

2009 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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Working Session 5

Tolerance and non discrimination I
30 September 2009

Statement of the Macedonian Delegation in exercise of its right to reply

Madame Moderator,

The Ohrid Framework Agreement remains a top priority of the Macedonian Government. This document is the basis of our multiethnic society and the pillar of Macedonia's Euro and Euro-Atlantic integration, being fully supported by the EU, USA and other major players in the International Arena.

A Committee of Ministers has been established to monitor the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. This Committee is headed by a Deputy Prime Minister. Currently, he is conducting a monitoring process in municipalities in order to establish the level of implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement at the local level.

All envisaged laws regulating rights of non-majority communities have been adopted. In July 2008 the Law on promotion and protection of the rights of those communities which represent less than 20 % of the population of the country was adopted. Also, for better implementation of this Law and monitoring the implementation of the rights of communities, an Agency was established. The recruitment procedures for persons belonging to the non-majority communities are pursued following the envisaged tempo.

There are also a series of projects implemented, among which a UNDP project supported by the Spanish Government centered on the improvement of inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation among communities, aiming at increasing the capacities of the central and local bodies for resolution of problems through consensus building on the priorities of communities.

On another issue, please allow me briefly to emphasize that for my Government the education is one of the main instruments in promoting integration and as such can heal wounds, prevent conflicts and contribute to sustainable societies in the long term.

During the last visit of the HCNM in my country, on January this year, he stressed that Macedonia had made headway in the past few years in some key areas of education, including mother- tongue tuition, the de-politicization of education and increased parental involvement in local municipalities.

He also warned my authorities about the negative consequences of segregated education on society, stressing that the progress above should not be undercut by increased ethnic segregation.

On this occasion, I would like to emphasize that the Struga inter-ethnic incidents constitute an isolated case of temporary **separation** which, frankly, does not reflect the much more positive reality in the country's education system.

However, we kindly suggest that the term segregation be avoided because it does not describe appropriately the issue at hand in my country. The word segregation evokes a sense and images of apartheid and deliberate ethnic discrimination on a massive scale and according to a pre-conceived evil plan, which I assure you it's not the case in the Republic of Macedonia.

Madame Moderator,
I thank you for your attention