

**Report by Victoria Shukhat at a Meeting on the Question of Considering the
Performance of the Obligations Devoted to Human Capacity of the Session of the
OSCE**

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From September 24th to October 5th 2007 a meeting is being carried out on the questions of examination the fulfillment of commitments, dedicated to human measurement, session OSCE. Victoria Shukhat, program director of the Center for Interethnic Cooperation, presented our organization in the report. Below the text is presented.

Report by Victoria Shukhat

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Attention to the Session of the OCSE:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to come to this session. My organization, the Center for Interethnic Cooperation has been carrying out work for the last ten years in the support of ethnic public associations of Russia. Only very recently consultative status with the UN was granted to us. We carry out work in twenty-five regions in Russia.

In practically all proceedings where the question of discrimination against ethnic minorities and migrants arises, the theme of the police appears.

As such, we would like to bring to the OCSE session the recommendation to neglect the wide-format program, with the appropriate authorities and the financing on the education of officers in interacting with representatives of ethnic minorities in the framework of training courses, for ALL colleagues of the police.

I shall explain why we recommend it. Unfortunately, very frequently the structure called to keep up observance of the law, is itself a source of discrimination and infringements on human rights in relation to migrants. By different estimations, up to 15 million migrants are at present in Russia. As a rule, they carry out the heaviest, most underpaid and most dangerous work. Thus, because of a poor knowledge of Russian and a lack of adaptation mechanisms, they are very often in an obviously tight position. In a situation of rights' infringement they do not know where to turn and are afraid of possible consequences of the manipulation that some police employees use.

Leaders of migrant NGOs mention on a regular basis extortion, insults and injustices on the part of ordinary police employees in relation to migrants.

This fact is recognized by many progressively thinking officers of the police.

This fact, in our opinion, is that in connection with a low salary and difficult work conditions on the position of ordinary employees, there are only representatives of having very little education and the socially problematic layers of the population.

And, in connection with a lack of education and little awareness about cultural,

ethnic and religious features of migrants, police employees very often see in them as a threat and people of a lower class.

This is especially shown at the time of a threat of terrorist attacks, when within the framework of anti-extremist actions representatives of this or that ethnic group, without analysis, are exposed to unjustified pressure. Besides mistrust and a fear in relation to migrants that is also associated to all Russians of non-Russian appearance, it also amplifies interethnic tension.

Within four years, the Center for Interethnic Cooperation carried out a project on forming interaction between ethnic HGOs and law enforcement bodies at the support of the European Union.

We have received very strong results. Both representatives of the police and representatives of migrant communities were very glad to have an opportunity to receive a trunk-call platform and to begin a working dialogue. The joint project "Police-Migrants", which was directed at a decrease in the tension between these two groups, was carried out. Our organization is independent and nongovernmental, we repeatedly criticize the authorities, but we managed to build constructive relations both with the regional governments and with regional law enforcement agencies. Both these structures marked an unconditional advantage of the project and rendered organizational support, but financial support could and cannot be obtained, as in Russia the civil society is just emerging and does not allow for the allocation of funds allocated by the federal legislation in support of NGOS.

Unfortunately, the project was of a pilot nature, and because of its small size it was not able to qualitatively change the situation in the country. All the participants, police officers and migrants, highly valued the work done at the trainings, most of all the change they saw in relation to

stereotypical views in both groups. As well, they all proposed to make practice of the course of the joint trainings.

As such, the center for Interethnic Cooperation proposes that the OCSE to examine the possibility of a large program that would increase the cooperation of migrant communities and the police, correspondingly introducing the rank and file staff and migrants with the traditions and laws of the Russian Federation.

We have already collaborated in this area with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Program for Tolerance and Non-Discrimination. We are very happy that specific steps are accomplished in this field. As such, for example, we know that in Moscow on November 10-11 there will be a training for police officers on the question of opposing racial discrimination. It seems to us that it is essential to conduct a full series of trainings, first and foremost, for the rank and file.

If this practice becomes universal, the mutual distrust and fear which nourishes discrimination and human rights infringement, would become much less.

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