



Outline

Roundtable Meeting with the NGOs addressing Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: “Youth and Education”

Vienna, 17 December 2008

Background

Since 2005, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in conjunction with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office (CiO) on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, has been organizing NGO roundtable meetings dealing with intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. The first NGO roundtable meeting aimed at outreaching the NGOs most active in this area and identifying general areas of concerns, good practices and recommendations. The ODIHR organized the second NGO roundtable meeting in 2006 with a special focus on the representation of Muslims in public discourse. In consultation with various NGO representatives and experts, the ODIHR and the CiO Personal Representative have decided to concentrate on youth and education in the third NGO roundtable meeting addressing intolerance and discrimination against Muslims.

The importance of this issue has been emphasized in several OSCE commitments. For instance, in 2006, the OSCE acknowledged the valuable contribution that youth can make to the fight against intolerance and discrimination and encouraged the continuation and further development of good practice activities. The 2007 Madrid Ministerial Council Decision has also encouraged the promotion of educational programmes in the participating States in order to raise awareness among youth of the value of mutual respect and understanding.

Aim and Rational

The aim of the proposed roundtable meeting is to bring together the representatives of NGOs dealing with intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in the OSCE region in order to discuss the issue of youth and education in relation to anti-Muslim attitudes. The event will provide a forum for exchange of views and information on the impact of intolerance against Muslims on Muslim youth. Having a forward looking approach, it will particularly focus on the role of youth initiatives and educational institutions in combating intolerance against Muslims and their interaction with each other. In this regard, the ODIHR hopes that the event will encourage NGOs, particularly youth initiatives, to more actively engage with educational authorities to counter intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. Therefore, the participants will also have the opportunity to identify good practices in this area and make recommendations to improve the

situation. At last but not least, during the roundtable the ODIHR will update the civil society representatives about its recent educational projects to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims.

Participation

The roundtable will bring together approximately 30 NGO representatives (depending on available funding) dealing with intolerance and discrimination against Muslims across the OSCE region. Muslim youth NGOs and other youth initiatives combating racism, xenophobia and intolerance and promoting mutual will be particularly encouraged to participate. Special attention will be also paid to ensure gender balance and regional diversity both in the composition of participants and selection of topics to be discussed.

Moreover, the permanent delegations of the OSCE participating States will be invited for the roundtable meeting as observers, so that they can learn more about Muslim youth and challenges that they face in education. In doing so, the roundtable event will provide the opportunity to enhance the dialogue between the civil society and delegations in addressing intolerance and discrimination against Muslims.

The ODIHR will also invite the representatives of other Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) to attend the roundtable meeting.

Organizational Modalities

- One day roundtable event (a luncheon and two coffee breaks provided)
- Two working sessions
- Participants are encouraged to make concrete recommendations for the OSCE institutions, participating states and civil society
- The roundtable will open in Vienna, on 17 December 2008, at 9 a.m and close at 6:30p.m.
- Working language of the meeting is English.

For more information please contact:

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