

Working Session 18: Discussion of human dimension activities (with special emphasis on project work)**No of statements: 5**

Delegations: 2

Civil Society: 1

OSCE Institutions: 1

International Organizations: 1

Media: 0

Rights of reply: 3

Rapporteur: Mr. David Jan Bosschaert, Attaché, Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of Belgium to the OSCE

The session was opened by Mrs. Kateryna Ryabiko, Project Co-ordinator at ODIHR, who introduced the speakers, including a representative of the Ministry of Justice of Greece, a video presentation by the Representative on Freedom of the Media and a presentation by the Luhansk Regional Centre of Human Rights 'Alternative'.

The three presentations focused on practical aspects of their daily work with the respective participating States and ODIHR. They identified examples of tangible outcomes, good practices as well as remaining challenges and lessons learned.

Ms. Maria Giannakaki of the Ministry of Justice of Greece presented the outcome of ODIHR's project "Building a Comprehensive Criminal Justice Response to Hate Crime", which focused on three major lines of action: development of a national, inter-agency agreement on activities and policies to be implemented by relevant authorities and civil society to address hate crime; improving recording of hate crimes; training prosecutors to enhance their ability to address hate crime. A multidisciplinary approach was followed and ensured that national authorities fostered leadership on commitment to the fight against hate crimes.

An intervention by a video titled "Safety of Female Journalists Online" was made by the Representative on Freedom of the Media. This presentation outlined the double line of attack against female journalists, who are being criticized as both journalists and as women. Threats of rape, physical violence

and graphic imagery show up in their inboxes and on their social media platforms as they go about their workday. In extreme cases these attacks lead to self-censorship or worse: women retreating from the public sphere, leaving the male-dominated field of journalism with even fewer female voices. The video is part of the the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Medias online campaign, in close cooperation with International Press Institute (IPI).

Mr. Valeriy Novikov of the Luhansk Regional Centre of Human Rights 'Alternative' discussed the impact that ODIHR's project work had on the development of its own organization, which benefitted of the project "Strengthening Dialogue among Civil Society and with Key Government Stakeholders on Human Dimension Issues in Ukraine". As IDPs the organization ceased its activity in Alchevsk and moved to Kyiv but the rights of consumers of housing and communal services in Alchevsk still form the main part of the work. Moreover, since the outbreak of hostilities, civil society in Ukraine lacked the knowledge, tools and resources to monitor and document violations of human rights in an area of armed conflict. It was necessary to document facts of human rights violations that could become evidence of violations of international humanitarian law. ODIHR's work positively impacted the work of the Ukrainian NGO's. Luhansk Regional Centre of Human Rights 'Alternative' organization has been involved in the implementation of more than 10 projects, a number of which are directly aimed at reducing the negative consequences of the conflict. Also, only this year the organization took part in the preparation of 5 reports related to the consequences of the armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine.

The delegations which took the floor expressed their strong support for the work of ODIHR, RfoM, HCNM and to the field missions, stressing that their work is integral to underpinning democracy, rule of law and fundamental freedoms. ODIHR's election monitoring work was also endorsed. Geographical imbalances in the work of the OSCE executive structures were pointed out by one delegation. Another delegation pointed out that in Ukraine the OSCE should be allowed to operate in the entire territory.

The Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine Vaidotas Verba discussed the national dialogue project in Ukraine, including stakeholders from all around the country. Smaller dialogues were also held to identify issues at the community level, using professional facilitators to mutually search for solutions. This helps authorities to better understand citizens' issues and problems.

An International organisation stressed the role of education in the promotion of democracy and human rights. The "Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture" and the new education campaign "Free to Speak, Safe to Learn" were cited as good practices by highlighting commitments to democratic values in schools.

In view of one civil society organization, ODIHR should monitor participating States more closely in relation to implementing commitments regarding IDPs and electoral observation.

Recommendations made by participants during this session include (non-exhaustive list):

Recommendations to the OSCE participating States:

- Participating States should avail themselves of the services offered by the OSCE executive structures, in enhancing the implementation of commitments, including by facilitating visits and monitoring missions.

Recommendations to the OSCE Executive Structures:

- Executive structures should continue to coordinate closely with each other and as well as with other relevant international and regional organisations, such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe, in order to learn from one another's experiences and to exchange best practice with a view to avoiding duplication and to maximising the impact of activities, including project work.
- Executive structures should also continue to develop close cooperation with civil society when designing projects and activities to ensure increased participation of civil society in the implementation phase. There may be scope for 'pathfinder' projects to illustrate a particular issue and set an example.
- Executive structures should continue to improve the monitoring and evaluation of their projects, from conception through to completion, including by prioritising the use of key performance indicators and implementing results-based management best practice.
- ODIHR should ensure that the monitoring of observance of election observation laws works and that participating States fulfill its commitments regarding IDPs and border areas. ODIHR should monitor the situation with neo-Nazism in participating States.
- ODIHR should formulate more projects bringing together a coalition of civil society organizations in relevant participating States.