



HDIM.DEL/258/08
6 October 2008

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2008

Working Session 10: Tolerance and non-discrimination II (continued)
(6th October 2008)

EU Statement

The European Union is a strong supporter of the OSCE's work on combating all forms of discrimination and intolerance. This organisation has taken a unique approach to addressing such problems, fusing high-level political attention with practical measures and mechanisms.

At the political level, the OSCE has led the way in dealing with tolerance issues comprehensively, while devoting appropriate attention to particular forms of discrimination. Approaching the issue in this manner strengthens the case that there must be no hierarchy of hatreds, but that different forms may require different responses.

The historic Berlin and Brussels conferences, as well as subsequent events in Paris, Cordoba and Bucharest set and developed a clear set of commitments that participating states have agreed to implement. As the European Union stated at this same event last year, implementation of these commitments is now key. Intolerance unchecked can lead to grave consequences, as European history sadly informs us. This is why the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security is so important. Comprehensive means all forms of discrimination being attacked on different fronts.

The EU works hard to combat all forms of discrimination. EU directives requires all member states to introduce legislation that outlaws discrimination on the basis on race, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability and religion or belief. The EU's Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia also requires member

ue2008.fr

states to prohibit and punish incitement to racial hatred and violence, and increase punitive tariffs for racially motivated violence. The Roma in particular often face serious levels of racism, exclusion and discrimination. The EU calls on all participating states to step up their efforts to promote the integration of Roma.

Anti-semitism remains a problem across the OSCE region. Important initiatives to combat this age-old scourge have been promoted through the OSCE. The EU would like to reiterate the message that in order to combat anti-semitism - and all forms of discrimination - governments and law enforcement agencies need reliable information on hate crimes in order to respond adequately. The EU calls on all participating states to implement their commitments to collect and maintain reliable information and statistics about anti-semitic and other hate crimes.

The EU believes that the OSCE Chairmanship Conference on intolerance and discrimination against Muslims held in Cordoba last year sent an important message that Muslims are part of our societies and must not be allowed to become fair game for bigots or racists. The European Union is firmly committed to ensuring the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. We call on all participating states to protect the human rights of these people, including their right to organise and campaign free of intimidation. We note the importance of ODIHR including homophobic hate crimes in its excellent 2007 report 'hate crimes in the OSCE region: incidents and responses'. with regard to the internal situation in the EU, the relatively recently established Gender and Fundamental Rights Institutes may prove helpful in further assessing and evidencing issues related to gender equality. In addition, the valuable work of the OSCE Secretariat Gender Section, including in its gender mainstreaming efforts, is highly appreciated.

The EU looks forward to the expert's seminar on "Innovative Approaches to Combating Violence against Women" scheduled for 20 to 22 october, 2008, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The EU regards such efforts by the OSCE to be precisely complimentary to the recently completed Council of Europe campaign on violence against women.

Mr Chairman,

The European Union is a staunch supporter of ODIHR and its practical work to promote tolerance and non-discrimination. We encourage participating states to seek the assistance of ODIHR in responding to hate crimes, in particular in training law enforcement officers, strengthening legislation, data collection and developing educational programmes. The EU was satisfied with the first meeting of National Contact Points for combating hate crime, held in Helsinki in June, and hopes that this can become an annual event.

ue2008.fr

Referring to the need for coherence and to avoid duplication in the work of international organisations, the EU welcomes the existing co-operation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The EU encourages both organisations to enhance and strengthen their cooperation across all fields, especially regarding tolerance and non-discrimination session at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

The European Union would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office on tolerance issues for their hard work across the OSCE region.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

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

ue2008.fr