



STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2017
Session 8: Tolerance and non-discrimination
Warsaw, 15 September 2017

Mme Moderator,

The Delegation of the Holy See considers it important to comment, albeit briefly, on this TnD session devoted to hate crime.

Hate crimes – “criminal offences committed with a bias motive” (MC Dec 09/09) – undoubtedly threaten the social cohesion inside the participating States, affecting not only the victim, but also the wider community and might even erode confidence between States and trigger violence and conflict on a wider-scale, putting in danger the peaceful relations among the States.

Our Delegation notes with deep concern that in the entire OSCE area many persons and communities are victims of hate crime as a result of their racial, ethnic or religious identity. In particular, data collected and made available by the ODIHR show us that crimes committed due to religious hatred mainly and increasingly target places of worship, cemeteries and other religious properties. Therefore, the Holy See remains confident that, in accordance with its nature as a regional security organization and in accordance with the commitments on the protection of religious communities and properties enshrined in Ministerial Council decision no. 3/13, the OSCE and the ODIHR will continue their work and develop new initiatives pertaining to the protection of all religious communities.

The Holy See underlines again that all forms of religious intolerance and discrimination need to be carefully identified and addressed, avoiding any improper selectivity or hierarchical approach.

Furthermore, OSCE commitments on hate crimes have highlighted a series of issues to which the Holy See would welcome further attention: assistance to victims of hate crimes, training for law enforcement and the judiciary in responding to and dealing with such crimes, as well as the positive and important role that political and other public leaders may play in drawing attention to hate crime and advancing preventive efforts.

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to make the following recommendation:

- that participating States and the ODIHR should advance efforts to ensure training for law enforcement and the judiciary about OSCE commitments on hate crime.

Thank you, Mme Moderator.