



**OSCE Review Conference 2010**  
**30 September 2010 – 8 October 2010, Warsaw**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Statement – Slovenia**

Mr Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, my delegation would like to express its sincere appreciation that due attention is being devoted to the subject of national and ethnic minorities in this Review Conference.

Slovenia attaches great importance to the protection of national and ethnic minorities. This is evident from our constitutional and legislative frameworks, which provide very advanced and comprehensive protection of traditional, (i.e. autochthonous, indigenous) national minorities in Slovenia, including collective rights, while the individual rights of persons belonging to other ethnic groups are also fully guaranteed.

Since Helsinki 1975, the OSCE participating States have made a number of commitments relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Among these is a commitment to the application of relevant international binding instruments in this field, as well as a recognition that issues relating to national minorities are matters of legitimate international concern and do not exclusively fall under the remit of the internal affairs of the respective state. Unfortunately, these commitments are not yet fully implemented. Slovenia urges all participating States to comply with their international obligations and

commitments, which aim to provide an adequate level of protection to national minorities in their respective countries.

We appreciate the work done by the OSCE HCNM in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Slovenia has fully supported the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations from the outset. As a set of practical instructions aimed at preventing interstate conflicts concerning national minority issues, detailing how countries should act in relation to national minorities, they are based on the very valuable past experiences of the previous High Commissioner and on the report of the Venice Commission, as well as on various international instruments and standards. We are convinced that the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations should be further promoted and implemented, as conflict prevention is one of the major pillars of the OSCE. Therefore, Slovenia supports the proposals for their adoption as a political commitment.

Mr Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now turn to the situation of Roma. Slovenia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU by Romania.

It is the responsibility of each and every state to guarantee that members of the Roma community living there enjoy full political and civil as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

In March 2010, the Slovenian Government adopted a new, integrated National Programme of Measures for Roma for the Period 2010–2015, on the basis of the Roma Community Act, which was adopted in 2007. The main strategic goals of the Programme are to improve the living conditions and educational structure of

the Roma community, to increase the employment rate of its members, to improve healthcare, to preserve and develop their cultural identity, and to raise the general awareness of the majority population. The relevant ministries and government offices are in the process of adopting detailed action plans, with the funds necessary for their realisation earmarked in their financial plans.

Special emphasis has been devoted to the equal treatment of Roma children in school. In line with a comprehensive strategy adopted in 2004, numerous activities have already taken place. Among these are, for example, the development of the standardisation of the Roma language and a syllabus for a course in Roma culture, the creation of a network of schools with Roma pupils to exchange good practices and a project introducing and educating Roma teaching assistants, which is being implemented with the support of the European Social Fund (ESF). This project, presented at a side event of the last HDIM, was nominated for the European Commission's 2010 RegioStars Awards and received a special mention from the jury. Due attention is also paid to building trust between the police and the Roma community. The training focuses on acquainting police officers with Roma culture and customs and involves a basic course on the Roma language.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recent events in some OSCE participating States have highlighted the challenges that individual States and the wider international community face. No measure adopted by an individual government should give the impression that there is a policy against certain ethnic communities. Any discrimination against the Roma community opens the door to further prejudice.

Slovenia fully agrees with the ODIHR Director Ambassador, Janez Lenarčič, that public officials need to be especially sensitive to the risk that statements

made about Roma could further encourage anti-Roma public discourse and prejudice, which could fuel intolerance, discrimination and even acts of violence against members of these communities.

Slovenia, in addition, supports the proposal put forward by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for a High-Level Meeting to be held later this month to launch a process involving the Council of Europe, the European Union and national governments, focusing on specific actions aimed at improving the economic and social integration of Roma in Europe. These efforts should also take into account the work done by the OSCE.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2003 OSCE Action Plan is recognised as the most comprehensive and far-reaching compilation of international commitments aimed at improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. Nevertheless, at the same time, it also remains one of the OSCE documents that has been implemented the least. The upcoming OSCE Summit is an opportunity to reaffirm our shared ambition and commitments regarding the combat against intolerance and discrimination. We expect the Summit to express a clear political will to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE region and to adopt a concrete plan as to how the participating States, in cooperation with the ODIHR, will enhance the implementation of the Action Plan in all its aspects.