively cooperate with ODIHR including through the collecting of reliable data to inform our efforts to combat hate crime.

Accordingly we call on all participating States to promote and protect the freedom of all individuals, groups and communities to follow a religion or belief without discrimination or persecution and note the important role that civil society can play in spreading messages of tolerance among people of different religions. The EU, which is in the process of putting together new EU guidelines on the promotion and protection of the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief, also encourages the OSCE to develop its own strategy to strengthen this fundamental freedom. In addition, EU stresses the need for participating States to adopt strong national norms to efficiently combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

** Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.