

## DRAFT RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

ENGLISH only

### Session VII: Policies of integration of persons belonging to national minorities

Moderator: Mr. John de Fonblanque, director, Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities

Rapporteur: Vincent de Graaf, Legal Officer, Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities

- The societies of the participating States of the OSCE have always been diverse. This **diversity is increasing**, specially through migration and the globalization process, and needs not only to be acknowledged but also **needs to be managed** in societies that multi-ethnic and multi-cultural.
- The best way to manage this diversity is through the concept of “**integration respecting diversity**” which is based on the full participation of all persons belonging to national minorities in all sectors of society while at the same time respecting their right to maintain their own identity and culture, as long as human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected.
- It is important to stress that the integration of all individuals into a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society is in the interest not only of persons belonging to national minorities but also **to society as a whole**, both in terms of reducing risks of conflicts and as well as increasing the possibilities for economic development.
- Integration respecting diversity is a **two-way process** which comprises rights and obligations for the state, persons belonging to national minorities and all other groups in society. Essential components are political, cultural and economic participation. Education and the media play a particularly important role in striving for the inclusion, integration and participation of persons belonging to national minorities.
- A legal framework and set of policy instruments based on the **principle of non-discrimination** is the starting point for integration respecting diversity. This principle has evolved from strictly formal equality into one which seeks to promote substantive equality. It is not only about the **right** to participate, but also about the **opportunity to participate**. To achieve this, special measures may be needed, for example in employment or education policies. These measures need to be tailor-made and based on accurate and sufficiently specific data on the exclusion of certain groups. Furthermore, special measures are by nature temporary and must not however result in reverse discrimination.
- Another useful policy instrument element is the **minority impact assessment** of all new major governmental policies in order to assess the impact the introduction

of these general policies will have on persons belonging to national minorities. Consultation of representatives of these groups is essential in this respect.

- The fight against exclusion and marginalization is not limited to policies which seek to promote the integration of persons belonging to national minorities but indeed to all (potentially) excluded groups, including in many cases migrants and other economically and socially deprived persons.
- The OSCE should draft and consider a “Statement of Principles” on integration respecting diversity which focuses on persons belonging to national minorities but which may have wider application in the OSCE participating states. Such a set of principles would include the key elements of the integration process, would be based on the existing OSCE standards as well as the best practices in the participating States.