

## STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

### OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

*Warsaw, 10–21 September 2018*

#### **Working session 7: Fundamental freedoms I, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief**

*Check against delivery*

*Mr/Ms Chairperson,*

Let me start by thanking ODIHR for providing us with the opportunity to exchange views on this important human rights issue.

*Mr/Ms Chairperson,*

Ensuring that everyone is safe from persecution based on their religion or belief is a responsibility that has to be shared by all members of the international society. Poland firmly believes that freedom of religion or belief is the foundation of any pluralistic and democratic society. This is why we are particularly concerned by the increasing phenomenon of discrimination and religious persecution because of faith in many countries of the world. This freedom has come under severe strain from both states imposing unlawful restrictions on the right to perform religious practices, and non-state actors responsible for unspeakable acts of violence against members of religions minorities.

*Mr/Ms Chairperson,*

Poland, among others, takes steps to assure that the international community's attention is drawn to the situation of Christian communities across the Middle East. Religious freedom, interreligious dialogue and protection of rights of religious minorities belong to our priorities in dialogue with countries of the region. For example, in Iraq we encourage religious and community leaders as well as local authorities to promote tolerance and coexistence, interfaith reconciliation and implementation of an inclusive peace process to preserve religious pluralism and the multicultural unity of the country. We similarly promote minority rights, especially interfaith cooperation and peace-building in Syria.

*Mr/Ms Chairperson,*

We would like to recommend taking following actions:

- providing an enabling environment for freedom of religion or belief by fostering tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity within and among societies;
- keeping the freedom of religion and belief on top of the agenda of our cooperation with international organizations;

- raising the issues of prosecution, discrimination and violence towards religious minorities;
- using and encouraging direct financial contributions to provide humanitarian and development assistance to the members of persecuted minorities;
- protecting those minority groups that are still suffering from severe consequences of brutal violence that have experienced;
- bringing to justice the perpetrators of murders of members of religious minorities and fighting the culture of impunity.

*I thank you.*