



STATEMENT BY TURKEY
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Closing Session
5 October 2012, Warsaw

Thank you Mr Chairman,

Let me first express our gratitude to you and the whole ODIHR staff for the excellent organization of the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

We would also like to thank all participants; in particular representatives of non-governmental organizations, who have shared with us their experiences, voiced their sources of concern and provided us with a variety of recommendations. They have reminded us of the wide range of commitments in the human dimension and the areas where shortcomings in the implementation of these commitments, exist.

We firmly believe that guaranteeing fundamental freedoms is a must to further strengthen democracy. In this regard, Turkey attaches much importance to the implementation of commitments in the human dimension. We will continue to address issues in areas that need further strengthening including in the area of freedom of expression and media. In doing so, we will assume a comprehensive approach addressing all aspects of the question including its challenges. As a token of our determination, we have joined the co-sponsors of the Declaration on Fundamental Freedoms in the digital age. Let me remind you that the text contains inter alia, a recognition that human rights and fundamental freedoms do not change with new technologies and that they extend into the Digital Age.

On the other hand, the calls made by civil society during session 14, where Islamophobia, instances of discrimination against Muslims and other groups at risk, such as Roma and Sinti, people of African Descent or attacks on synagogues were eloquently voiced, should sound as a timely wake up call to remind us of the growing trend of non-tolerance and discrimination in our OSCE area.

It should be a sign that even NGO's, that in the past did not show much interest to the subject of racism and xenophobia towards Muslims for example, are now issuing reports and recommendations to governments for action.

Some of the most horrific attacks in Europe of recent years, the string of racist murders in Germany and the ruthless, premeditated murder of scores of innocent people by an extremist in Norway, are also alarming signals.

Furthermore, the reactions of individuals living outside the OSCE area to the anti Muslim video had a negative impact in the OSCE area as it has regenerated or in some instances, deepened fears caused by a biased perception of Islam. If this challenge is not addressed, the same pattern will repeat itself.

The financial difficulty in some countries is also producing additional grievance and intolerance to communities that are already deprived of many rights.

All these considerations show the dire necessity to address with more emphasis the issue of racism towards all target groups and xenophobia which if passed unnoticed may have a bearing on security, cohesion and harmony in our societies.

Rejecting racial, ethnic and religious discrimination in any form is one of the many commitments in this field (Helsinki 1992, Summit Declaration). The establishment of a society void of all sorts of racism, xenophobia or other forms of intolerance and discrimination must be a goal to which we must all continue to strive.

Given its multi-dimensional approach to security, its knowledge and experience, the OSCE with its institutions, ODIHR, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and others, could and in our opinion, should do much more in assisting participating States *also* on this path.

We hope that the Chairmanship will help us reaffirm political will in this area **as well**. This years' HDIM may have contributed to that goal.

Thank you.