

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2014

Statement by the Czech Republic on Democratic Institutions

Working Session 1: Democratic Institutions

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic aligns herself with the intervention delivered by the European Union on Democratic Institutions.

The Czech Republic would like to congratulate Mr. Link on his appointment as ODIHR Director and we wish him best of luck and a lot of success in the lead of the ODIHR. We perceive the ODIHR as an outstanding institution with a great responsibility for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and promotion of democratization processes. This applies especially today as the recent events are demonstrating a persistent necessity of such an institution with an utmost task to assist the states with their democratic advancement and meeting their human rights commitments.

The Czech Republic appreciates the high professional standards and expertise of the ODIHR. For a due mandate performance the ODIHR's autonomy is absolutely necessary in order for it to be able to effectively assist participating States in the implementation of the OSCE human dimension commitments. I would also like to stress that financial independence is as crucial as political autonomy and in this regard ODIHR has the full support of the Czech Republic.

We wish to draw your attention to one topic in particular which is Equal Political Participation that has been one of the long-term priorities of the Czech Republic's human rights foreign policy. We pay special attention to the support of conduct of elections in accordance with international democratic standards and play an active role in OSCE and EU election observation missions.

In this respect, we consider ODIHR's role in election observation, including through follow-up activities, irreplaceable. It is proven by the fact that the ODIHR's in-depth observation methodology, emphasizing the principle of independence, impartiality and professionalism has been followed by a number of international actors. We congratulate ODIHR on the many Election Observation Missions conducted last year.

The Czech Republic cooperates with different election oriented non-governmental organizations such as the Carter Center or International Foundation for Electoral Systems, supports election processes through the MFA's Transition Promotion Program and encourages relevant institutions and states to implement recommendations of election observation missions. We try to be an example ourselves; last week at the Human Dimension Committee meeting we presented a voluntary report on the implementation of the recommendations of ODIHR's Election Assessment Mission carried out during the 2013 presidential election in the Czech Republic.

Additionally, we brought the topic of Equal Political Participation to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. In September 2013, the Council adopted by consensus with the support of 77 cosponsoring states from all regions the resolution on "Equal Political Participation" submitted by the Czech Republic. The resolution was supported by the overwhelming majority of OSCE Participating States as cosponsors. At the current UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Czech Republic is presenting a broadened resolution on "Equal Participation in Political and Public Affairs".

Dear Mr. Link, on behalf of my country, let me assure you our support in your endeavors. Allow me also to extend the invitation of our Foreign Minister, which has been addressed to you earlier this summer, to visit the Czech Republic. We stand ready to cooperate with you and your office.

Thank you Mr. President.