

ENGLISH only

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***Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions***

**Report to the OSCE Permanent Council**  
*Vienna, 7 November 2013*

## **I. Introduction and General Overview**

- I am honored to address to the Permanent Council today as Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.
- This is my first Report to the Permanent Council in my capacity as Personal Representative of the Chair-in-Office.
- During 2013 together with my colleagues, Personal Representatives, we made country visits to Belgium and Greece.
- I also had a possibility to participate and organize a number of other events in the framework of my broad mandate. In particular:

## **II. Overview of the Main Activities in 2013**

1. On January 16 I paid my first visit as a Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office to Vienna where I had a possibility to attend the Permanent Council meeting and a number of events related to the beginning of Ukraine's Chairmanship in the OSCE.
2. On February 8 I participated in the Seminar on Co-operation to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean Region which took place in Rome. The seminar brought together officials and civil society representatives from OSCE participating States.
3. On February 21 I attended a Co-ordination meeting with the OSCE Chairmanship and the ODIHR in Vienna. Working plans of the Personal Representatives for 2013, in particular, our visits to the participating States were among the key issues discussed at the meeting.
4. On February 26-28 I participated in the 5th Global Forum of the UNAOC, which was hosted by the Austrian Government and brought together to

Vienna more than 2000 people from different countries. My statement on this event (in the Meeting of Friends) was dedicated to the activities undertaken in order to promote tolerance and mutual understanding, as well as inter-religious dialogue as a means to promote freedom of religion or belief throughout the OSCE area.

5. On March 6 I had a meeting with Ambassador of Nigeria to the Holy See H.E. Francis Okeke and with the Dean of the African Diplomatic Community. The agenda of the meeting consisted of discussions about the priorities of the Ukrainian Chairmanship in the OSCE as well as various social, religious, economic issues and the situation with African religious communities.
6. On March 26 I took part in the Conference on the rights of LGBT persons in Europe which was organized by the Government of France in conjunction with Poland and the European Commission. Representatives from 56 continental European States were invited to a meeting.
7. On April 15 I had a round-table meeting with the delegation of the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Government headed by the Head of the department Ms. Patrizia De Rose. The issues of the discussion were: non-discrimination, religious minorities, equal treatment, LGBT, Roma-Sinti, African communities, gender equality as well as the Italian social security system.
8. On April 16 I participated in the round-table “Global changes in the world policy and economy”, which was held in Rome and organized by the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas. In the framework of this event I had a special meeting with former Prime Minister of Italy and the tenth President of the European Commission Romano Prodi.
9. On April 17 I attended International Congress «Listening To Asia: Pathways For Faith», which was hosted by Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome and dedicated to issues that enlighten the strengths and weaknesses of the Christian communities in Asia.
10. On May 6 – my welcome speech during the inauguration of the Interfaith Center Libertas in Lviv, Ukraine. The Center was founded under my support. Interfaith Center Libertas is a non-profit organization dedicated to encourage interreligious dialogue in Ukraine and abroad. The inauguration was followed by a Conference on the relevant issues.
11. On May 7 I participated in the roundtable on interreligious dialogue in promoting freedom of religion or belief held in Vienna organized jointly by the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship, OSCE Office for Democratic

Institutions and Human Rights and the European Council of Religious Leaders.

12. On May 21 I took part in the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, including Human Rights Youth Education on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, in Tirana (Albania).
13. On June 10-12 I participated in the joint country visit to Belgium of the three Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination.

Besides, I visited the Bureau of European Policy Advisers and had a meeting with Adviser for the Dialogue with Churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organizations Ms. Katharina Von Schnurbein.

14. On July 17-18 I paid a working visit to Switzerland. I participated in the meeting on discrimination and racism, organized by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the UNO in Geneva and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I had a meeting with the General Secretary of the Council of European Bishops Conferences Mgr. Duarte da Cunha (St.Gallen) and with Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Churches Mr. Georges Lemopoulos (Geneva).

15. On September 3-4 I participated in the 2013 OSCE Central Asian Youth Network Seminar "The Pendulum Swings: Empowering the CA Youth against Violent Extremism" in Almaty where I led and moderated group discussions on promoting tolerance and preventing violent extremism and radicalization. I also delivered a lecture in Al-Farabi Kazakh National University where I spoke to students of the faculty on tolerance education.
16. On September 12 I had a meeting with members of the Summer school of the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas for the students from Central and Eastern Europe. During this event I made a presentation of the priorities of the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the OSCE and answered questions of the students and lecturers about my activities as a Personal Representative of the CiO.
17. On September 18-20 as one of the three PRs of the OSCE CiO on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination I paid a joint country visit to Greece.

Besides, on September 20 I made a TV Statement on non-discrimination at the request of the National UNHCR.

18. On September 23-24 I participated in the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) of the OSCE in Warsaw.
19. On September 25 I made a presentation in the International Scientific Practical Conference “The Role of Astana Interreligious Forum in the Dialogue of Civilizations”, which was related to the 10th anniversary of the convening the first Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions – international platform which focuses on promoting inter-faith dialogue, solidarity and tolerance.
20. From September 29 to October 1 I participated in the interreligious meeting for peace, organized by the Community of St. Egidio titled “The Courage to Hope”. Participants of this event, including representatives of all Churches and representatives of the Jewish and Muslim faiths as well as other world religions, politicians, including Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta, discussed such crucial issues and problems as the persecution of Christians, interreligious dialogue, violence against women, welcoming and integrating immigrants, sick cities and existential suburbs, information at the service of peace, lay people and believers in dialogue.
21. On October 8 together with my colleagues PRs of the OSCE CiO on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination I took part in the Human Dimension Committee meeting in Vienna.
22. On October 9 I visited KACIID Dialogue Centre where I had a meeting with Secretary General Faisal bin Muammar. We discussed the center's support and activities regarding religious freedom and interfaith dialogue. I've assisted the organizers of the Central Asian Youth Network to set a contact with KAICIID Center for further cooperation.
23. Upcoming event in November 2013:
- On November 29 – Conference «Christians in the OSCE Region: Intolerance and Discrimination» will be held in Rome at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas.

### **III. Recommendations and Conclusions:**

- To encourage participating States to strengthen the links between Governments and NGO's in order to facilitate positive interaction between them.
- In view of continuing growth of intolerance and incidents targeting Christians to recommend the OSCE participating States to collect data on hate crimes against Christians in separate statistics.

- More attention should be given to the situation of people of African descent.
- To pay special attention to economic migration which is a crucial issue closely connected to different forms of discrimination.
- To support educational initiatives to counter intolerance and discrimination.
- To tackle racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and intolerance by capitalising on sporting events and to draw attention to these efforts by conducting awareness raising initiatives in society.
- Authorities and political leaders need to abstain from using intolerant rhetoric and to firmly and unequivocally condemn all instances of hate speech in public discourse.

In conclusion I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ukrainian Chairmanship, Members of the OSCE Permanent Council, OSCE Staff, ODIHR and my Colleagues Personal Representatives for their support and collaboration.