

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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Session 12 - Rights of Persons belonging to national minorities

Thank you Madame Moderator. Ambassador and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaeck spoke in his introduction about diversity in society.

We live in a changing world, in a global world and identities from persons become diverse, as well. So if family members derive from different and multiple nationalities.

The Turkish Community in the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region (TGMN) is worried about the German States restricting treatment of its population with dual identities.

According to the German immigration law from 2000 you have to lay down your original citizenship to become German. There are some exceptional cases, for instance if your original country doesn't allow to do so e.g. Iran, Afghanistan or Cuba. In this case Germany allows dual citizenship. However there are more exceptional cases for getting the dual citizenship: when you have parents from two different nationalities, when you are an Ethnic German resettler (Spätaussiedler) or a citizen of the European Union.

So the existence of the dual citizenship in the German population is statistically not an exceptional case. Despite this, some parts of the population, especially the second largest group of immigrants in Germany, namely the Turkish people, are by law excluded from this right. The vast majority of these Turkish people are people who either have been living in Germany for more than 50 years, the first generation of Turkish immigrants, or their descendants, who were born in Germany.

Citizenship is the key to get an access to elections and the right to vote is the fundament of our democracy, as the German constitution emphasizes in Paragraph 20, sentence 2:

"All state authority is derived from the people. It shall be exercised by the people through elections and other votes and through specific legislative, executive and judicial bodies."

By this law the German State first treats parts of its population unequally, second denies parts of its population the access to democratic tools and third ignores the very reality of identities based on dual cultural backgrounds.

The Turkish Community in the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region asks the German delegate to initiate further steps to give this necessity of its minorities a voice within the German State officials and to end this unequal treatment by enhancing the dual citizenship. There are good practices concerning the dual citizenship in France, Italy and in other European countries.

We hope that all OSCE participating states check the circumstances concerning the dual citizenship in their countries and we hope that ODIHR will pay more attention to this topic.

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