

Statement Efgani Dönmez, European Citizens' Initiative Stop Extremism, HDIM 2017,
Working Group 8, September 15, 2017

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Ms. Finch (***chairing the session***)

- The EU-wide movement „European Citizens' Initiative Against Extremism“, which I am honored to represent here, has led the European Commission to a comprehensive anti-extremism-package of measures at the legal level which would allow an effective and joint action by all member states against tendencies that are based on hate speech, intolerance and lead to extremism and terror. Intolerance, hate speech are not threats that only the EU has to deal with, it is a phenomenon active in all OSCE member states. Therefore, as the EU institutions already acknowledged our measures, our initiative would now invite the OSCE bodies to join us in the fight against discrimination, hate speech and intolerance.
- Tolerance and non-discrimination are essential parts in fighting extremist tendencies in the OSCE region, it is an effective weapon in countering extremism, a major threat to our societies in the OSCE area.
- To effectively protect ourselves from extremism, we must not be indifferent to intolerance and hate as they are the source of extremism. All of OSCE member states are therefore requested to seize measures to correct the mistakes of the past and to effectively push back extremism in all its forms. For this aim, our initiative has prepared a legal package of measures that includes some radical changes in dealing with intolerance, hate crime that leads to extremism. Our initiative included those points into a recommendation document that was already delivered to the OSCE Secretariat here in Warsaw for review. You, dear colleagues, might find our document in your files already.
- Two years ago, the OSCE together with the then Chairman established a new program dedicated to the active fight against extremism and non-tolerance. That new initiative, let me quote from the Ministerial Declaration, „***strongly condemns manifestations of intolerance, including on the basis of religion or belief, to foster tolerance and non-discrimination, mutual respect and understanding in their societies, and reaffirming the commitment to promote and protect human rights***“

and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.“

- With the initiative „Stop Extremism“, a comprehensive approach at all levels has been defined in preventing and countering intolerance, hate speech, discrimination, violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. The main source of our engagement combines all levels of political and civil stakeholders and we underline the need of deep co-operation and co-ordination among national authorities, participating States, and the dialogue with relevant international and regional NGOs.
- Basic rights and prosperity are not self-evident. We - here in the OSCE region - have fought for our basic rights for centuries. Now, we must also preserve them, as they are in danger and with them peace, education and tolerance and liberty of today's and future generations.
- At the end of my short statement, let me invite you all to our side event, directly after this working session here in the Plenary Hall. My colleague and co-initiator of Stop Extremism, Seyran Ates, will join me in giving your a more detailed description of our initiative. Thank you!