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**ENGLISH** only

# STATEMENT BY BÜRGERBEWEGUNG PAX EUROPA

## **OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting**

Working Session 2 Freedom of Assembly and Association

Vienna, November 8, 2012

#### Intervention

During yesterday's speech Ambassador Lenarcic mentioned the people's right to organize themselves for particular purposes and that all people in the OSCE area must be able to exercise this right.

While much and encouraging progress has been made especially east of Vienna, the situation is markedly deteriorating west of Vienna the United Kingdom and Germany being two cases in point. For Germany I refer to my intervention from yesterday's session.

Legal and registered demonstrations organized by the English Defence League have turned into police interrogations of the demonstrators, and where those those opposing the rally using violence were not arrested because police deemed an arrest "unsafe" in a hostile environment. The democratic right to peaceful assembly and association with respect to the English Defence League is applicable only to some groups. Dissenting opinions are crushed by force, intimidation and inconvenience to the demonstrators.

These methods employed by those attacking peaceful demonstrations seem to follow a systematic strategy:

- ➤ By means of escalating otherwise peaceful street events and political campaigns to street battles, ordinary citizens are intimidated from attending such events.
- The radical groups are actively preparing for and seeking confrontation with police at these events, apparently having as a secondary aim to present themselves as victims of police brutality, in spite of these groups being the attacking part and the real source of violence.

### BPE recommends that OSCE institutions increase this activity:

As the problems for freedom of assembly are increasing, in particular in participating States west of

Vienna, ICLA urges OSCE to significantly increase its monitoring activities in these countries. Neutral monitoring and reporting is urgently needed in order that peaceful citizens can safely exercise their right to freedom of assembly, as stipulated in OSCE principles.

## **Recommendation to OSCE participating States**

- That law enforcement agencies increase their efforts to quickly and accurately identify the source of violence at public events, in order to actively and immediately deal with any threats, that the protected events may proceed as planned.
- That threats and violence against organizers and/or their partners, suppliers etc. be treated as politically motivated and persecuted more effectively under the law.